

Wellness Suite - Workbook

MAYBE
I SHOULD
SEE
SOMEONE

A workbook to help you find a therapist, figure out your goals, and make the most of your first few sessions.

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Welcome

Whether it's your first time or your fifth, starting therapy can be a scary and exciting step. With so many different types of therapists, it is easy to feel overwhelmed and even wonder if you truly "need" to talk to someone.

You deserve a safe space to be heard... and the knowledge to find and start that process with as much ease as possible! This workbook will help.

At the end of this workbook you will know how to

1. Determine how therapy might help you
2. Figure out what your goals for therapy are
3. Learn how to find, vet, and select the ideal therapist for you
4. Effectively evaluate your new (or existing) therapeutic relationship to make sure its a good fit.



Author's Note: The decision to go to therapy is not always a straight line but with this workbook, it can be easier. That said, this is not medical advice and it can't cover every possible scenario or consideration. Please use your best judgment and include trusted people in your life as a support to this very important process.

Wishing you a meaningful therapy journey-

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M F T



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Therapy, at its core, is the honoring and healing of the humanity within each of us.



Deciding to go to Therapy

finding your why



Before we dive into **how** to find a therapist, we should start with **why** you want to find a therapist. Knowing your why will help make some of the challenges to finding the right therapist a little bit easier. There are so many ways therapy can help and so many aspects of life that can benefit from expert support. By taking time to get clear on what you want and need right now you will increase the odds of finding a good fit.

That sad, it is not a requirement that you have a crystal clear goal or immediate crisis in order to start therapy. Your desire to start this journey can be simple curiosity about yourself, or your circumstances, or based on the gentle nudge of someone who loves you. The important thing is to know why you're starting and stay open to what you might discover through the journey.



So *do* I need to talk to someone?

Everyone can benefit from therapy at any time. But, people often wonder how to decide when to go. I want you to close your eyes for a minute and think about what it is that has made you consider going to therapy at this particular moment in your life. Maybe it's a relationship issue, negative self-talk, a pattern of behavior, or just a nagging feeling inside. Whatever it is, bring it to your mind's eye and then answer the questions below honestly.

01	DOES THIS HAVE A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE IMPORTANT RELATIONSHIPS IN YOUR LIFE?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
----	---	---------------------------------	--------------------------------

02	IS IT MAKING IT HARD TO MEET YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AT HOME, WORK OR SCHOOL?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
----	---	---------------------------------	--------------------------------

03	HAVE PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE COMMENTED ON THIS ISSUE OR SUGGESTED THAT THERAPY OR SOME OTHER TYPE OF HELP IS NEEDED?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
----	--	---------------------------------	--------------------------------

04	IS IT HARD TO DO BASIC SELF CARE LIKE EATING, SHOWERING, GOING OUTSIDE, OR SLEEPING?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
----	--	---------------------------------	--------------------------------

05	IS THIS SOMETHING YOU HAVE WISHED WAS DIFFERENT FOR A LONG TIME (I.E., MORE THAN A FEW WEEKS)?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
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06	EVEN IF YOU AREN'T SURE IT CAN BE DIFFERENT, WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO WORK TO MAKE IT DIFFERENT IF SOMEONE COULD SHOW YOU HOW?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
----	--	---------------------------------	--------------------------------

07	DO YOU WANT THIS TO CHANGE FOR YOU RIGHT NOW? IS IT A PRIORITY FOR YOU?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
----	---	---------------------------------	--------------------------------

if you answered 'yes' to even one of these questions, then this is a good time to start therapy! The more "yes"s you have, the more crucial it is to start therapy now. The longer you wait, the more negative impact this will have and the harder you will have to work to heal and grow from it.



How Therapy Can Help

Therapy can help in all sorts of ways and with all sorts of issues. Below are three ways to think about the role you want therapy to play in your life at this moment. For most people, their experience with therapy will cover all of these and sometimes more than one at a time.



Acute Crisis Intervention

This is the kind of situation most people think of when they think of therapy. The focus of therapy is resolving a major issue or illness such as a divorce, panic attacks, or major depression.



