

Finding a Private Therapist

With the increase in demand for our counselling services, we know that the waiting time can be very long before our clients are able to see someone.

Sometimes clients are interested in seeking private counselling whilst they wait and we have been asked to recommend someone, which we are not in a position to do, however we can give you some 'pointers' towards the aspects of private counselling you may want to consider.

What do you want from a therapist?

We asked one person who has experience of looking for a therapist privately and they said:

What I look for is:

***Safety** – I hope to feel safe in the presence of this person*

***Trust** – I want to be able to trust this person in a way that means I can talk about the things that I need to*

***Progress** – I want to feel some progress in my life. It may be a slow-paced progress but this journey should be benefiting me in some, hopefully many, ways*

How do I find a private therapist?

Seeing a therapist privately means that you will contact a therapist directly and pay for your therapy sessions. You may know of a therapist from a recommendation, or through a local advert, or you may not know of any therapists at all.

Things to think about when searching for a counsellor/therapist:

1. **Are they BACP or UKCP accredited?** While this does not guarantee the therapist has the expertise you are looking for, being 'registered' with a professional body does mean they are qualified and being 'accredited' means they have got significant experience.
2. **What areas do they specialise in?** What issues are you coming to them with? It is important that they have some experience of dealing with these issues.
3. **Where they have trained?** Some people like to research different approaches and colleges and then find counsellors that have come out of those schools of thought.
4. **How much do they cost?** The cost of private counselling can vary considerably. Depending on where you live, a session can cost anything up to £70. Some therapists may be willing to adjust their fees in accordance with your income. Many private counsellors offer an initial free session and concessionary rates for students, job seekers and those on low wages. You should ask about charges and agree a price before starting a course of counselling.

Professional Bodies

- ❖ British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy (BACP) www.bacp.co.uk Tel: 01455 883300
<http://www.itsgoodtotalk.org.uk/therapists/>

- ❖ United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP) www.ukcp.org.uk Tel: 020 7014 9955
<http://www.psychotherapy.org.uk/index.php?id=32>
- ❖ COSCA www.cosca.org.uk Tel: 01786 475140
- ❖ British Association of Behavioural & Cognitive Psychotherapies (BABCP) www.babcp.com Tel: 0161 797 4484 <http://www.cbregisteruk.com/Default.aspx>
- ❖ British Association of Psychotherapists www.bap-psychotherapy.org Tel: 020 8452 9823
- ❖ British Association for the Person-Centred Approach www.bapca.org.uk Tel: 01989 763863
- ❖ British Association of Sexual & Relationship Therapy (BASRT) www.basrt.org.uk Tel: 020 8543 2707
- ❖ British Psychological Society (BPS) www.bps.org.uk Tel: 0161 797 448
<http://www.bps.org.uk/bpslegacy/dcp>

Before the first session

Before your first therapy appointment you may find it useful to think about **these 5 questions**:

1. What do I want my therapist to help me with?
2. What will I find hard to talk about?
3. What am I worried my therapist won't hear?
4. Have I got multiple things I want to talk about and want help with? What do I want help with most?
5. Is there anything that might prevent me from making changes in my life? (This might be your own fears around what change might mean, or might be external things such as caring responsibilities, lack of time or other resources.)

At the first session

Questions you can ask the therapist before you decide to work with them:

- Have you helped people with similar problems to mine?
- What happens in a session?
- How long does it take?
- How often would I need to come?
- Can I stop at any time?
- What qualifications and training have you got – what does that mean?
- Have you got sufficient experience to help me?
- How can you help me?
- Do you belong to a professional therapy organisation and can I check you are a member?
- What if the therapy is not helping me?
- How confidential is what I discuss with you?
- How much do I need to pay for each appointment?

Guiding principles for therapy

When you find a therapist it is important that you feel:

- ✓ you can trust them
- ✓ you warm to them
- ✓ that the counsellor can help you to talk about your thoughts and feelings

If you don't feel this you should feel free to find someone else.