



FREA

FINDING RECOVERY & EMPOWERMENT FROM ABUSE

How to Find a Therapist

At FREA we believe applying the self-help tools offered on this site can help you successfully navigate the emotional challenges that come with sexual assault or domestic abuse. The information that follows is for those who choose to work with a professional therapist in addition to using the tools on the FREA site.

Regardless of whether you work exclusively with the recovery tools or also work with a therapist, it's important to remember *that your life is not defined by any single experience or group of experiences*. Your present and future are far more important than what's happened in the past. Releasing any emotional charge associated with the past and changing any disempowering beliefs to ones that empower and support a joyful life are the two primary outcomes we believe are possible for you.

If you would like to include one-to-one or group therapy as part of your recovery journey, it's important that you understand what therapy entails, what you can reasonably expect from therapy, and how to select a therapist you feel comfortable with.

What is Psychotherapy?

The American Heritage Medical Dictionary defines psychotherapy as:

"The treatment of mental and emotional disorders through the use of psychological techniques designed to encourage communication of conflict and insights into problems, with the goal being personality growth and behavior modifications."

Stated simply, psychotherapy is a discipline with multiple methods for identifying and releasing blocks to emotional and mental wellbeing and creating positive, empowering beliefs and behaviors.

There is no one single method of psychotherapy. The term "psychotherapist" can be applied to trained professionals from an array of different educational backgrounds and licensing designations. Examples include psychiatrists (medical doctors specializing in mental health treatment, often including prescribing drugs), licensed psychologists specializing in mental health treatment (must hold Ph.D or Psy.D doctorate level degree), Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSW), Licensed Master Social Workers (LMSW), Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists (MFT), Psychiatric Nurses and Licensed Counselors with a variety of training specialties.

There are also spiritual counselors, pastors, stress specialists, support groups, and others who offer counseling or guidance services.

Just like there is no one single psychotherapy profession, there is no one single treatment approach. There are many, many different approaches and specific treatments to help people recover from abuse.

For the vast majority of people, its virtually impossible to know what kind of practitioner or treatment method is right for them. So what can you do if you would like professional help in addition to help you find on this website?

Finding a Therapist:

How do you find the right therapist for you? Begin with friends and family who were or are being treated by a therapist. Ask them about their experiences. Is the therapist kind and caring? Does he or she really listen? How much progress has your friend or family member made as a result of treatment?

If you have experienced sexual or domestic abuse and criminal charges have been brought against the person responsible, check with the prosecutor's office to learn if there is a victim or witness coordinator available you can speak with. Ask the coordinator to recommend a treatment center or therapist who specializes in helping people who have experienced abuse.

Check for a rape crisis, domestic violence center, or similar service in your community. Call the center and speak with a representative who can provide guidance about available treatment through their organization or from other sources.

One good resource is the professional practitioner listing at the Association for Comprehensive Energy Psychology (ACEP) website. Visit: <http://www.energypsych.org/> and then select the "Find a Practitioner" menu item. In the United States, you can search by Zip code. To locate ACEP professionals outside of the United States, visit: <http://www.eftmx.com/ACEPmap.php>.

Use a search service such as Google, Bing, or Yahoo! and enter a search inquiry such as, "sexual abuse therapists Baltimore, MD" (enter your city or county and state). "*Psychology Today*" offers a professional listing service by areas and specialties in the US at their website <http://therapists.psychologytoday.com/>. Keep in mind the results of these searches will be predominately advertisements rather than independent recommendations.

Narrow Your Search and Ask Questions:

Most importantly, when you've narrowed your search you'll want to interview the finalists. Ask them about their education and experience. How many cases similar to yours have they handled? What were the outcomes? What are their fees? If insurance is involved, find out if they accept your insurance provider. Ask about the co-pay if they do accept your insurance. Ask what kind of therapy methods they employ and the length of time their typical patient with similar experiences to yours is under treatment.

An important caveat with this last question is that we are all unique people. The purpose of this question is not to fix the number of treatment sessions at some arbitrary maximum number. Rather, it's to encourage an open conversation with the therapist about setting expectations and how you will both work together as a team.

Finally, if you've seen a therapist several times and you're not benefiting, consider seeing someone else. There is little point in continuing therapy if you don't experience progress after a reasonable amount of time.

Using Innovate Tools Offered on This Site During Therapy:

The tools offered on this site can be used independently of - or in association with - formal therapy. We encourage you to begin recovery now. The faster you take action to release painful emotions and disempowering thoughts the faster you'll find your way to emotional freedom and an empowered joyful life.

Select the _____ tab and start your recovery journey now.