

How to find a counselor



When choosing a counselor, it is important to keep in mind their “therapeutic orientation,” their overall philosophy and approach to conducting counseling. FuelEd recommends a humanistic, person-centered (also known as client-centered) approach. This approach is founded on the belief that the best growth happens when we are provided with a relationship characterized by empathic understanding, unconditional acceptance, and genuineness. FuelEd suggests finding a counselor whose main job will be to provide a secure attachment for you.

Some keywords you can search for:

- person/client-centered
- non-directive
- emotionally focused therapy
- attachment therapy

FuelEd suggests using Psychology Today ([psychologytoday.com](https://www.psychologytoday.com)) or The Open Path Collective ([openpathcollective.org](https://www.openpathcollective.org)) to review counselor profiles. You can search based on your location, price range and the type of mental health services you would like. Some mental health services may be covered by health insurance so be sure to check!

What should I look for in my counselor?

1

“Can you tell me about your theoretical orientation? I’m looking for a person-centered therapist.”

2

“How important is our relationship in the work we will do together?”

3

“Can you tell me your hours? What is your cancellation policy?”

After your first interaction, evaluate the following:

- 1. Safety:** Overall, how safe do you feel with the therapist? Trust your gut. If you don’t like the therapist, your course of therapy will probably not be fruitful.
- 2. Feeling Seen:** Did you feel as if the therapist really tried to see and hear you or just give you information? A person-centered therapist will take the position that you know yourself best and will want to get to know you.
- 3. Relaxed:** Person-centered therapists tend to be relaxed and avoid asking lots of questions (other than your name, etc.) They want to give you space in which to talk.
- 4. Ethics:** You will be asked to sign a consent form at your first session. Make sure you understand it. Ask questions and make sure the therapist understands it as well. It contains the ethical practices to which the counselor must adhere, so it’s important.