Long-Term Growth

Often the next step after acute crisis care, this is therapy that focuses on understanding and changing long held beliefs, patterns, and traumas - helping you be your best self.



Supportive Care

Empathetic support is part of every therapy experience but, when it's the sole focus, I like to think of it as next level self care. Sessions are often less frequent and more like maintenance.

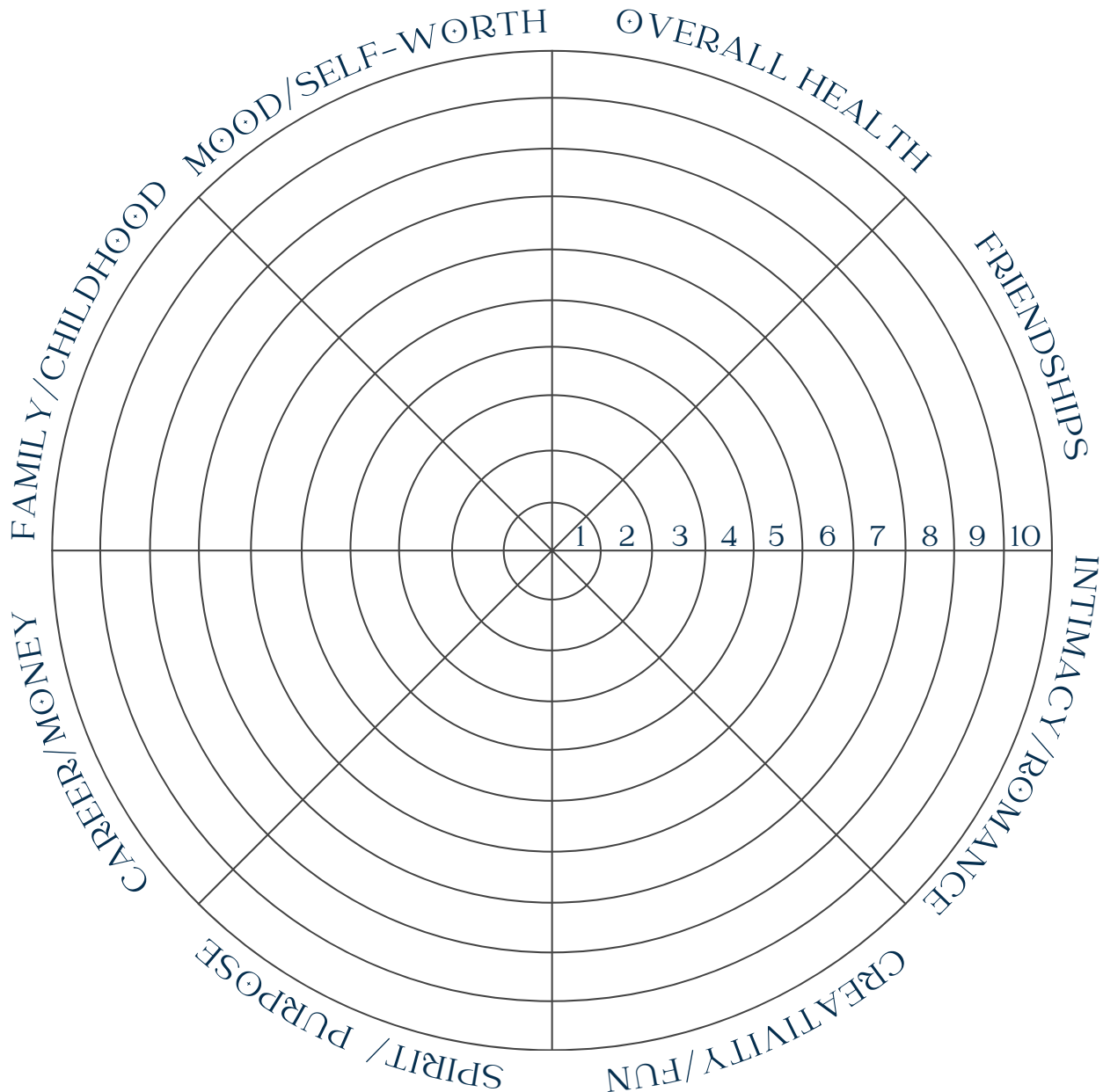


HOW FULL DO I FEEL IN MY

LIFE

The wheel of life is a great tool that helps you better understand what parts of your life fill you up and what areas feel depleted. Take a few minutes to reflect on each area then color the rings to rate each area 1 to 10.

