

Possible Interview Questions for a Potential Therapist by Susan Landy

When I was interviewing therapists last year for the first time (instead of just taking whomever I got assigned or whomever was first to call back), I discovered a dilemma. It was not very useful to ask him/her “Do you have experience treating trauma survivors?” Probably 8 out of 10 therapists have experience with trauma survivors - there are a lot of us, as was mentioned in the article on the ACE Study. Your potential therapist could have been treating trauma survivors in a way that was not useful to them for decades.

Everybody selects a therapist (or other healer) in their own way and probably each selector would come up with a different list of questions for interviewing potential therapists. Please remember: You have the right to ask questions! You can think about it and come with prepared questions, and you can change your mind mid-interview and ask other questions that occur to you.

Questions that I myself have found more useful are among the following: What have you learned from working with trauma survivors that you use in your work now? Where did you get some of your best information on treating trauma survivors? What techniques have you used that have been effective?

Some studies have said that the relationship with the therapist is more important to consumers than the particular school of therapy. A frank admission of inexperience may mean more to you than an arrogant display of knowledge. The subject of the possible ways to interview a potential therapist deserves a lot more space. A potential therapist may merit a second look from you if you are comfortable with the way the therapist answers as well as the actual answers to your questions.