

7 Things an Awesome Therapist Does

Therapy is *so in* right now. With so much going on literally every day of our lives, why wouldn't it be? Between the lingering pandemic, political turmoil, and *gestures broadly* all of this, the feel-good market is white-hot.

More than 41 million American adults sought mental health treatment in 2021, [an increase](#) from 27.2 million in 2002. U.S. adults aged 18-44 received therapy or medication at higher rates than older generations, largely as a result of reduced stigma surrounding mental health treatment.

Successfully treating your mental health through therapy involves more than just finding a therapist who takes your insurance, though. It's important to find the right fit, and you may have to see multiple therapists before that happens.

If a therapist does these seven things, you've probably struck gold!

1. Actively listens.

This seems like the bare minimum, doesn't it? It should be, but too many people report feeling like they are not being heard during therapy. Your therapist should not only be free from distractions—like a buzzing cell phone or ticking clock—they should also be showing signs of active listening. Nodding, changing facial expressions, and adjusting physical posture are all indications your therapist is listening to you and absorbing every word.

2. Explains different types of therapy.

Contrary to everything you see on Netflix and Hulu, therapy can involve much more than tearfully spilling your childhood trauma to your therapist—though that method, psychoanalysis, can be exactly what some patients need.

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is another type of talk therapy and perhaps the best-known. CBT is designed to help patients recognize unhelpful thought patterns and arm them with coping strategies. Still, there are more than a dozen types of therapy that your therapist can try with you. A good one is not afraid to try more than one.

3. Keeps the focus on you.

Don't feel selfish for talking about yourself the entire session—that's why your therapist is getting paid! A good therapist will respectfully interject to offer insights and possible solutions, but have your antenna up for a therapist who incessantly speaks about their personal life. You shouldn't feel responsible for asking your therapist questions simply to fill any awkward pauses, either.

4. Respects your time.

A good therapist starts and ends sessions as they're scheduled. We gently suggest giving your therapist a pass if they're late to a session once in a blue moon, as crises do happen, but that should never become a habit. You should always feel like you're getting a full 50 minutes each time you sit down with your therapist, and you should never feel rushed.

5. Gives you homework during off days.

Really? Homework? Yes, really—homework. Therapy is no good if you don't actively apply the lessons you learn to your daily life. Sessions are obviously important, but a keen therapist will challenge you to use coping tactics and strategies in the real world. And, yes, we did just say that therapy should *challenge you*. Changed thinking and behaviors don't come from staying inside your comfort zone!

6. Never judges you.

You are not damaged. You are not beyond hope. Any therapist who makes you feel like you are should make you run—not walk—the other way. Period. No notes.

7. Remembers who you are.

This goes beyond memorizing your name and your diagnosis, because you are so much more than those two things. You are one badass person who bravely faces each day with more courage than anyone else on Earth can imagine. Your therapist should recognize this by asking about the important things in your life and following up on those items during sessions, at the very least. A therapist doesn't need to have an eidetic memory to accomplish this, by the way. Taking good notes is simply what good therapists do!

Connect with a Therapist Today

The way you've been feeling lately is NOT the way you're always going to feel. A great therapist has an open spot for you. If you're nervous about trying therapy for the first time or hesitant to jump back in after a bad experience, we understand. Our network of certified therapists and mental health professionals is here to help you achieve your goals and become the best version of yourself. Get started today on your better tomorrow.