- 1 (I'm struggling/this causes me a lot of pain/angst)
- 10 (I feel content/find great joy in this part of life)



Areas rated 8 or less could really thrive with a little support, areas rated 6 or less probably need expert guidance to improve, and areas rated 4 or less deserve immediate expert attention .



BRAINSTORMING YOUR

THERAPY GOALS

You don't need a clearly defined goal to start and benefit from therapy. But a little introspection on how you hope it will help can go a long way to making the most out of the process. Start at the top to begin brainstorming ideas for change before writing your overall goal(s).

I WANT TO

STOP DOING	
DO LESS OF	
KEEP DOING	
DO MORE OF	
START DOING	

MY PRIMARY GOAL(S):





We all need a safe space in this world to explore all the parts of our story while being acknowledged that even our darkest parts are worthy of love and kindness.



Understanding Therapist Lingo

a cheat sheet for your therapist search



There are dozens of different kinds of therapists. And within each of these specializations, there are numerous approaches to therapy, from personal perspective to niche certifications and preferred modalities. These technical details can offer you a great starting point but it's important to remember that "fit" is the single most relevant factor to the success of your work together.

Research is clear: the relationship between client and therapist is the biggest predictor of therapeutic success. So soak up all the information on the following pages, but remember that in the end, it's **how you feel** that is going to matter most when choosing your therapist.



L IS FOR LOVE... AND LICENSE

Every state (and many other countries) has their own specific requirements for therapists of all types to be licensed. In general, it requires they complete graduate education, pass a national exam, and accrue 1000s of hours of clinical experience after school.

Therapists must be licensed (or working toward licensure) in order to see clients in a particular location. This is important to note in our virtual world. **Your therapist can be anywhere and see you online if they are licensed wherever you are.** This can be a help and a hindrance, particularly in areas where several states are close together, your therapist may be geographically nearby but if they aren't licensed by your state, they can't see you.

The hope is one day there will be national licensing allowing therapists to practice anywhere. Till then, it can help for you to have a basic understanding of the licensure journey.



Residency/Post-Graduate Therapists

Therapists in this stage of their work may have an "R" or "G" in the letters behind their names. This means they have completed graduate school and internship hours, and are now working to get fully licensed by the state. This stage can be 1-3+ years depending on the state and their workload. Many amazing therapists are still in their residency phase and you shouldn't pass them by just because they don't have an 'L' yet.



Interns/Students

Clinical interns are still students, either working toward their masters or doctorate degree in some clinical area of mental health. Although they are newbies and still learning the theory, skills, and techniques, you can find excellent care at very affordable rates with interns. And you get the bonus of an enthusiastic learner and a team of professors and supervisors all involved in your case



YOU PROBABLY HEARD OF THESE 5

THERAPISTS

BUT DO YOU KNOW WHAT THEY DO?

01

LPC – LICENSED PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR

LPCs hold a master's degree in counseling or a related clinical area of mental health. They're trained to provide therapy to individuals for a wide range of issues. Some also specialize in certain areas like trauma, addiction, couples, or children.

02

LMFT – MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPIST

MFTs have specialized training to work with couples, families and even individuals facing mental health and relational issues. Despite the title, MFTs work with all kinds of relationships - romantic, familial, platonic work... and your relationship to yourself.

03

LCSW- CLINICAL SOCIAL WORKER

LCSWs hold a master's degree in social work and are trained to provide therapy to individuals, couples, families, and groups. They often focus on helping clients with practical issues such as accessing resources and navigating complex social systems.

04

PSYCHOLOGIST

Psychologists hold a doctorate in psychology and often specialize in testing and evaluation for mental health and learning/cognitive disorders. They tend to focus on individual therapy after diagnosis.

