

Therapists Are Like Shoes: Find A Good Fit!



I like to share with families my belief that there are many different mental health professionals in our community and finding the right person to help can happen! It can be helpful to do your homework ahead of time in order to ensure finding someone you feel comfortable with! Even if a trusted person recommends someone, they might not be a fit for you.

Many therapists will consult (either on the phone or face to face ahead of time for free). Let them know your primary concern and ask them how they might approach things. If insurance and time allows, I recommend talking with three different therapists before making your selection.

Questions To Consider:

- 1. What are your trainings and qualifications?** Different therapists have different backgrounds- social work, counseling, and psychology are three different approaches. Further, many therapists have received additional trainings and certifications in areas such as addictions, trauma, marriage and family therapy, or play therapy.
- 2. How to you treat problems and approach things? Are there any areas that are important to you- such as ideas on adoption, divorce...** Different professionals have different theories on how they view problems, and therefore they also have different ways to help people respond to the concerns they experience. Approaches can range from cognitive-behavioral to experiential. Also, a therapist's personal beliefs on certain topics can influence their treatment approach.
- 3. Can you tell me a little about yourself/your background/why you like this work?** Asking a more open-ended question such as this gives the therapist a chance to share something about themselves you might not otherwise learn.
- 4. Logistical information: what insurance do you take? How often would we meet? How long would therapy last? How would I get a hold of you in an emergency?** Knowing procedural information ahead of time helps to avoid miscommunications and conflicts that can interfere with effective treatment that results in changes and improvements.
- 5. Bringing it home (to your situation). Give some basic information about your concerns and issues, then ask how the therapist might propose to help you: What do you think of my problems? How would you suggest we work together? What methods do you have in mind? What is my role?** Especially for parents seeking help for their children, it is important to know ahead of time how active of a role you might have. Will you sit in on sessions? Will there be time when the therapist just works alone with the parent?

Questions?

Melissa Kimball, MSW, LSW

613-6509

kimballm@thompson.k12.co.us