

Choosing a Therapist

The search for a therapist can be daunting. Reaching out for support in a time of need is not easy. It is important to find a therapist that is a good fit. I offer this list as a starting place for some questions to ask your potential therapist. It is important to interview them so that you have more information with which to make an informed choice. I hope it is helpful for you in your search.

Questions for yourself:

- Have a clear idea of what you are seeking support with: What is bringing you into therapy?
- What are some qualities that you may want your therapist to have?
- What areas of experience or expertise do you want them to be familiar with?
- What are your goals for therapy – short term and long term?

Questions to ask when interviewing a therapist.

(Not all questions will apply to every situation; choose what feels relevant to your needs.)

- What experience do you have working with the issues I'm seeking support for (e.g., trauma, substance use, healthy relationships, anxiety, depression, life transitions, racism, toxic workplaces)?
- What do you find most challenging about working with these issues?
- What kinds of successes have you seen with clients navigating similar concerns?
- Do you have any areas of specialization?
- What therapeutic modalities do you use (e.g., Psychodynamic, CBT, Trauma-Focused CBT, Somatic, Psychoanalytic, Narrative)?
- Do you have personal experience with being in therapy? If so, what do you find challenging or rewarding about the therapeutic process?
- What is your policy around contact between sessions? How available are you if something comes up between appointments?
- What experience do you have working with people from different cultural backgrounds?
- What experience do you have working with LGBTQI clients?
- What experience do you have working with people involved in the juvenile or adult criminal justice system?
- How do you determine when it's time to end therapy?
- How do you track progress toward a client's goals?
- How do you approach situations where a client is having difficulty following through with therapeutic goals or requests?
- How do you navigate moments when a client disagrees with your recommendations?

Important:

You can research a therapist's license to ensure they are in good standing with the Board of Behavioral Sciences-which regulates mental health professionals in CA. Any disciplinary actions will be documented there. (<https://search.dca.ca.gov/>)