05

PSYCHIATRIST

Psychiatrists are medical doctors who specialize in mental health. They most often focus on prescribing and managing medication for mental health disorders. Some also provide individual psychotherapy.



YOU PROBABLY DON'T KNOW THESE 5

THERAPISTS

BUT NOW YOU DO!

01

ART THERAPIST

Art therapists hold a master's degree in art therapy and are trained to use art as a therapeutic tool to help clients express themselves and explore their emotions. Often thought of for children experiencing trauma, art therapy can be helpful for any client.

02

MUSIC THERAPIST

Music therapists hold a bachelor's or master's degree in music therapy and use music to help clients achieve therapeutic goals such as improving communication, reducing anxiety, and enhancing mood.

03

SOMATIC THERAPIST

Somatic therapy is a form of psychotherapy that focuses on the connection between the mind and body. Somatic therapists work with clients to help them become more aware of their bodily sensations, emotions, and thoughts in the present moment.

04

PERFORMANCE PSYCHOLOGIST

Sports or performance psychologists work with athletes, performers, executives, and others. They help clients enhance their cognitive skills, manage stress and anxiety, and overcome psychological obstacles to achieve their performance-related goals.

05

DANCE/MOVEMENT THERAPIST

Dance/movement therapists hold a master's degree in dance/movement therapy and use movement to help clients explore their emotions and express themselves.

What is a 'modality'?

Modalities, or theoretical models, are simply a therapist's way of approaching therapy with you. Most therapists incorporate a variety of different modalities in their work so they are better equipped to meet each person's unique needs and personality. That said, when you start searching it can be helpful to know little bit about each approach so you can ask better questions and feel more confident that you are choosing the best fit for you. Below is an overview of 20 common modalities (types of therapy) you may see.

- **Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT):** Based on the idea that acceptance and mindfulness can help individuals develop greater psychological flexibility and cope with difficult emotions, ACT therapists work with clients to develop acceptance of their thoughts and feelings and develop strategies for living in accordance with their values.
- **Attachment-Based Therapy:** Based on the idea that early attachment experiences with caregivers shape our sense of self and our ability to form healthy relationships throughout our lives., Attachment-Based Therapists work with individuals to explore these attachment patterns and develop more secure attachment styles.
- **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT):** Focused on identifying and changing negative thought patterns and behaviors that contribute to mental health issues. CBT aims to help individuals develop more positive and realistic ways of thinking and behaving.
- **Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT):** Often used to treat individuals with borderline personality disorder and other conditions that involve difficulty regulating emotions, DBT is based on the idea that individuals can learn new skills to better manage their emotions and involves a combination of individual therapy, group skills training, and coaching outside of therapy sessions.
- **Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT):** Focused on helping individuals improve their relationships by exploring and addressing the emotions that underlie their interactions with others, EFT therapists help clients identify and express their emotions in a safe and supportive environment and work to improve communication and build stronger connections with their loved ones.
- **Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR):** Primarily used to treat trauma, EMDR therapists guide clients through a series of eye movements while they recall traumatic events. This helps them to reprocess these memories in a more adaptive way, often without the need to retell their trauma in great detail.



- **Family Therapy:** This type of therapy involves working with the entire family to address issues related to communication, conflict, and relationships. The goal of family therapy is to improve communication and strengthen family relationships.
- **Gestalt Therapy:** Focuses on the present moment and helping clients become more aware of their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Gestalt therapists often use experiential techniques such as role-playing, visualization, and body awareness exercises to help clients gain insight into their patterns of behavior and develop new ways of relating to themselves and others.
- **Group Therapy:** This type of therapy involves a group of people who meet regularly to discuss their challenges and support one another. Group therapy can be particularly helpful for individuals struggling with loneliness or wanting to improve social or communication skills. Groups can be time limited and focused on a specific skill or more free flowing to process current and past issues with others.
- **Humanistic Therapy:** This type of therapy emphasizes the importance of individual growth and self-awareness. The goal of humanistic therapy is to help individuals gain a greater understanding of themselves and their potential for personal growth.
- **Internal Family Systems (IFS) Therapy:** This type of therapy is based on the idea that each individual has multiple "parts" or aspects of their personality, and that these parts can sometimes be in conflict with each other. IFS therapists help clients identify and understand these different parts and develop a more peaceful relationship with each
- **Interpersonal Therapy (IPT):** This type of therapy is based on the idea that our relationships with others can have a significant impact on our mental health. IPT helps people improve their communication and problem-solving skills in order to improve their relationships and reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- **Mindfulness-Based Therapy:** This type of therapy incorporates mindfulness meditation and other mindfulness practices to help individuals develop greater awareness and acceptance of their thoughts, emotions, and physical sensations. Mindfulness-based therapists teach clients techniques to reduce stress, manage difficult emotions, and improve overall well-being.



