



How To Choose a Therapist

I have found that choosing the right therapist can win half the battle of getting well. In his book, I CAN IF I WANT TO by Arnold Lazarus, Ph.D., Dr. Lazarus provides an excellent guide. With his permission, I have reprinted it below.

Therapist-Selection Questionnaire

Scale: 0 = poor; 4 = excellent

- | | | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | I feel comfortable with the therapist. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2 | The therapist seems comfortable with me. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3 | The therapist is casual and informal rather than stiff and formal. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4 | The therapist does not treat me as if I am sick, defective, and/or about to fall apart. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5 | The therapist is flexible and open to new ideas rather than pursuing one point of view. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6 | The therapist has a good sense of humor and a pleasant disposition. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7 | The therapist is willing to tell me how he or she feels. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8 | The therapist admits limitations and does not pretend to know things he/she doesn't know. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9 | The therapist is very willing to acknowledge being wrong and apologizes for making errors or for being inconsiderate, instead of justifying this kind of behavior. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10 | The therapist answers direct rather than simply asking me questions what I think. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 11 | The therapist reveals things about himself/ herself either spontaneously or in response to my inquiries (but not by bragging and talking incessantly and irrelevantly). | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 12 | The therapist encourages the feeling that I am as good as he/she | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

4	is.	0 1 2 3 4
1		
3	The therapist acts as if he/she is my consultant, rather than the manager of my life.	0 1 2 3 4
1		
4	The therapist encourages differences of opinion rather than telling me that I am resisting if I disagree him/her.	0 1 2 3 4
1		
5	The therapist is interested in seeing people who share my life (or at least is willing to do so). This would include family, friends, lovers, work associates, or any other significant people in my life.	0 1 2 3 4
1		
6	The things that the therapist says make sense to me.	0 1 2 3 4
1		
7	In general, my contacts with the therapist lead to my feeling more hopeful and having higher self-esteem.	0 1 2 3 4

Now add up all the numbers you circled to get a total score.

HOW TO INTERPRET THE SCORE

I would not feel comfortable working with a therapist who I rated below 50 points.



Send mail to [George Bates](#) with questions or comments about this web site.
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