

HOW TO INTERVIEW A THERAPIST



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ADVISORY

Therapists play a crucial role in helping individuals navigate the complexities of trauma, gain clarity, and make decisions focused on safety and healing. Unfortunately, therapy has been demonized and has caused people to spend years feeling afraid to seek help. Often, it is those who desire to maintain control who evoke fear about it. One way to overcome our fears is to address concerns upfront.

We all need help from time to time and someone who is unbiased to provide valuable insight. Yet, it's essential to remember that not all therapists are the same. This is why it is crucial to interview and make an empowered choice. It's recommended to interview at least three candidates before making a decision, but you can do as many as it takes. Many find the interviewing process itself empowering and healing.

QUESTIONS YOU CAN ASK:

- What is their history and experience?
- What are the focuses of their practice and why?
- What boundary do they think is the most important to have with clients?
- Why did they want to be a therapist?
- What do they hope to provide to their clients?
- What types of therapy do they use, and why?
- What are their specialties?
- Do they have more than 7 years of experience?
 - This is important for individuals with a history of complex trauma, domestic violence, clergy, or narcissistic abuse.
- How do they provide steps forward to their clients? Do they listen and suggest, or do they provide a more systematic, step-by-step approach?

Psychology Today's website has a great search tool for finding a licensed therapist near you. You can search by insurance provider (including Medicaid), specialty, location, and more.

More resources available at KatieLeighAdvisory.com



OBSERVATIONS

During the interview process, observe yourself and the therapist you're interviewing. It's essential to pay attention to how you feel during the interview, especially in your body. Our bodies often sense things before our emotions or cognition are aware. Here are some things to pay close attention to during your interview:

- Did the conversation feel peaceful and relaxed?
- Was the conversation comfortable, or did it feel rushed?
- Did their bodies look relaxed or tense?
- Could my body relax when I was talking to them?
- Was there anything they said that stood out to me? What was it, and what did I feel?

*Take Note:
Great caution is needed with EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing) therapy for those with a complex trauma history or an active court case.*

Comparison Chart

Interviews

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Clarity of Answers	1 2 3 4 5 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	1 2 3 4 5 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	1 2 3 4 5 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	1 2 3 4 5 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Response to Hard Questions	1 2 3 4 5 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	1 2 3 4 5 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	1 2 3 4 5 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	1 2 3 4 5 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Openness vs. Defensiveness	1 2 3 4 5 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	1 2 3 4 5 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	1 2 3 4 5 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	1 2 3 4 5 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Transparency About Limits	1 2 3 4 5 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	1 2 3 4 5 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	1 2 3 4 5 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	1 2 3 4 5 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Communication Style	1 2 3 4 5 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	1 2 3 4 5 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	1 2 3 4 5 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	1 2 3 4 5 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Trauma-Awareness	1 2 3 4 5 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	1 2 3 4 5 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	1 2 3 4 5 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	1 2 3 4 5 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Professional Confidence	1 2 3 4 5 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	1 2 3 4 5 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	1 2 3 4 5 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	1 2 3 4 5 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Respect for My Concerns	1 2 3 4 5 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	1 2 3 4 5 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	1 2 3 4 5 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	1 2 3 4 5 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Flexible and Open to Ideas	1 2 3 4 5 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	1 2 3 4 5 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	1 2 3 4 5 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	1 2 3 4 5 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Overall Sense of Alignment	1 2 3 4 5 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	1 2 3 4 5 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	1 2 3 4 5 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	1 2 3 4 5 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Total Score				
Observations:				
Primary Thing I Noticed?				
Recommended to me?	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
Provide guidance or sell?	☐ Guide ☐ Sold	☐ Guide ☐ Sold	☐ Guide ☐ Sold	☐ Guide ☐ Sold
My Decision:	☐ Hire ☐ No ☐ ?	☐ Hire ☐ No ☐ ?	☐ Hire ☐ No ☐ ?	☐ Hire ☐ No ☐ ?

Scores: 40–50: Strong alignment | 30–39: Proceed with follow-up questions | <30: Consider that concerns outweigh strengths