- **Narrative Therapy:** Based on the idea that the stories we tell about ourselves and our experiences shape our identities and influence our behavior, Narrative Therapists work with clients to explore and reframe the stories they tell themselves in order to create new, more empowering narratives.
- **Play Therapy:** Often used with children and involves the use of play to help them express their emotions and work through issues, Play Therapists provide a safe and supportive environment in which children can play freely and explore their thoughts and feelings.
- **Psychodynamic Therapy:** Based on the idea that our past experiences and relationships influence our current thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, the goal of psychodynamic therapy is to help individuals understand and resolve unconscious conflicts and emotional issues.
- **Solution-Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT):** Focused on helping individuals identify and achieve their goals in a short period of time, SFBT therapists work with clients to identify what is already working well in their lives and build on these strengths to achieve positive change.
- **Somatic Experiencing:** Based on the idea that trauma can be stored in the body and aims to help individuals release this trauma through physical sensations and movements, Somatic experiencing therapists work with clients to develop greater awareness of bodily sensations and use techniques such as gentle touch and movement to help individuals process trauma.
- **Systems Theory:** This type of therapy looks at individuals within the context of their social and familial relationships and focuses on improving these relationships in order to improve overall well-being. Systems therapists work with families, couples, and other groups to identify patterns of communication and behavior that are causing problems and help individuals develop new ways of relating to each other.
- **Trauma-Informed Therapy:** Trauma can have a significant impact on a person's mental health and behavior. This approach aims to create a safe and supportive environment in which individuals can explore and process their experiences. Trauma-informed therapists focus on building trust and rapport with clients and may use techniques such as mindfulness and grounding exercises..





Real freedom comes from having the
courage to openly seek the resources
available to help us heal.



Let's Talk Money

insurance and other billing concerns



There is actually something therapeutic in intentionally talking about the costs of therapy and our ability to pay. It forces us to explore our sense of worthiness when it comes to asking for help and any unconscious feelings of shame or embarrassment for needing help—financial or just in general.

It's helpful to notice if you feel frustrated thinking about the financial barriers to therapy. Share those feelings - not just with friends and family but with employers and policy makers. Use your frustration to inspire change to our health care systems. All of us deserve access to therapy that doesn't create more financial stress and you're not bad or failing if therapy is an expense that you struggle to pay for.

Remember... You are worthy of support. Ask for help. Be courageous in owning your need for help, both financially and emotionally.



PROS AND CONS OF TYPICAL PAYMENT OPTIONS

In addition to the options below, there are things like Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), non-profit groups, community-funded agencies, and other ways to get therapy paid for. Don't let cost keep you from therapy.

PROS

CONS

<i>SELF-PAY</i>	you can see who you want; you and your therapist are the only ones who get a say in how your care goes	you pay for therapy out-of-pocket and it can get expensive
<i>IN-NETWORK INSURANCE</i>	you have a built in directory to search and can pay a small copay or even no copay to access therapy	you're limited to their network; insurance companies make decisions about your care and often underpay therapists; if you have a high deductible you may end up paying out of pocket
<i>OUT-OF-NETWORK INSURANCE</i>	the benefits of being self-pay with the bonus of having your insurance company pay for a portion of the costs	you have to pay out-of-pocket up front; high deductibles can mean you pay for most of your therapy before insurance chips in; you have to do paperwork to submit claims
<i>HSA/FSA</i>	HSAs and FSAs are both types of tax-advantaged savings accounts that can be used to pay for qualified medical expenses. Because these kinds of plans vary so widely, it's best to ask your employer or whoever manages this for you about these options for more information on the pros and cons.	
<i>UNIVERSITY TRAINING CLINICS</i>	most offer sliding scales, low cost, and/or free options; student therapists are often enthusiastic and you get the benefit of multiple therapists weighing in on your case	depending on your location, there may not be a training clinic accessible; these are students so you may need to change therapists each semester as their schedule changes



