



Therapy modalities 101

What treatment approach is best for me?

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THROUGHOUT MY CAREER, ONE thing I have noticed is that finding the right therapy for yourself, your child, or a friend or family member can be overwhelming — from knowing which type of mental health professional you need to what treatment approach would work best.

Even being in the field myself, I find it frustrating at times. So, let's break it down:

Types of providers

Therapists or counselors have a master's degree in counseling or social work field and are licensed by the state. They focus on providing counseling sessions to process a client's history of trauma. These are the most sought-after providers within the mental health field and their sessions are typically 55 minutes long.

Psychologists have a doctorate in psychology and while they may conduct some counseling sessions, they frequently complete psychological evaluations and testing for conditions like ADHD, learning disabilities and custody evaluations. These sessions are less frequent and last for hours due to the length of testing provided.

Psychiatrists and psychiatric nurse practitioners are responsible for managing psychiatric medication needs. They do not provide counseling, appointments are shorter and they want to help lessen the severity of mental health issues using medications. Finding the right provider is crucial as they will approach medications differently. Working with your medication provider and counselor can provide you with the best option for success as they work together to help you find the most appropriate course of action and overall relief.

Treatment modalities

Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing is a form of therapy that works with the client to resolve emotional distress caused by a variety of factors in their life. It does not require the client to provide detailed information about their distressing issues. EMDR utilizes dual attention stimuli to help "move" the memories through the brain to fully process, thus lessening the distress experienced.



Accelerated resolution therapy has been shown to relieve clients experiencing trauma, depression, anxiety, addictions, phobias, job-related stress and more. Throughout the process, the client is in complete control while the therapist provides support and guides the session. Using relaxing eye movements and a technique called voluntary memory/image replacement, ART helps the client change the way the negative memories are stored in the brain. It works to provide relief from triggers or strong physical and emotional reactions. Through ART, the client does not have to share details of their trauma to find relief.

Brainspotting locates points in the client's visual field that help to access unprocessed trauma in the subcortical brain. Dr. David Grand discovered that "Where you look affects how you feel." The goal is to bypass the conscious thinking processes of the neocortex to get to the deeper, more emotional and body-based processes from the subcortex part of the brain.

Sand tray therapy is an expressive approach in which the client can create their own world in a tray utilizing a variety of figurines and objects. In creating their world, the client can tell their story, verbally or non-verbally, in a safe environment. The conscious and unconscious material stored in the brain can be expressed and processed using symbolic figurines.

Play therapy provides children and teenagers with the ability to freely express themselves in a non-confrontational way. By giving them the ability to play, they can process situations and emotions and work to find their own solutions. Children learn best naturally through play, so incorporating it in a therapy session with a trained provider can have profound effects as their brains are not fully developed yet for traditional talk therapy.

You may not know what you need when first starting, and that is okay. Make sure to do some research and have a consultation with your counselor before starting services. Ideally, they will provide you with their approach and how they find it effective.

If it doesn't seem like the right fit for you, that is okay, too. Look for someone else. You must feel comfortable with your provider, so you fully open up to them for help.

For more information about these approaches or others, please visit our website or reach out to us directly. [📞](#)



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