

Finding the right therapist for you and your unique challenges may take some time. This is to be expected. It is your right to call a therapist prior to a visit and ask them a series of specific questions. Write their answers down and use the information collected to carefully choose the therapist best equipped to handle your case. Keep in mind that you must connect with your therapist and feel comfortable and safe. If you do not sense feelings of professionalism and trust, Relief is happy to provide a new referral for you.

Prior to your initial conversation with the therapist, consider reviewing the following list of questions. Add your own set of questions to this list as well. Once you have collected the answers, if you would like to discuss the details, feel free to reach out to Relief.

Checklist to Ask A Potential Therapist

- Are you licensed?
- What type of degree do you have? LCSW, LMHC, LMFT, LPC, PhD PsyD?
- How many years have you been practicing?
- What experience do you have helping people with the challenges I face?
- What are your areas of expertise? (ie: children, families, specific diagnosis)
- What types of treatments do you generally use? Have they been proven effective?
- If I send my child to you for treatment and therapy, how often and in what format will you communicate with me? (A delicate balance must be reached between respecting adolescents' privacy and informing parents of challenges and progress)
- What are your fees? (Fees are usually based on a 45-minute to 50-minute session)
- Do you accept insurance? Will you accept direct billing to or payment from my insurance company? Are you affiliated with any managed care organizations? Do you accept Medicare or Medicaid insurance?

- What is your communication policy from session to session?

In addition to the checklist, it is always helpful to evaluate whether a therapist has certain qualities which will be effective at treating several conditions. 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 spend the time and money for continued training.

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?

Limitation Acknowledgement - We will ask a clinician "at what point would you refer a patient to someone else?" "What do you feel less than qualified to treat?" The answers can be quite enlightening.