Insurance Vocabulary to Know

- **In-network Provider:** providers sign a contract and agree to take a lower fee from your insurance company, often anywhere between 20-50+% less than their standard rate, in exchange for insurance referring them to you; you pay a copay or coinsurance and sometimes a deductible
- **Out-of-network Provider:** therapists who are not contracted with your insurance company; you pay them directly and they can provide the documentation you need to get reimbursed from your insurance company
- **Out-of-network Benefits:** the amount your insurance company agrees to pay you to help cover services from out of network providers; varies from plan to plan and sometimes you have to meet a deductible first
- **Deductible:** this is the amount you must pay out-of-pocket towards your health expenses before the insurance company starts paying their portion; it is calculated based on the “allowable amount”.
- **Allowable Amount:** this is the amount that the insurance company agrees to pay toward a service; it is rarely the same as what a provider is charging for the service
- **Co-Share:** this is your portion of the bill once insurance starts paying (i.e. after you meet your deductible); sometimes this is a copay and sometimes it's coinsurance
- **Copay:** a set dollar amount you are responsible for paying toward covered health care services
- **Coinsurance:** a set percentage of the allowable amount that you are responsible for paying toward covered health care services
- **Behavioral Health:** another term for therapy or mental health services often used by insurance; outpatient behavioral health refers to therapy in an office or virtually; inpatient refers to hospitalization and treatment centers
- **Telehealth:** health services provided online such as teletherapy or virtual sessions with a doctor; not all plans will cover this service

Questions to Ask Your Insurance Company

- Does my plan cover therapy (behavioral health)? Are there any limitations?
- Do I have out-of-network (OON) benefits for therapy (behavioral health)?
- What is my deductible amount? What other co-shares will I have to pay?
- What is the timeline for reimbursement of out-of-network benefits?





The only way we choose well in relationships is to first work on ourselves and understand who we are, what we need, and what we want.



Finding Your Therapist

tips and resources to start your search



You've got your goals, some idea of how you want therapy to help you, and a basic understanding of all the lingo. You even have some clarity on how you're going to pay for it. Now it's time to start your search. Often, this is where many people get overwhelmed and lose momentum. Calling and emailing offices, trying to get someone to respond, and finding time in your schedule to meet with them can feel daunting.

But this is where the magic can happen. Using your newfound knowledge it's time to tap into your inner voice and trust those gut instincts. As you search directories, talk to friends and family, and schedule your consultations and initial appointments I want you to remember that ultimately you're choosing someone to have a relationship with. You'll know who you like and if it's a fit but you have to put yourself out there and start making some calls.



A FEW OF OUR FAVE PLACES TO

FIND YOUR THERAPIST

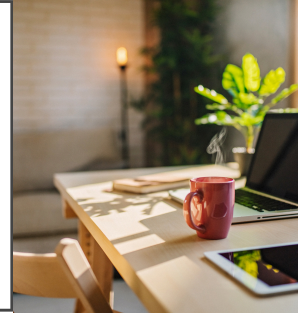
PSYCHOLOGY TODAY

WWW.PSYCHOLOGYTODAY.COM



ZENCARE

WWW.ZENCARE.CO



OPEN PATH COLLECTIVE

WWW.OPENPATHCOLLECTIVE.ORG



GOOD THERAPY

WWW.GOODTHERAPY.ORG



SOME OTHER GOOD WAYS TO

FIND A THERAPIST

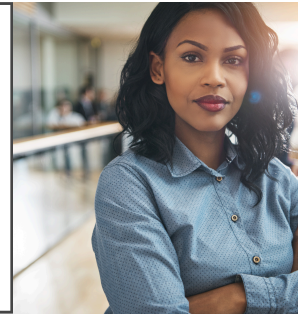
ASK YOUR FRIENDS

One of the most effective ways to find a great therapist is to ask the people in your life. Even if they haven't mentioned it before, odds are someone you know knows a great therapist they can refer you to.



