

## **Characteristics of an Effective Therapist**

Before beginning with any therapist, it is important to discuss your symptoms and ensure the therapist has experience with your specific situation. In your initial discussions, don't be afraid to evaluate these three traits: Drive for excellence, humility, and limitation acknowledgement.

**Drive for excellence:** Is the therapist satisfied with what they have learnt and accomplished or are they seeking to better themselves? Generally, a therapist who is excited to learn is willing to be engaged in continued training. Don't be afraid to ask them how they maintain their skills and learn new techniques.

**Humility** – Even the best and most trained therapists encounter challenging cases. It is important to determine who these therapists turn to with their professional challenges. Do they have mentors, supervisors and colleagues who they turn to in difficult situations? Even with cases that seem “routine,” it is best to see a therapist who has a habit of discussing his or her cases with other experts in their industry.

**Limitation Acknowledgement**–Before beginning with a therapist, it is helpful to understand at what point his or she may refer you to a different specialist. Asking a clinician "at what point would you refer a patient to someone else?" or "What do you feel less than qualified to treat?" can help you understand the process, as a whole.

More specifically, here is a list of characteristics that effective therapists tend to share:

- Up to date on the latest research and most effective treatments for your diagnosis
- Strong collaboration with their clients to achieve treatment goals
- Non-judgmental

Most importantly, **only** seek treatment from a licensed clinician. Being licensed means your therapist has had thousands of supervised hours, learns through continued education, is bound by confidentiality laws and is liable if he/she causes harm. Of course, simply having a license will not ensure your therapist is excellent. However, it does indicate he/she has met certain qualifications for ethical and competent practice.