

The Right Therapist for You

You've found a Therapist but how do you know if he or she is the right one for you? One of the risks associated with Therapy is meeting with one you do not connect with. & it's okay for you to choose a different one. Therapists are trained professionals and aware that it may take time for you to find one that works out. Below are a few ways to know if your therapist is the right person for you:

- **It feels good.** I believe we all have internal cues that tell us when something feels right or if something may not be good for us. Whether it's intuition, a vibe or aura. Pay attention to it and move accordingly. Do you feel supported? Are they welcoming? Do you feel at peace when talking to them?
- **They are culturally competent.** This is a huge factor. Cultural competence is the ability to understand, interact and communicate with people regardless of their culture or racial background. It is vital that that the Therapist you see is aware of how to work with individuals that look like you. Your Therapist should have basic knowledge around any cultural barriers you may face as well.
- **Their recommendations fit your beliefs.** Self-explanatory. Therapists are trained to be able to meet you where you are. We are here to support you. *For example: if prayer is something of value to you, it can certainly be worked into your treatment.*
- **You feel challenged.** Your therapist shouldn't agree with everything you say. Your therapist should challenge you. Your therapist should be able to give you a new perspective and offer different ways to learn new skills.
- **You're meeting your goals.** Have you set any goals and made progress towards them yet? How are you tracking your progress? Your therapist should have some sort of treatment plan for you. That treatment should be based on your feedback and how fast or slow you wish to move. Don't be afraid to discuss your treatment plan. Progress may be a slow process. As long as you are on the right track, that's what matters.
- **They are empathetic and validating.** Do you feel supported? Heard? Does your therapist offer a safe, non-judgmental therapeutic space?
- **They have the expertise to meet your needs.** Most therapists can provide good support. However, some Therapists have specific training and educational experience to help support specific clients. *For example, if you are wanting to work through a traumatic experience, it would most*

likely be beneficial (not a must) for your therapist to be trained in EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing) therapy, Trauma Focused therapy or have experience in working with survivors of trauma.

- **They are attentive.** Do they make comfortable eye contact? What's their body language look like? Do they check in with you to see how the therapeutic process is going? Are they paying attention to you? If you show up, your therapist should too.
- **Boundaries are not violated.** It is not healthy to feel dependent on your therapist. Be aware of any inappropriate feelings that may arise and where they may be coming from. An effective Therapist will work with you to help you learn useful skills, not tell you what to do. Your therapeutic relationship should remain as that. Therapists are not friends, lovers etc.