ASK OTHER HEALTH PROVIDERS

Your mental health is not separate from your physical health. The doctors you trust to care for your body often know some great therapists to help care for your heart. You can ask physical therapists, acupuncturists, and masseuses too!



NICHE DIRECTORIES

Therapy for Black Girls, Inclusive Therapists, and so many other directories specialize in only listing therapists that meet the needs of their audience. If you are looking for an identity affirming therapist, this is a good place to go.



SOCIAL MEDIA

So many amazing therapists are on social media sharing their wisdom and resources... and giving you a first-hand look at what it might be like to work with them! Just be sure you are still asking the right questions and vetting what they say.



My Top Picks

therapists I might want to work with

name/website/contact/date contacted

name/website/contact/date contacted

name/website/contact/date contacted

name/website/contact/date contacted

name/website/contact/date contacted

name/website/contact/date contacted

name/website/contact/date contacted

name/website/contact/date contacted



CONSULTATION CALL REVIEW

CHECKLIST

YOU CAN PRINT THIS PAGE OR WRITE IN A NOTEBOOK FOR EACH THERAPIST OFFICE YOU TALK TO OR WEBSITE PROFILE YOU REVIEW

01	DID THEY EXPLAIN THEIR APPROACH TO THERAPY IN A WAY THAT I COULD UNDERSTAND?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
02	DO THEY HAVE EXPERIENCE THAT SOUNDS LIKE IT WILL ADDRESS MY NEEDS/GOALS?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
03	DO I THINK I WILL LIKE THEM AS A PERSON? COULD WE GET ALONG PERSONALLY?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
04	ARE THEY ACCEPTING NEW CLIENTS RIGHT NOW? IF NOT, DID THEY OFFER ANY REFERRALS?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
05	WERE THEY RESPONSIVE TO MY INQUIRIES? IS IT CLEAR TO ME HOW I CAN CONTACT THEM?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
06	ARE THEY WITHIN MY BUDGET / DO THEY TAKE MY INSURANCE?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
07	DO THEY HAVE OPENINGS THAT FIT MY SCHEDULE AND PREFERRED LOCATION?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
08	DID THEY EXPLAIN WHAT TO EXPECT AND THE NEXT STEPS IF I WANT TO MOVE FORWARD?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>





Don't use comfort as the benchmark when you're trying to grow. What's unfamiliar is always uncomfortable. If you're trying to do things differently, it's going to feel weird for a while-and that's okay.



Are They The *One*?

evaluating your new therapist



You made the calls, scheduled an appointment and had your first session. It can seem like now you just kick back and get to work in therapy. And that is a big part of what's next but in the process, it is important to ask yourself, is this the right fit? It's not always an easy question to answer but it's critical.

You deserve to get the most from your therapy journey and that is as much your job as it is your new therapist's. In this section, we are going explore what you can do to maximize your first month or two in therapy. You're also going to find out what to look for to help you decide if you have in fact found the right therapist for you.



Some tips for navigating the First Month of Therapy



Remember this is a relationship and relationships take time

It can be easy to expect that your new therapist will seem like the right fit and totally get you in the first session. But the truth is that this is the beginning of a very unique relationship. It is intimate and close but also professional with specific boundaries. Give yourself and the new therapist a chance to settle into a rhythm with each other. In general, by the 3rd or 4th session you should be feeling more comfortable by session 6, you should feel comfortable about how you work together. That being said, if you feel disrespected or that your therapist is unprofessional in the first couple of sessions, do not feel obligated to stick around.



You get out what you are willing to put in – don't forget to check your effort too

Your therapist is at work but they are not the only ones who have to make an effort if therapy is going to be successful for you. Good therapy is a collaborative process which means you have to show up and be ready to engage, be honest, and take what happens in a session out into your real life. If you aren't feeling like the sessions are making progress or inspiring new thoughts, feelings, or behaviors in you outside of the session, then you need to evaluate. But before you blame it on the therapist, do some honest checking in with yourself. Are you coming to the session with things to share or do you expect the therapist to tell you what to talk about? Are you speaking up about moments you feel misunderstood or unheard? Are you trying to implement suggestions at home? It might be them, but make sure it's not also you.



