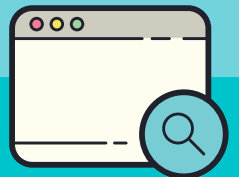


TIPS FOR CONNECTING TO A THERAPIST

Counseling & Psychological Services
Northwestern University

Choosing a therapist can feel daunting, but investing in your mental health is worth it. This guide is designed to help you be an informed consumer and connect to a therapist that is a good fit for you.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR



Licensure: Clinical Counselor (LCPC), Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT), Clinical Social Worker (LCSW), Psychiatrist (MD), Psychologist (PsyD, PhD), Certified Alcohol Drug Counselor (CADC)

Expertise/Specialization: Finding a therapist with specialized training and experience relevant to your goals enables you to receive the best possible care.

Approach to Therapy: Reading more about a therapist's approach to their work may give you a better sense of who they are, how they think about counseling, as well as what to expect from the process.

GETTING STARTED



Request a phone consultation before making an appointment

- Many therapists will conduct a brief phone screen to help assess whether they are a good match for what you're looking for and for you to see if they are a good fit for you.
- This is a great time to ask any questions you may have about their experience, approach to therapy, and logistics (e.g., location, insurance, fees, length and frequency of sessions).

DECIDING IF IT'S A GOOD FIT



During the first session, do you feel listened to and understood? Ask questions and do your best to share your authentic reactions.

After a few sessions, are you feeling more comfortable? Do you have a better understanding of how you and the therapist will work together? Is the therapist responsive to your feedback?

If it's not feeling like a good fit, discuss this with your therapist. Often they are able to adjust the therapy. Other times, understanding what does not work for you can help in connecting to a therapist who is a better fit.