



MOSAIC MENTAL HEALTH TIPS

Is Your Therapist a Good Fit for You? Look for These 7 **Green** Flags To Tell

By: Natalie Arroyo Camacho <https://tinyurl.com/yxpub6fn>

In romantic relationships, people often identify **green** flags (which indicate a union is safe and healthy) and **red** flags (which indicate the opposite). Another area of life where you'd stand to benefit from having clear **green** flags is with your mental-health provider. Identifying therapist **green** flags is crucial to ensuring that you're safe and comfortable in sessions and that you're seeing someone who is indeed a good fit for you and your needs.

"Having **green** flags is fundamental to a safe relationship because it establishes, at least for yourself, that this person is someone that [you] think [you] can be vulnerable with," says psychotherapist Meghan Watson, resident therapist for Alkeme Health and founder of Bloom Psychology Wellness. "Then [you] can be [your] authentic self to access the healing that [you] need."

But knowing exactly what to look for in a therapist (especially if you're new to therapy) can be difficult to discern. So, read on to learn about seven therapist **green** flags, according to mental health experts

1. They strictly adhere to confidentiality

While this is an ethical requirement for all mental health experts, not all providers adhere, says psychologist and host of the Psych Talk podcast Jessica Leigh, PhD. "Therapy is based on trust, so you need to trust that your therapist is keeping the information confidential from other people," she says.

To gauge how much a therapist values the privacy of their patients, Dr. Leigh suggests working with a provider who "explains the limits of confidentiality at the first session and continues to talk about the limits of confidentiality throughout the duration of the therapeutic relationship."

2. They're honest about their areas of expertise

It's a **green** flag if a therapist is clear about what they can and can't do for you. If what you're hoping to work on is out of their scope of expertise, they'd ideally refer you to someone else.



3. They're engaged with you in the moment

"You want to feel like the information this person is giving [you], the ways that they listen, and the ways that they show up in the space in terms of attentiveness and engagement feels like a good fit," says Watson.

To figure this out for yourself, focus on observation. Do you feel like they're impatient or rushing you out of the session? If so, that's probably not a **green** flag that the therapist is the best fit for you. "Therapy is a very vulnerable and intimate situation and relationship," says Dr. Leigh. "As a client, you need to feel safe, validated, and heard so that you can continue to feel comfortable enough to share and, in turn, grow."

4. They keep you accountable

One difference between a good friend and a fantastic therapist, says Watson, is that the latter will keep you accountable—especially during hard times. As much as friends help each other day to day, it's not their responsibility to ensure that you're doing what you said you would be doing.

That's where your therapist comes in. "Your therapist really has to be the person to say, 'You sought my services out because you wanted help with [a given] issue,'" Watson says.

Dr. Leigh agrees, adding that "a therapist needs to challenge you—within limits—to help you move forward and grow. Without being challenged, you will stay in the same place."



5. THEY FOCUS ON IMPACT, NOT DETAILS OF YOUR TRAUMA

If the therapist seems like they'll get caught up in the details, that's not exactly a **green** flag, says Watson. "You won't always get the benefits that you're looking for from healing, because you'll just be recounting and going over the same things over and over again," Watson says.

6. THEY ESTABLISH CLEAR BOUNDARIES

"A good therapist will have clear boundaries and model appropriate boundaries for the client within the session as well as with policies and procedures," says Dr. Leigh.

A therapist who has poor boundaries, on the other hand—which might look like regularly running late, talking about themselves in session, or being available 24/7—is unideal, in part, because it has a negative effect on the client-provider relationship. "It also does not model appropriate boundaries for the client, which is something many people want to work on," says Dr. Leigh.

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7. YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE WITH THEM

Because we're all so different as individuals, it's hard to make a blanket statement about how to assess your comfort level with a given therapist, says Watson. That's why it's perhaps most important that you personally feel comfortable with your therapist. "You want to be able to feel like you can be humbled, take feedback, and that your therapist is ultimately a kind person that recognizes that you're doing your best," says Watson.

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And if you haven't found a therapist who is a great fit yet, not to worry. "If the therapist checks the boxes, the therapist is likely a good fit for you," Dr. Leigh says. "If they don't, it is okay to seek out someone else." Using a referral agency increases your odds of a perfect match.