IS THIS A

GREAT FIT?

Your relationship with your therapist is even more important than their credentials and expertise. Use the guide below to determine if it may be a **GREAT** fit! Make notes in the right column about what's working and what's not in each area, then bring this to the session to discuss.

G	<p><u>GROWTH</u></p> <p>CAN I SEE HOW OUR SESSIONS CAN CREATE CHANGE IN MY LIFE?</p>	
R	<p><u>RELATABLE</u></p> <p>ARE WE BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP THAT FEELS GOOD TO ME?</p>	
E	<p><u>EMPATHIC</u></p> <p>DOES MY THERAPIST GET ME, MY EMOTIONS, AND MY HISTORY?</p>	
A	<p><u>ATTUNED</u></p> <p>DO I FEEL SEEN, RESPECTED, AND FREE TO BE ME IN SESSION?</p>	
T	<p><u>TRUSTWORTHY</u></p> <p>CAN I IMAGINE SHARING MY MOST VULNERABLE STORIES WITH THEM?</p>	



Time For Some Action

The conversations and insights that happen in-session are great, but they won't create change unless you take it out of the therapy room into real life! Below, list 3 ah-ha moments or suggested homework that came up in your first few sessions and then write down ways you can take action in your life over the next few weeks.

Insight/Homework

I will turn this into action by...

Insight/Homework

I will turn this into action by...

Insight/Homework

I will turn this into action by...

Pro Tip: action doesn't mean perfection and it's not always about **doing** something; sometimes it's about taking time to think, breathe, feel, be with yourself.



making a change:

Choosing a Different Therapist

Just like any other important relationship, sometimes things don't work out. If you are feeling like your current therapist is not a good fit, do not feel stuck. You deserve support and care that meets your needs.

Sometimes it's just a personality fit. Other times they are simply not qualified or skilled at helping you with the issues you want to address.

Whatever the reasons, it's ok to end therapy with that person and start again with someone who is better suited to you.

- IF YOU CAN, ASK YOUR CURRENT THERAPIST, OR THEIR OFFICE, FOR A REFERRAL, THAT MAY BE A BETTER FIT FOR YOU.
- REVISIT YOUR GOALS AND MAKE THEY'RE STILL RELEVANT TO YOU
- USE THE NEXT PAGE TO EVALUATE WHAT YOU NEED/WANT IN YOUR NEXT THERAPIST



Signs Your Therapist Might Not Be The One

- No connection or rapport even after a few sessions
- Poor communication in or between sessions
- You don't feel like they are listening or understand you
- Judgement, bias, or criticism of you as a person, your lifestyle, or your identity
- Unprofessional behavior, late cancellations, not paying attention in sessions
- Excessive focus on themselves; some sharing of their life can be appropriate but the focus should always be on you
- Poor or no boundaries; they should respect your boundaries and also have their own boundaries
- Breach of confidentiality or other abuse of power; these are reportable issues that can be taken to your state licensing board
- Feeling stuck even after you have talked about a lack of progress

A Script for Breaking Up With Your Therapist

Hi [*Therapist Name*],

I have been thinking a lot about our work together and feel that it is time for me to make a change. I have found [*list anything that has been helpful in your sessions (e.g. the way they listen, the homework they gave)*] has been helpful, however, it is not quite enough to meet my needs.

I am hoping to find a therapist who [*list specific thing you want (e.g. is more directive, has more experience with couples, is also Black/female/a parent)*]. If you know someone who might be a better fit, I would appreciate a referral.

Thank you again for our time together.

Warmly,
[*Your Name*]

You can use this to guide a face-to-face conversation as well. Please edit as needed to your situation and personality.



A Guide for Choosing a New Therapist

What worked for me with the last therapist?

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What didn't work? What do I want more/less of?

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The right therapist helps you become more than what others have already defined you to be. They give you ROOM to expand into your full self.





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