

Tips on Finding the Right Therapist for Your Teenager

Compiled from the book "Rescuing Your Teenager from Depression"

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Questions to Ask When Interviewing the Therapist:

1. What are your credentials? Are you licensed?
2. What type of therapy do you do? (Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy, Interpersonal etc)
3. How much experience you have had with teenagers?
4. What are your fees? Do you accept our type of insurance? Do you offer a sliding scale if we have to pay out of pocket?
5. When are you available to start seeing my teenager?
6. Is there flexibility regarding session length and schedule?
7. How do you feel about medication combined with therapy for depression?
8. What is your experience with suicidal patients? What are your views on hospitalization if there is risk of suicide?
9. What methods do you use to break through communication barriers with teenagers?
10. Are you willing to keep me regularly informed about the progress of the therapy?
11. How do you feel about family-based therapy and the idea of parental partnering?
12. Do you have special beliefs on religious or family values that we need to discuss?
13. How do you measure the teenager's progress?
14. How do you decide when it's time to stop therapy? Do you offer booster sessions?

Notes:

- **Family Values:** Make sure your family values are respected by the therapist.
- **Family Training:** Some therapists don't like the parents to be involved in the process of recovery. As the family plays a great role in the teen's recovery, make sure the therapist is willing to partner with the family.
- **Is the therapy working?** Don't wait for the therapist to tell you this. Reassess to see progress or need for therapy at this point. If the teen has improved, you can taper off therapy session by reducing frequency of therapy. If the teen's condition has gotten worse, it may be time to find a new therapist. Use your discretion as each teen and situation is different.
- **Parent Education:** Learn about the teen's diagnosis. **NAMI Basics** is a great class for parents of children younger than 18 years to learn about their child's mental health diagnosis and the best ways to communicate and help in teen's recovery.