

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER ASKING WHEN YOU ARE LOOKING FOR A COUNSELLOR:

Choosing a counsellor can be a confusing and overwhelming task. But I believe I can help you make the task a little easier.

Once you know what you are looking for, finding the right person is pretty straightforward. So, before you start your Google Search, ask yourself a few questions, such as:

- What are the concerns that I want to talk to a counsellor about?
- Do I prefer a particular therapeutic approach? (It's ok if you don't know).
- Are there certain times of the day or week that would suit me best for appointments?
- Can the fees be covered through my insurance, health care plan, employee assistance program, or compensation program?

Consider searching through directories such as psychologytoday.com, which verify the counsellor's professional credentials, prior to posting his/her listing.

Once you have made your selection, I encourage you to ask the counsellor these questions as well:

"WHAT ARE YOUR PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND CREDENTIALS?"

A qualified counsellor is a professional with a master's degree or higher from a recognized university. You can usually see this information on the counsellor's website, or listing, if not you can ask during your consultation.

"ARE YOU REGISTERED WITH, OR A MEMBER OF A PROFESSIONAL COLLEGE/ASSOCIATION?"

It is in your best interests if your counsellor is a member of a regulatory college or professional association to which he/she is accountable. Regulatory Colleges and Professional Associations have a code of ethics and grant certification based on high standards of training and education.

"WHAT THERAPEUTIC APPROACHES AND TECHNIQUES DO YOU USUALLY USE?"

You should feel confident that your counsellor has the expertise and necessary training or area of specialization to help you with your specific problems.

"WILL THERE BE AN OPPORTUNITY AFTER THE FIRST OR AFTER A FEW SESSIONS TO TALK ABOUT HOW THINGS ARE GOING AND WHETHER TO CONTINUE?"

A professional and caring counsellor welcomes your feedback and asks you how you feel the counselling process is going.

"WHAT ARRANGEMENTS CAN BE MADE FOR PAYING FEES? WHAT ARE YOUR EXPECTATIONS OF PAYMENT IF I HAVE TO CANCEL OR MISS AN APPOINTMENT?"

A professional counsellor should be able to describe General Terms of Service to you, including the session fees, method of payment, the policy regarding missed appointments, the length of each session and how to reach them or crisis support in case of an emergency.

"DO YOU HAVE A WAITING LIST? IF SO, HOW LONG WILL I HAVE TO WAIT BEFORE THE FIRST APPOINTMENT?"

Your counsellor should be able to clearly explain any wait time, and his or her availability for regular appointments.

I wish you all the best!