

A consumer's AWARENESS GUIDE to getting the right therapy:

What You Need To Know Before You Begin Therapy

Hi, this is Abe Kass.

You, like everyone else, will have challenges in life. Some these challenges may require the services of a caring and competent relationship or mental health specialist.

Finding the right professional—and the right type of therapy—is one of the most important parts to finding the solution to your problem.

Selecting the "right" mental health specialist is exactly like selecting the right medicine. The wrong choice can lead to a worsening of your situation whereas the right choice will lead to a cure.

Sadly, I have met countless individuals that have sought help from the wrong specialist. They ended up worse off than before they received the so-called "help." Simply put: **FINDING THE RIGHT PERSON IS REALLY IMPORTANT.**

Depending on where you live, a particular specialist may or may not be regulated by a government agency or a self-governing body. When "regulation" is available in your community, you should not seek treatment from an unregulated individual.

As you would never go to an unregulated medical doctor or dentist, so too you should not go to an unregulated relationship or mental health specialist. Your life and the wellbeing of your family are far too important to go with anyone that just hangs-out a sign and shouts, *"I AM AN EXPERT."*

Government agencies and self-regulating bodies provide the necessary supervision to ensure the therapist you use is competent and ethical.

The professional you select must be more than just academically trained and supervised. Equally important is his or her character. He or she must be honest, conscientious, caring and accessible. Your relationship and mental health specialist must **CARE ABOUT YOU AND YOUR FAMILY.**

Here are 3-steps to finding the right relationship or mental health specialist

1. Define the type of help you are looking for.

Once you are clear in your mind what personal or relationship problem you are trying to solve, you can then go on to consider who will be the right professional for you. This is an essential step in the process.

For example, you wouldn't go to the shoemaker to fix your car. The same applies to mental health and relationship problems. For example, you shouldn't go to a social worker to treat psychosis or schizophrenia, nor should you go to a psychiatrist for a serious relationship problem.

Here are descriptions of what each professional does best:

Family therapist. Specialist in the assessment and treatment of relationships and personal problems caused by past or current social groups such as a family. The power of the "relationship" is used to achieve the cure.

Marriage Therapist. Skilled in assessing the underlying causes of relationship conflict and then devising practical strategies to establish relationship harmony.

Psychologist. Specialist in psychological testing and treating individual conditions such as depression and anxiety. With additional training, psychologists can also qualify to treat relationship dynamics.

Psychiatrist. Specialist in treating serious mental illness. Most psychiatrists rely on medication to alleviate mental health problems. For serious mental illness and some types of personality disorders, psychiatrists are the profession of choice.

Psychotherapist. This is a subspecialty to the other professions. Typically, a family therapist, clinical social worker, psychologist or psychiatrist will use psychotherapy to improve a person's emotional health.

Hypnotherapist. Like psychotherapy, hypnosis is a subspecialty to help individuals achieve emotional health or a particular goal.

Clinical social worker. Uses the power of interpersonal relationships to solve personal and relationship problems. Can also support the treatment plans of other mental health specialists.

Counselor. Provides guidance that helps individuals establish healthy patterns of behavior for a healthy and happy life.

Coach. This is a new profession. Some coaches are born from a few days of training, and others have undergone more rigorous requirements before they qualify. When properly trained, coaches can assist an individual to make the right life choices and stay focused on what they need to do to achieve their goals. They are not qualified to treat serious emotional or relationship problems.

Note: Some professionals qualify for more than one specialty.

2. **Personal characteristics of a good therapist.**

Research has shown that the primary ingredient in effective therapy is not the type of treatment, but rather the character of the therapist. In other words, successful treatment is primarily influenced by the "relationship" between the therapist and the client.

Values and personality characteristics your therapist should have:

Be honest

Have integrity

Be sincere

Willing to listen to you

Be punctual

Be professional

Be willing, if necessary, to work hard to help you

Be friendly

Be available when you need him or her

Be caring

Make you feel valued
Make you feel respected
Make you feel comfortable

3. **"Helpers" to stay away from when seeking help for your relationship or mental health:**

Non-trained experts. You would be surprised how many people are duped into seeking help from people like this. I have witnessed so called helpers trained only as librarians, dog trainers, writers, claims of "I had this problem myself," lawyers, marketers and the like that offer their services for serious emotional and relationship problems. My advice—*stay away!*

Motivational gurus. Anthony Robins, Stephen Covey and the like have a valued place in helping individuals achieve their potential. But they cannot—and should not treat or advice others regarding emotional and relationship problems.

Untrained Clergy. Certainly, a spiritual life is important to a person's wellbeing. And to that end, clergy are the best at advising how to avoid many personal and relationship problems in the first place. However, when "problems" do happen, they are out of their league in treating them, and if they have integrity they will encourage their congregants to get the needed professional help while at the same time offering caring support.

Here, in a nutshell are the basics to help you find the right professional with the right tools to help you with a troublesome or more serious personal or relationship problem.

Ask around, the experiences of friends and family that have had similar challenges as you, can also help guide you in the right direction. They may have first-hand experience with a particular individual that has the specialty you are looking for and give you a "thumbs-up" or a "thumbs-down."

Be careful, don't let well-intended family or friends give you advice that is meant to "cure." Even professionals in unrelated fields should not be counted on for the

needed help. For example, don't ask your lawyer if you should get divorced or not!
GO TO THE RIGHT PROFESSIONAL. This is of critical importance.

Good luck and I wish you the best.

Let me know if I can be of further help,

Social Worker, Marriage and Family Therapist and Clinical Hypnotherapist,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Abe Kass".

Abe Kass, MA, RSW, RMFT, CCHT

Contact info:

Phone: 905.771.1087

Email: abe@abekass.com

For more information about Abe: www.AbeKass.com

For Abe's self-help products: www.goSmartLife.com

P.S. I am available for consultations. People phone and Skype me from all over the world. I am easy to talk to. Let's discuss how I can help you. Use the contact information above. If you decide to make an appointment after we discuss your situation, you can pay by credit card or Paypal.