

FIND A THERAPIST: WORKSHEET FOR PROTECTIVE PARENTS SEEKING THERAPY FOR YOUR CHILD

Therapy should always begin by helping you and your child establish safety and build a collaborative relationship. There are many different types of therapists — see <https://www.camh.ca/en/health-info/mental-illness-and-addiction-index/psychotherapy> which explains some of the differences.

You can seek recommendations from:

- Trusted friends
- Your child’s pediatrician or a local children’s hospital
- Your local rape or sexual assault center
- An online directory

Ask for an introductory phone call: Some therapists may offer an introductory phone call free of charge. *Be sure to confirm at the beginning of the call if you will be charged a fee.*

Important questions to ask during an introductory phone call or session:

Do you take my insurance? (if applicable) *Since insurance plans can vary widely from one workplace or provider to the next, having the details of your insurance benefits on hand during the phone call or session will be helpful for you and the therapist.*

Do you have experience treating children with sexual abuse trauma?

Have you received specialized training in treating children? If yes, what kind?

What is your treatment approach for a child who has been sexually abused?

How often do you see clients with a background of sexual abuse/complex trauma?

Do you currently receive supervision or consultation on your clinical work?

Will you meet with my child alone? What will you share with me about your work with my child?

Will you include me (the protective parent) in this work? How often?

What recommendations do you have for me as a parent, to help my child?

What recommendations do you have for me to help me cope and understand my child's experience?

Questions to ask at your first full session:

- Do you think you can help my child? What are their chances of success and feeling better through this process?

- Can you describe the way you work?

- Do you integrate any other approaches, such as sand tray, art or music therapy, play therapy?

This space is for other questions you want to ask:

Questions to ask yourself and your child (if they are old enough) after your appointment:

- Does this person seem knowledgeable about trauma, and my child's kinds of experiences?

- Do I feel a sense of connection, did my child seem comfortable with this person? (Even if I and my child are also feeling naturally anxious about starting therapy?)

- Does this person seem kind, empathic, open-minded?

- Did I feel respected?

- Did this person ask about my child's and my strengths?

Considerations to determine whether or not this therapist is a fit: Check in with yourself and your child (if they are old enough) about the following experiences:

1. Did I feel rushed?

2. Did I feel pushed to share too much about details of abuse before feeling ready?

3. Did this person remember me/things I have told them?

4. Did this person listen?

5. Did I feel my personal space and physical boundaries were respected?
