



Guide to Choosing  
the **Right Therapist**

**W**e want you to feel empowered in choosing a therapist. Research shows that the two biggest predictors of a positive therapy outcome are a therapist who is a good personal fit for you (ironically not the type of therapy they practice) and your motivation to take an honest look at yourself and try new things.

There are three considerations in choosing a therapist: **Location, Money** and **Style/Personality**. If budget or location are your top concerns then getting a list of candidates in your price range and preferred location is the best first step before interviewing personalities. Style and personality fit deserve the greatest portion of your search attention. For successful outcomes research shows match has the biggest impact. So if logistics are less important for you, start with fit.

## LOCATION

This is a fairly straightforward consideration. In general, the easier you make it for you to get to therapy the fewer internal road blocks you might face. If you want to see someone during the day and you slip out of work, search for someone near your office. If you want to see someone in the evening, you may want to look near work, in transit from work to home or near your home. Psyched has six locations for you to choose from for this reason.

### HOW TO BEGIN YOUR LOCATION SEARCH

[PsychologyToday.com](http://PsychologyToday.com) and [GoodTherapy.org](http://GoodTherapy.org) are two reputable search sites that allow you to search by zip code to find a therapist. YELP is a mixed bag. The California State Board doesn't want therapists asking clients for YELP reviews so the therapists who are following the rules won't have any or very few YELP reviews. Often senior therapists are choosing not to list themselves on YELP altogether so you have to consider the quagmire of using YELP as your first source in locating a therapist. Often those reviews were solicited for and our research shows over 50% of therapists choose not to be on YELP at all. Reading articles that the therapist has written and their website might be a better way to go. Noting their education and conducting a good interview that is discussed below is also a more reliable data.

# MONEY

## 1. Deciding on your therapy budget.

It is totally OK to think about this. Talking about money with your therapist is another growth point, so go for it. When you are figuring out your monthly and yearly budget you want to consider;

a) Most therapists require weekly sessions for continuity and relationship building but not all. Some require multiple times a week. Some allow intervals based on need. Fees are calculated per session.

b) Think about the return on your investment before you try to find the cheapest rather than the best for you. You may go out and pay for a \$100 dinner which is short lived. The return on investment according to some research shows a \$1400 investment in therapy can increase a person's sense of wellbeing as much as a \$40,000 a year raise.

### Would a \$40,000 Raise Make You Happier?

Sure, it would.

But you may be surprised to learn that investing just under \$1400 in personal therapy can tip the happiness scale even further.

Researchers in the UK say therapy could be as much as 32 times more cost-effective at improving well-being than having more money alone.

Source: Money or Mental Health, Chris Boyce, 2009, Health Economics, Policy and Law

c) How many sessions can I expect? Probably no therapist will give you an answer to that question because this is relational work and we all come to it with different levels of motivation. In general, specific behavior modification is short and dealing with relational stuff takes longer. 15-50 sessions is a range.

### HOW MUCH DOES THERAPY GENERALLY COST?

Here is a fee range for Bay Area Therapists

In the San Francisco Bay Area you will generally find this to be the range:

**Interns** brand new in the field (less than 2 years) (MFTi) :

\$60-\$100 per hour

**Licensed Therapists** with a Master's degree (MFT or LCSW) :

\$90 - \$200 per hour

**Psychologists or Doctors of Psychology** (PsyD or PhD) :

\$160 - \$300 per hour

**Psychiatrists** who do therapy and prescribe meds (MD) :

\$200-\$450 per hour

## 2. Using Insurance to pay for therapy

**Using Insurance:** Decide on in network or out of network providers.

**In network** therapists are therapists who are under contract with your insurance company to provide you with services at a pre-

negotiated fee. The challenge is these folks are often full or you are limited in specialization or style of treatment as insurance companies tend to be narrow in their approach.

**Out of network** therapists are therapists who are not contracted with insurance companies. But your insurance may still cover a portion of their fee. If you have found someone in a convenient location that is out of network call your insurance company and find out what your deductible is, if you have met it and what your mental health allotment is. For couple therapy it is important to ask if your insurance covers for couple therapy (many insurance companies do not). Psyched therapists would be considered out of network. Most insurance companies are covering between 40-60% of our sessions fees providing your diagnosis is covered.

## **Commitment-Phobic When it Comes to Therapy?**

To boost your chances of success by more than 50%, ask yourself these three questions during your course of therapy:

1. **Am I motivated?** Successful therapy relies on your motivation and participation by 20%.
2. **Do I trust and respect my therapist?** A high-quality relationship between you and your therapist accounts for a whopping 30%.
3. **Are we on the same page?** If your expectations match up with your therapist's, the results you want are more likely to happen.

Sources: Essential Research Findings in Counselling and Psychotherapy: The Facts are Friendly, Mick Cooper, 2008  
Asay TP, Lambert MJ. The empirical case for the common factors in therapy: quantitative findings, in Hubble M, Duncan BL, Miller SD (eds). The heart and soul of change: what works in therapy. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. 1999: 33-55

## HOW TO BEGIN YOUR IN NETWORK PROVIDER SEARCH

The fastest and easiest way to find an in network therapist is to do a search on [PsychologyToday.com](http://PsychologyToday.com) and input your insurance provider in their search box or print out a list from your insurance website. Just calling around will be a headache. See below for out of network searching.

## STYLE AND PERSONALITY

As we said above, the research shows that someone who is a fit with you is a better predictor of outcome than their modality of psychotherapy. So talking to more than one therapist is usually a good idea. Most therapists charge for a first session but spend 20 minutes on the phone to answer questions for you, free of charge.

### Here is how to find the right style and personality;

1. Ask trusted friends for names of therapists they recommend. If they are in therapy, their therapist may give you names of people they like and trust. Referrals to good therapists are almost always the best matches.
2. Then consider asking your family doctor, who usually has several names they refer to, and likely have one that they think will be a fit for you.

3. Of course there is the good old Internet search. Once you find names on Google or [PsychologyToday.com](http://PsychologyToday.com) or [GoodTherapy.org](http://GoodTherapy.org) you might want to read articles written by the therapist, check out their personal website and call them and talk live. This is about you, after all, so you get to interview them even if you are worried it isn't nice to ask so many questions. You are making an investment in a relationship with this person and you get to ask questions.

### HOW TO INTERVIEW A THERAPIST

Ask them what their specialty is? What their training is? What they believe helps people change? Ask them how long they have been practicing.

Tell them what you want to get out of therapy and see how they respond. If you feel understood, you have confidence in this person and it feels good then go for it. If you don't, keep calling.

At Psyched, we have a wide range of styles. But all of us believe in the power of relating to another human as the ultimate changer of the brain and old behaviors. We are here to support your goals and help you find a good therapist. Call or email Psyched and tell us what you are looking for and we are happy to make a match inside or outside our clinic.

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