



Choosing a Therapist

Maybe you or someone you know is in crisis. Or perhaps you simply want a tune-up for everyday life. Counseling is an investment in your current and future quality of life. This article is meant to help you focus your search efforts to better evaluate psychotherapy options so that you may make an informed decision.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

How much do credentials matter?

There are a variety of different licensing credentials used in the mental health profession, which can be confusing. However, these licenses indicate very important information about training, professional ethics, and accountability. Be very cautious about seeking services from someone without mental health credentials.

Common and respected mental health credentials include:

Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist (LMFT)
Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC)
Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)

Doctor of Psychology (PsyD)
Doctor of Philosophy a.k.a. Psychologist (PhD)
Psychiatrist (MD)

How is the LMFT different from other mental health professionals?

MFTs receive advanced training in addition to the standard training of other licenses, making them uniquely skilled and qualified to address complex issues. MFTs work with individuals, couples, families, and groups from a “systemic perspective,” one that requires expertise in interpersonal relationships and interaction dynamics. Systemic theories and techniques have been proven to be more effective in treatment than individual-oriented therapies.



Consult www.aamft.org for research that demonstrates the superior efficacy of systemic counseling.

What questions should I ask to evaluate my options?

- ✓ **Do you offer free consultations?** Some do, some don't. However, a therapist who wants your business should be able to speak to you for 10 to 20 minutes without charge.
- ✓ **Where can I read reviews of your work?** Experienced therapists should be able to provide you with suggestions like Yelp, Facebook, or their own websites where you can read what past clients have to say. However, direct references from past clients are not possible due to confidentiality standards.
- ✓ **What should I expect from working with you?** Good therapists should be able to describe how they typically work with clients, as well as the benefits those clients may experience as a result. It is ok for you to want to hear about practical ways therapists foster client growth.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) (continued)

What should I expect in my first session?

All therapists and approaches are different. Some say very little; others talk a great deal. Some ask many questions; others mostly make observations. Some use only one approach, others use many. Despite these variations, you should always expect:

1. To feel respected and cared for;
2. To receive information about confidentiality and other professional policies;
3. To guide the therapy conversation so that it is useful for you.

How do I know if I've found the right therapist?

This may take some trial-and-error, talking with several different therapists. However, finding a clinician who feels right to you will make a huge change in your life. How can you tell?

- You leave your first session feeling hopeful, even surprised.
- You have the sense that the therapist really understood you.
- You find yourself thinking things like "This person is really good... S/he can help me..."
- You actually want to go back.

If you leave your first session with these sorts of feelings, you've probably found a good match — at least one that's worth pursuing further.

How many sessions will therapy last?

Every client is different, and every therapist is different. So, there is no exact standard for the frequency of visits or duration of treatment. However, many therapies involve meeting for one hour each week for several months. You should expect observable improvement within three-to-five sessions if you and your therapist work well together. Therapy is helpful if you work hard with the therapist. The therapist supports you, and suggests helpful ways to work on problems. But if you don't work at solving the problem, the therapy won't work.

How can Wheelhouse Counseling help me?

The mission of Wheelhouse Counseling is to facilitate health & happiness for our clients and community through counseling, coaching, and consulting. The company is led by Owner & Senior Clinician Brandon M. Wheeler, who has served as a leader in the mental health field for many years. With an emphasis on client satisfaction, our company offers several exclusive benefits, including:

- **Complimentary initial consultations:** Goodness-of-fit is extremely important when searching for a psychotherapist. A licensed clinician speaks with every potential client prior to scheduling the first session.
- **Evening and weekend appointments:** Our clinicians offer evening and weekend appointment times so that clients need not take vacation time to meet with their therapist.
- **Centrally located office:** Our office is located in the heart of Houston and is convenient for many who live or work in the area.
- **Agile, evidence-based clinical approach:** We integrate empirically-based best practices into the counseling process to best fit the goals and concerns of each individual client.
- **Professional reputation:** Our staff is well respected in the local and national mental health community. Wheelhouse Counseling is the go-to referral for multiple schools, physicians, and community organizations that seek reliable and exceptional psychological resources.

Request an appointment by phone or online today!

(832) 726-1735

www.WheelhouseCounseling.com