

What to Look for in a Therapist*

For a list of therapists who treat OCD, please visit our website:
<http://www.ocfoundation.org>

Some therapists are better at treating OCD than others. It is important to interview therapists to find out if they know how to do Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP) therapy well. Their responses to your questions are a good guide to what you want to know about a new therapist. If he or she is guarded, withholds information, or becomes angry at your requests for information, you should probably look elsewhere. If the therapist appreciates how important a decision this is for you and is open, friendly, and knowledgeable, you may have a gem of a therapist! Your relationship with the therapist is important. Especially since they will be asking you to do things that you find uncomfortable. **Remember:** You have a perfect right to ask questions. This is your life and health!

What Should I Ask?

The following checklist can help guide your search for the right therapist.

- “What techniques do you use to treat OCD?”**
Note: If the therapist is vague about or does not mention cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) or Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP), use caution.
- “Do you use Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP) to treat OCD?”**
Note: Be cautious of therapists who say they use CBT, but won't be more specific.
- “What is your training and background in treating OCD?”**
Note: Listen for therapists who say that they went to a CBT psychology graduate program or did a post-doctoral fellowship in CBT. If therapists say they are a member of the Obsessive Compulsive Foundation (OCF) or the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies (ABCT) this is also a good sign. Also listen for therapists who say that they have attended specialized workshops or trainings offered through the OCF or ABCT.
- “How much of your practice currently involves anxiety disorders?”**
- “How much of your practice currently involves working with individuals with OCD?”**
- “Do you feel that you have been effective in your treatment with individuals with OCD?”**
- “What is your attitude toward medicine in the treatment of OCD?”**
Note: If they are negative about medicine, this is a bad sign as medicine is an effective treatment for OCD.
- “Are you willing to leave your office if needed to do behavior therapy?”**
Note: It is sometimes necessary to go out of the office to do effective Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP).

* Adapted from: *“How To Choose a Behavior Therapist”* by Michael Jenike, MD