

How to Find the Hypnotherapist Right for You – Part 1: Identifying Hypnotherapists

This article, the first in a three-part series on finding your hypnotherapist, provides details on how to find prospective hypnotherapists. It lays out a strategy for setting qualifications based on your requirements and preferences, getting referrals, and organizing critical data in preparation for selection.

In “How to Find the Hypnotherapist Right for You – Part 2: Rank Ordering Top Tier Hypnotherapists,” you learn how to determine which hypnotherapists to contact, what questions to ask them, and how to rank order them by qualifications.

To learn how to narrow down to two interviewees, how to interview and evaluate each one, and then how to pick the right one for you, see “How to Find the Hypnotherapist Right for You – Part 3: Making Your Final Selection.”

How to determine your list of qualifications

Every client deserves a hypnotherapist who has professional training and certification by an accredited institution. **Professional hypnotherapists must have certification from a licensed, accredited institution.** Certification attests to their completion of requisite coursework, exams, and clinical hours seeing clients in a supervised setting. You should require certification.

Every client deserves a hypnotherapist who has integrity, a genuine desire to help people, and the capacity to listen and take to heart what the client tells them in confidence. Every client deserves a clinical hypnosis practitioner who understands and can apply the hypnotherapeutic techniques appropriate for resolving their problems. The best ones also teach their clients how to use the techniques in between sessions. By asking questions and listening carefully to their answers, you can gain the information to determine who has these qualities.

You, as a client, are unique. You have particular requirements and preferences based on your life experiences and circumstances. The qualifications for being your hypnotherapist should reflect these requirements and preferences.

To determine the qualifications, start by asking yourself which goal(s) you are having trouble achieving and what obstacles stand in your way? Be specific. Do you want to switch careers, but lack the confidence and perseverance? Do you procrastinate studying for a professional exam because you suffer test anxiety? Is an addiction to cigarettes, alcohol, or other substances damaging your health and well-being?

If you have multiple problems, decide which is most important for you to resolve first? That is your primary problem; the others are secondary problems. Identifying your primary and secondary problem areas is critical for choosing the right hypnotherapist. You want and deserve a therapist who specializes in treating your types of problems/issues. Examples of specializations include anxiety and stress management, smoking cessation, building self-esteem and stopping self-sabotage, overcoming fears and phobias, just to name a few.

The first qualification is based on the requirement that the hypnotherapist specialize in treating your primary problem area. (Ideally, you would want your hypnotherapist to specialize in your secondary problem areas as well. Most hypnotherapists have at least one specialization. But beware of those who claim to have many unrelated specializations. You don't want a “Jack of all trades, master of none.” A hypnotherapist specializing in your primary problem area who has some training and experience treating your secondary problems should qualify.)

To determine more qualifications ask yourself what other requirements you have? If, for example, your family and work commitments prohibit sessions on week-days or evenings, you require a hypnotherapist who offers week-end sessions.

Your preferences --what your desire but don't require--also determine qualifications. If you prefer using a credit card, even though you are willing to pay by cash or check, accepting credit cards is one of your preference-based qualifications.

Another preference might be in-office treatment rather than phone hypnosis. Ask yourself how far you are willing to commute? No matter how wonderful the hypnotherapist, if you have to fight heavy traffic on a long drive, the extra stress could work against successful treatment. Decide what distance from you counts as geographically desirable and whether that's a requirement or a preference. You might prefer within five miles, but require within ten. How you define "geographical desirability" and whether it is a preference or requirement is for you to decide.

The following list contains examples of candidate attributes to consider when deciding which qualifications you require and which you prefer:

- Accredited Training
- Professional Certification
- Areas of Specialization
- Areas of Experience/Training
- College Education
- Graduate Education
- Continuing Education
- Years in Practice
- Professional Associations
- Testimonials
- Comes from Referral
- Gender Preference
- Geographical Desirability
- Hypnosis by Phone
- In-office Sessions
- Week-end Appointments
- Night Appointments
- Accepts Credit Cards
- Complimentary Consultation
- Complimentary CDs
- Custom CDs
- Discount Packages
- Payment Plans

Where to find prospective hypnotherapists

Your objective is to develop an initial list of hypnotherapists to consider before selecting the right one. You do this by getting referrals and doing research. Taking notes on your referral conversations and research data is strongly advised.

Referrals from satisfied clients are extremely valuable. Ask family and friends you trust and respect if they (or anyone they know) have benefited from treatment with a certified clinically hypnotherapist. Ask your doctors, psychologists, and alternative medicine professionals such as acupuncturists if they know a good hypnotherapist. Mention you are looking for someone specializing in your areas of concern. If they give you a referral, ask for the therapist's full name, address, and phone number.

If you don't uncover any or enough referrals, do your research. Begin identifying associations of hypnotherapists, such as the American Hypnosis Association or the National Guild of Hypnotists. Go online to their websites to find member links. Click on those links to go to the individual hypnotherapist's website, where you can find information on their style and approach, their specializations, background, testimonials, etc.

Use search engines like Google or Yahoo. Start with a general search for a hypnotherapist in your geographical area. For example, enter "Chicago hypnotherapy". Then as you pull up names, start narrowing down by looking for relevant keywords based on your primary and secondary problem areas, requirement, and preferences. Consider "confidence", "self-esteem", "procrastination", "week-end appointments", "phone hypnosis", "accepts credit cards", etc.

How to organize critical data for evaluation and comparison

The easiest way to organize your data on each candidate is by keeping it in a table. Consider using an automated spreadsheet program like Microsoft Excel to facilitate entering and editing data, and then rank ordering hypnotherapists by criteria you set.

Label the first four columns "Name", "Address", "Phone Number", and "Referral Source". The remaining columns are for qualifications, (i.e. requirements and preferences) such as "Specializations" and "Gender", "Where Certified", "Years in Practice", "Phone Hypnosis", "Free Consultations", "Credit Cards Accepted", "Week-end Sessions", etc. You may add more column headings as you think of them. Consider using properties pertaining to hypnotherapists and their practice given in step 2 above as column headings representing qualifications.

Mark the column headings for requirements with an "R" and those pertaining to preferences with a "P". Order the headings so that requirements precede preferences. For both types of qualifications, the more important ones appear closer to the left side of the table.

Create a wider "Comments" column to note your impressions of the hypnotherapists based on contact with them over the phone, through email, and in person.

Based on your notes, start by filling in the table with each hypnotherapist's name and as much of the other data about them as you know at this point. (You will continue to update the table as you glean more information from the initial contacts and any subsequent interactions.)

For guidance in deciding which hypnotherapists to contact, what questions to ask, and how to rank order them by qualifications, see "How to Find the Hypnotherapist Right for You – Part 2: Rank Ordering Top Tier Hypnotherapists."

To learn how to narrow down to two interviewees, how to interview and evaluate each one, and finally how to pick the right one for you, see "How to Find the Hypnotherapist Right for You – Part 3: Making Your Final Selection".