

## TYPES OF THERAPY

Therapy is not a one-size-fits-all affair. Although you may not be aware of it, there is a methodology behind what your therapist does, which generally depends on the specific needs of a patient. The following are some of the most common methods that therapists use.

» **Psychoanalytic therapy.** In this type of therapy, doctors will have their patients discuss their lives in order to determine what patterns of behavior and significant events of their past may be currently affecting them. This can give you real insight about how the past has influenced your life, as well as the opportunity to get things off your chest that you may not have been able to talk to anyone about before.

» **Cognitive behavioral therapy.** This type of therapy is often used when patients are facing a specific challenge, such as depression or anxiety. In this approach, therapists will explore a patient's thinking and behavior patterns in order to track how they contribute to their state of mind. Then the therapist will work with the patient on developing strategies to change these thoughts and behaviors, which will go a long way toward changing their mood.

» **Interpersonal therapy.** This kind of therapy focuses on how patients communicate with their family, romantic partner or friends. This is often helpful for people suffering from depression because they learn how their illness impacts their relationships and what strategies can be used to improve how they relate to others, which will ultimately help them feel better as well. Similarly, people having problems in their relationships may consider pursuing couple's therapy with their partner or family therapy with their children.



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## FEATURE

# Therapy

## 101

What you need to know about working with a **therapist**

By Kenya McCullum

**I**s your life not going the way you want it to? Are you suffering from anxiety or depression? You don't have to suffer in silence: Going to a therapist can go a long way toward alleviating your symptoms and help you get the life you really want.

But you have to find the right one first. The following tips can help you find a therapist and get the most out of the relationship when you do.

Do your homework. Not everyone who puts out a therapy shingle is actually qualified to provide this sensitive care. As a result, you have to do your due diligence to find someone licensed to provide therapy. If your state has a psychological association, you can research therapists in your area on the organization's website or call them for a referral. You may also be able to get recommendations from people you trust, like your primary care doctor, or even family and friends you know who have been to a therapist.

Get a feel for the therapist before you begin. Once you've chosen some candidates, speak to them on the phone to determine whether or not they will be able to

help you. Ask the therapists questions about their experience with problems like yours and think about which one you believe you can work with best. Then, when you make an appointment with the therapist, continue with your evaluation.

"When you speak with them on the phone, get a feel for if this is someone you can work with. Does the therapist seem empathic and understanding to what you're dealing with? Have they worked with these types of situations before?" said Dr. Richard Dauber, Clinical Psychologist and Founding Partner of the Morris Psychological Group. "And nothing works better than to actually meet with the person and talk about what's going on with you. See if you feel comfortable with that person because it's the relationship between the therapist and the patient that really is what's most important in terms of helping that person."

Don't be afraid of therapy. Many people are apprehensive about going to a therapist because they think people will judge them for having certain problems. But Dauber points out that the stigma around therapy that was once prevalent in our society is not as strong, and more and

more, people understand the importance of taking care of our mental health.

"You have to think that your emotional well-being is just as important as your physical health. There is a big mind-body connection, so whatever is going on with you emotionally and mentally is going to affect you physically, and whatever affects you physically is going to affect you emotionally. You've got to take care of both things," he said. "Emotional health is very important, so don't be afraid to see a therapist. If your leg was broken, you wouldn't be afraid to see an orthopedist. I think it's the same thing; emotional pain is significant."

Speak up if it's not working out. After you have been going to your new therapist for a while, evaluate whether or not you think the relationship is working. Have you started to feel better since you began therapy? Have you gotten closer to reaching your goals? If not, don't be afraid to talk to your doctor openly and honestly about your concerns. Your therapist may need to try a different approach with you in order to meet your needs. But if that doesn't work after a while, you may want to consider finding someone else.