

THERAPIST CHECKLIST

Finding the right mental health therapist requires a bit of thought and some research. There are many factors to consider when choosing a therapist and most therapists won't have them all so prioritizing those factors that are the most important to you is helpful.

Below are some factors to consider when selecting a therapist. Select those that are important to you and rank them in order of priority with 1 being your most important factor.

Priority	Therapist Factor	Priority	Therapist Factor
_____	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPERTISE: A therapist who is familiar with the things I am struggling? A therapist who is familiar with my issues and the symptoms I am experiencing.	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSISTENCY OF APPOINTMENTS: How often am I looking to meet with someone? Weekly? Bi-weekly? Monthly? As needed?
_____	<input type="checkbox"/> FINANCIAL: A therapist who is covered by my health insurance. (Not sure about this? Contact your health care company to ask about the types of coverage you have for a mental health provider. <i>Considerations: How much can I afford to pay for someone who is a good fit but not covered by my health insurance coverage?</i> <i>Note: some mental health care professionals offer reduced prices for those who are unable to afford their rates, you can call and inquire if your preferred therapist offers this option.</i>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> THERAPIST IDENTITY: There is a specific race/ethnicity/gender identity/age/religious identity/sexual orientation I would feel more comfortable with? <i>(This is not an exhaustive list of identity considerations. List any additional identity considerations and/or circle which identities are most important to you and what those identities are.)</i>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/> AVAILABILITY: Someone that offers non-traditional appointments including evenings, weekends or 24/7 crisis support.	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> SERVICE DELIVERY METHOD/ LOCATION: I prefer in person therapy or virtual therapy. I require a location or area that is within a certain distance from me. I require accessible therapy (ASL or transcription services for virtual sessions) <i>Consideration: If virtual, I have a private space to have a therapy session consistently.</i>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/> LENGTH OF THERAPY: A long term therapy relationship is preferred vs. short-term situational support	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> THERAPIST TRAINING/ CERTIFICATION: I prefer a specific type of therapy intervention/style/technique i.e. DBT, CBT. I am looking for a certain type of therapist. (social worker, marriage and family therapist, psychologist, psychiatrist, mental health counselor, etc.)

This list is not exhaustive so consider it a guide and conduct additional research on factors as necessary.

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Post-Therapy Questions

Sometimes it takes several sessions to get a sense about your therapist and the therapy, don't feel pressured to immediately determine if the therapist is a good fit. Following your initial consultation/sessions with a therapist, here are some questions you can ask yourself to reflect on if the therapist was a good fit.

1. **Do you feel emotionally/physically safe?**
2. **Does it seem like you could trust this person?**
3. **Do you like how they carry themselves and the energy they exude?**
4. **Do you think they asked you good questions?**
5. **Did they seem interested and engaged with you?**
6. **Do they seem knowledgeable and competent?**
7. **Do you like them and enjoy talking to them?**
8. **Did the session feel confidential?**
9. **Did you feel engaged?**
10. **Did you feel heard and understood?**
11. **Did the therapist seem empathetic to your situation?**

Sometimes you may have a negative or uncomfortable experience with a therapist - that doesn't mean you should give up on therapy all together; it just means that therapist wasn't a good fit for you or your needs. Some additional options are discussing the things that are important to you with your therapist, sharing any negative experiences you had directly with your therapist, or looking for a different therapist.

The Barnes Center at The Arch is the hub for student wellness and features programs, services and offerings including the Counseling Center.

If you have any additional questions about identifying the right mental health professional or if you are experiencing a mental health crisis, call our the Barnes Center 24/7 at 315.443.8000.

Office of Diversity and Inclusion and the Barnes Center Counseling