



## Suggestions For Choosing A Therapist

Before you enter a therapist's office, some preparation may ensure that your course of therapy meets with success. These six suggestions are not a guarantee that you will accomplish your goals, but you may find the following helpful.

1. **Make a list** of what you want to accomplish. Include everything you ever dreamed of doing in your life. Writing it down doesn't mean that you will get it, but it will give the therapist, and you, deeper insight into your psyche and problems, and it will help discover many of your long term goals.
2. **Call** or visit and interview several therapists. Ask them what model of counseling they use, how long they've been in practice. Ask about their formal education and continuing education: degrees? license?
3. **Ask them how long** their average course of therapy lasts and what types of problems they have helped others with. They cannot divulge secrets or break a client-therapist confidence, but they can share their areas of experience.
4. **Briefly discuss** what you hope to accomplish and ask them if they think they can help you reach your goals.
5. **Listen** not only to what they say, but how they say it. Does the therapist's manner put you at ease? Is their speech pattern, accent and vocabulary easy for you to follow and understand? Do you consider them empathetic and caring?
6. **Trust yourself** and your impressions. If one therapist has more impressive credentials, but another one puts you more at ease, go with your heart and pick the one who puts you at ease. Research has shown that the relationship or bond between the therapist and client is the single greatest element in the facilitation of positive change and growth for the client.

Source: NEXUS 1992

The Denver Center for Crime Victims also suggests the following considerations to help you choose a therapist:

- A. **Cost.** Will the therapist give you a free first consultation? What insurance is accepted? Is Medicaid accepted? Is Victim Compensation accepted? Does the therapist offer a sliding scale based on your ability to pay?
- B. **Location.** Is the therapist's office accessible? Does the location create a hardship for you?
- C. **Experience.** What is the therapist's therapeutic style? Does he/she have special training or expertise in a particular area? Has he/she worked with anyone with specific needs similar to yours?
- D. **Gender, Ethnicity, Culture and Language.** 1. Would you feel more comfortable working with a man or a woman? 2. What ethnicity would you feel most comfortable with? 3. What age? 4. Do you have any specific communication needs due to language or disability? Do you have other preferences for a therapist?
- E. **Availability.** Does the therapist have emergency coverage services? Are telephone crisis sessions available? Is the therapist available to talk to partners, family, friends, etc.?