



Finding the Right Therapist: Tips and Strategies



The following is an excerpt from my upcoming book **Curious AF**:

<https://www.wellnessevolved.ca/curious-af>

Finding the right therapist is like seeking a life partner—you probably wouldn't marry the first person you were set up with on a blind date. Apply the same principle with this process because it's all about the fit. Even the most acclaimed therapist might not be the perfect match for you, and that's okay. It's crucial to trust your gut here.

The therapeutic alliance, the bond between you and your therapist, plays a pivotal role in the success of your journey. If the connection is lacking, the path to your best possible outcomes is more likely to be rocky. Think of it as therapist shopping. Start with a list of potential therapists and arrange for a preliminary phone consultation - most qualified therapists offer this free of charge. If they don't, it might be a sign to move on. Remember, this is about finding the best match for your unique needs.

As a therapist myself, I understand and accept that I'm not the right fit for everyone. If a client feels that we're not clicking, I respect their decision and help guide them to a therapist who might be more suited to their needs. So, when you're interviewing therapists, really listen to how you feel about their responses, their tone, even the sound of their voice. If something doesn't sit right with you, it's okay to cross them off your list. Be direct, but kind. After all, this is about what you need, not about pleasing the therapist. However, if you don't like the sound of the voice of every therapist you try, then we may be navigating a YOU issue to consider. Regardless, the right therapist will help you navigate your feelings and will leave you feeling supported in your journey towards self-discovery and growth.

Interviewing Your Potential Therapist: What to Ask

When it's time to interview potential therapists, think of it as a brief yet meaningful conversation, rather than a checklist. Here are some key questions to guide you:



1. **Theory of Change:** Ask them about their approach to therapy—what do they believe catalyzes change and helps clients reach their goals? This gives you insight into their therapeutic style and philosophy.

2. **Session Logistics:** Inquire about the recommended length and frequency of sessions. This varies from therapist to therapist and can impact how you plan your therapy journey.

3. **Relevant Experience:** Briefly outline your situation and ask if they have experience dealing with similar issues. It's crucial that they understand and have a background in the areas you're looking to explore.

4. **Personal Struggles and Growth:** This is a delicate but revealing question. Ask if they've faced personal challenges and how these experiences inform their practice. Their response is less about the details and more about how open and authentic they are. Probe gently into their personal journey. Does the response instill trust, or does it feel like a guarded monologue? Therapy is an intimate exchange; a therapist who can't show vulnerability might not be able to fully support you in your journey. Remember, therapy is as much about the emotional connection as it is about professional expertise. Trust your gut feeling about their responses, especially when it comes to their personal experiences.

Once you begin therapy, remember that consistency is more crucial than frequency. Being genuine, even when it's uncomfortable, often leads to the most significant breakthroughs. Building trust takes time, but it's worth it when you start diving into those hard-to-express conversations. A good therapist will not only validate your

openness but also encourage you to delve deeper. It's also vital to understand that much of the transformative work in therapy happens outside the therapy room. Attending sessions without applying the insights in your daily life is like having an enlightening psychedelic trip with no integration—it might feel good, but the real growth comes from putting those insights into action.

Summary of the Therapy Selection Process:

The preceding sections underscore a vital truth: while therapy is undoubtedly effective, the journey to find the right therapist can be challenging. The training and development of therapists, unfortunately, don't always guarantee top-quality practitioners. This means that the therapeutic landscape is dotted with less-than-ideal therapists. However, encountering one doesn't imply that therapy isn't suitable for you. It's more about persistence in finding the right match, someone who resonates with your needs and can truly guide your journey towards healing and growth.

The tips provided earlier are designed to equip you with the tools necessary to navigate this search. From understanding a therapist's approach to change, to assessing their personal journey and how it informs their practice, these pointers aim to help you identify a therapist who's not just qualified, but also a good fit for you. It's worth the effort to sift through the options, as connecting with the ideal therapeutic ally can be a transformative and enriching experience.