



## Questions for finding a therapist/counselor

Finding an appropriate therapist for you or a loved one is an important decision and there are key questions and points that need to be answered and considered:

1) What do I need to think about?

Do some self-reflection. What do you want to gain from therapy? Do you need a therapist for a child, an adult and/or family?

2) How do I find a therapist?

Ask your friends if they can recommend a person or you may ask your insurance provider. You may also want to ask your personal family doctor, pediatrician, school social worker or counselor or other services agency that may be able to provide a referral.

3) Key general criteria.

- You will need to have a general idea of the kind of therapist you are looking for. A licensed person demonstrates that they have completed the minimum amount of education (Masters degree) and have met the licensing requirements as set forth by their home state. The general types of licensure include: Licensed Professional Counselors (LPC), Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSW), Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists (MFT) and Psy.D's and Ph.D within a social science field. A psychiatrist is a medical doctor and while some provide counseling services, many provide psychological evaluations and medication management only. Many licensed professionals also have specialties/licensures in play therapy, equine therapy etc.
- Other items to consider when looking for a therapist include: locations, areas of specialty, fees, sliding scale and insurance they accept. If you can not obtain the above information from common sites such as the internet and phone book, call and request the above information to make an informed decision.
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4) Call a couple of therapists that fit the defined general criteria and request a consultation meeting. Many therapists provide these free or at a reduced rate. Be sure to bring all of the family members that will be meeting with the therapist, their opinion of the therapist matters.

5) Ask the therapist the following questions:

- How long has he she been in practice?
- Does the therapist access regular peer consultation in their practice?
- What are their fees? Do they have a sliding scale (obtain a copy)? Do they accept your insurance provider?
- What is their general philosophy and approach to working with their clients? Ask about experience working with your area of difficulty.

- How would they define how they can help you? Can they provide a tangible "road map" toward working on your problem?
- If they are working with your child, ask about their policy around working with the parent(s) - keeping you informed. A quality therapist recognizes that work with the parent(s) is crucial to the work with the child. Be aware that youth 16 yrs and older in the state of CO have the right of confidentiality.
- Obtain their business card

6) Following the consultation - review their answers.

- Ask yourself and other family members who attended if you/they felt comfortable with the therapist?
- Check with Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA) to see if there have been any complaints or sanctions against the therapist.

7) Upon picking the therapist, call and make an appointment. You may need to arrive early to complete any paperwork.