

FINDING THE RIGHT THERAPIST

A quick guide to finding someone who fits

AGAPE COUNSELING CENTER

Centerville, Ohio

agapecounselingcenter.com

Start here: The right therapist should be qualified for your needs, realistic for your life, and someone you can imagine becoming comfortable talking with.

1. START WITH THE PRACTICAL STUFF

- ☐ Location: Is the office convenient enough to attend regularly?
- ☐ In person or telehealth: Which do you prefer, and is it offered?
- ☐ Schedule: Do appointment times work with work, school, childcare, or other responsibilities?
- ☐ Insurance: Is the therapist in network with your specific plan?
- ☐ Cost: Ask about expected copays, deductibles, self pay rates, and cancellation policies.
- ☐ Availability: Are they accepting new clients? How soon can you be seen?
- ☐ Age or population: Do they regularly work with people in your age group or situation?

2. WHAT DO YOU WANT HELP WITH?

You do not need to diagnose yourself. Ask: What is making me look for therapy right now?

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| ☐ Anxiety or panic | ☐ Depression or low mood |
| ☐ Grief or loss | ☐ Trauma or painful experiences |
| ☐ Relationship concerns | ☐ Parenting stress |
| ☐ Life transitions | ☐ Stress or burnout |
| ☐ Emotional regulation | ☐ ADHD |
| ☐ Self esteem or confidence | ☐ Faith or spiritual concerns |
| ☐ Understanding myself better | ☐ Other: _____ |

3. THINK ABOUT PERSONAL FIT

What might help you feel comfortable enough to be honest?

- ☐ Warm and conversational
 - ☐ Direct and challenging
 - ☐ Structured or skills focused
 - ☐ Relaxed and flexible
 - ☐ Comfortable using humor
 - ☐ Homework or exercises
 - ☐ Able to incorporate my faith
 - ☐ A particular gender or background preference
- Remember: There is no therapist who is the perfect fit for everyone. The goal is finding someone who may be a good fit for you.

5 QUESTIONS TO ASK A POTENTIAL THERAPIST

1. Do you have experience working with what I am dealing with?
2. What does therapy with you usually look like?
3. How will we know if therapy is helping?
4. What happens if I disagree with you or something is not working for me?
5. Is there anything about what I need that makes you think another therapist or treatment might be a better fit?

AFTER THE FIRST FEW SESSIONS

- ☐ I feel listened to and respected.
- ☐ I can ask questions and disagree.
- ☐ I understand what we are working toward.
- ☐ My therapist seems interested in understanding me, not simply fitting me into a theory.
- ☐ I can imagine becoming more open and honest over time.
- ☐ I believe I could say if something in therapy was not helping.

HEALTHY THERAPY IS NOT ALWAYS COMFORTABLE

Good therapy may include difficult conversations, uncomfortable emotions, new insights, or being gently challenged. Uncomfortable does not automatically mean unhealthy.

Healthy challenge should happen within a relationship where you feel respected, heard, safe enough to be honest, and included in decisions about your care.

You should not routinely feel shamed, belittled, pressured, controlled, or dismissed.

IT IS OKAY IF THE FIT ISN'T RIGHT

You are allowed to decide: "This therapist seems perfectly nice, but I do not think they are my person."

That does not necessarily mean anyone did something wrong. Sometimes the fit simply is not right, and a clinician may even help you identify a better match.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Look for someone who is qualified for your needs, accessible for your real life, affordable or compatible with your insurance, and someone you may eventually trust enough to tell the truth to.

That is the fit you are looking for.