

What should NOT happen in therapy?

A therapist needs to provide their clients with consistency, reliability, responsiveness, positivity and friendliness with firm boundaries...paraphrased from....

In line with these expectations your therapist should not:

- Exploit the relationship they have with you for any sexual, emotional, financial or any other gain
- Break the client – therapist boundary
- Harm you – “The therapist verbally attacked my character and told me I was being over the top. The next week, she said that she was sorry for what she had said while also blaming me for provoking her outburst!”
- Treat you differently because of your gender, colour, age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, social status, economic status, religion, lifestyle, beliefs, social class
- Break confidentiality except in specific circumstances
- Imply they have qualifications that they do not
- Practice beyond the scope of their competence
- Practice without supervision – “I do not believe my counsellor was being supervised. Supervision would have helped my therapist to work ethically as she would have had a level of self-awareness.”
- Be disrespectful of or ignore your wishes about what happens in your therapy
- Mislead you about the type of therapy you’re having
- Engage in any form of sexual relationship with you

Most therapists will be members of professional organisations or interest groups that provide specific guidance to therapists of the standards of conduct that are expected. Therapists who are proved to have breached these standards can be subjected to disciplinary proceedings and have their membership, accreditation, or other professional registration removed. As things currently stand in the UK, however, there is no requirement for anyone calling him or herself a psychotherapist to have obtained a specific qualification or be registered.

Questions to ask yourself

- Is my therapist involving me in all aspects of therapy?
- Is my therapist behaving in a way that is unethical, abusive or illegal?
- Is my therapy harming me?

If you feel your therapist is behaving in an unethical manner you have the right to complain to any organisation they are registered with. This may be done by going to the organisations website and looking up their complaints procedure.