

# Step-By-Step Guide To Finding A Therapist



Our guide to help you find a therapist in  
*non-crisis* situations

SFLGBT  
CENTER

# What's Your Therapy Goal?

Starting therapy can sometimes feel overwhelming. Like, where do you even begin? A good place to start can be reflecting on what your goal/s might be for therapy. Take a moment to reflect. Feel free to use the space and sample questions below.

Journaling can often help us sort through ideas and goals, but it's always ok if you don't know. Part of therapy is working with your therapist to identify goals you will work towards together.

## Example Reflection Questions:

**What would you like to change and or be different as a result of going to therapy?**

**How will you know if you're moving towards your goal?**

# Where To Start?

There are several different avenues you can take when looking for a therapist. Unfortunately, there is no one-stop shop to help you find a therapist. Due to this, we have put together a small directory of resources that can be a good place to start your search.

Before starting your search, decide how you would like to pay for services, such as:

- Insurance
- Employment Assistance Programs (EAP)
- Out-of-pocket pay
- Free services in your area!

If you decide to use your insurance and/or EAP, you can ask them to provide you with a list of providers.



# Directories If You Identify As Black, Indigenous, Or A Person Of Color

- [Asians for Mental Health](#)
- [A Therapist Like Me](#) (for clients from historically marginalized communities)
- [Ayana Therapy](#) (telehealth directory for marginalized communities)
- [Black Female Therapists](#)
- [Black Therapists Network](#)
- [Boris Lawrence Henson Foundation](#) (directory serving the African-American community & therapy scholarships)
- [Clinicians of Color](#)
- [Inclusive Therapists](#)
- [Innopsych](#) (find a therapist of color)
- [Latinx Therapists Action Network](#)
- [Latinx Therapy](#)
- [Melanin and Mental Health](#)
- [National Queer & Trans Therapists of Color Network](#)
- [Root to Crown Healing](#) (race-based trauma services, art therapy, & witch\*craft therapy)
- [South Asian Therapists](#)
- [The Loveland Foundation](#) (funds for 4-12 therapy sessions)
- [Therapy for Black Girls](#)
- [Therapy for Black Men](#)
- [Therapy for Latinx](#)
- [Therapy for QPOC](#)
- [Therapy that Liberates](#) (practitioners trained in a Liberation-focused healing framework)
- [Whole Brother Mission](#)

# SF Transitional-Aged Youth Mental Health Services Directory

If you reside in San Francisco & have Medi-Cal/Healthy SF insurance, the 24-Hour Access Helpline can support you in finding a therapist:  
(415) 255-3737

If you or someone you love is experiencing a mental crisis in San Francisco, you can reach out to Mobile Crisis for Emergency Mental Health Services:  
(415) 970-4000

Name:	Number:	Address:
3rd St Youth Center & Clinic	(415) 822-1707	1728 Bancroft Ave, San Francisco
Asian & Pacific Islander Wellness Clinic (Polk St. Location)	(415) 292-3400	730 Polk St., San Francisco
Community United Against Violence	415-333-HELP (4357)	427 S Van Ness Ave San Francisco
Community Youth Center of San Francisco	(415) 775-2636	1038 Post St., San Francisco
Dimensions Youth Clinic	(415) 934-7789	3850 17th St., San Francisco
Felton Institute	(415) 474-7310	1500 Franklin St., San Francisco
Glide Memorial Church	(415) 674-6000	330 Ellis St., San Francisco
Homeless Youth Alliance	(415) 318-6384	1572 Haight St., San Francisco

# SF Transitional-Aged Youth Mental Health Services Directory

Name:	Number:	Address:
Horizons Unlimited Inc	(415) 487-6700	440 Potrero Ave., San Francisco
Huckleberry Youth Services	(415) 437-2500	44 Gough St. #104, San Francisco
Instituto Familiar de la Raza	(415)-229-0500	2919 Mission St., San Francisco
Mental Health Association of San Francisco	(415) 421-2926	870 Market St. #928, San Francisco
Progress Foundation	(415) 861-0828	368 Fell St., San Francisco
Richmond Area Multi-Services (RAMS)	(415) 668-5955	3626 Balboa St., San Francisco
SF Community Health Center, Trans Thrive	(415)-292-3400	730 Polk St. 4th Floor, San Francisco
TAY Behavioral Health Linkage Services	(415)-642-4525	755 South Van Ness, San Francisco
UCSF Alliance Health Project	(415)-476-3902	1930 Market St., San Francisco
Vietnamese Youth Development	(415) 771-2600	166 Eddy St., San Francisco
Westside Community Services	(415)-431-9000	1153 Oak St., San Francisco

# Mental Health Resources In The Bay Area (Outside of SF)

## ALAMEDA COUNTY RESOURCES

**Crisis Support Services of Alameda County:** (800) 309-2131

*Substance Use Treatment & Referral Helpline:* 1-844-682-7215

*Mobile Crisis Team:* (510) 981-5254 (Berkeley & Albany only)

*Adult & Crisis Services:* (510) 981-5290 (Berkeley & Albany only)

**Mental Health First Oakland- Anti Police Terror Project:** Non-police response for Mental Health Crisis.

*CALL/TEXT:* (510) 999-9MH1 (Available Friday & Saturday 8:00PM-8:00AM)

## CONTRA COSTA RESOURCES

**Contra Costa Crisis Center:** (800) 833-2900

*24-hour Access Line for mental health resources:* 1-888-678-7277

*Mobile Crisis Response Team:* 1-833-443-2672

*Behavioral Health Access Line:* 800-846-1652

## MARIN COUNTY RESOURCE LIST

**Mental Health & Substance Use Access & Assessment:**

(888) 818-1115

*Crisis Stabilization Unit:* (415) 473-6666

*Mobile Crisis Response Team:* (415) 473-6392 (Available 1-9PM, 7 days/week)

**Suicide Prevention & Community Counseling of Marin:**

(415) 499-1100

# Mental Health Resources In The Bay Area (Outside of SF) Cont'd

## NAPA COUNTY RESOURCES

**24-hour Mental Health Crisis Hotline:** (707) 253-4711

## SANTA CLARA COUNTY RESOURCES

**Santa Clara County Suicide and Crisis Hotline:**

(855) 278-4204 (24-hour/English & Spanish)

*Crisis Text Line:* Text RENEW to 741741

*Bilingual Spanish Hotline:* (800) 572-2782

**Community Solutions Teen Crisis & Parental Stress:**

(408) 683-4118 (24-hour)

**Uplift (EMQ) Crisis Team:** (408) 379-9085 (24-hour)

**YWCA Rape Crisis Center 24-hour crisis line:** (650) 493-7273

**NAMI Santa Clara WARM LINE:** (408) 453-0400, option 1 (*Not a crisis line*)

**Santa Clara County Mental Health Call Center:**

1-800-704-0900 (*Not a crisis line*)

**Mental Health Urgent Care:** (408) 885-7855, (Walk-in clinic)

871 Enborg Court, Unit 100, San Jose, CA 95128

Available Monday - Sunday, 8AM - 10PM, including holidays

**Bill Wilson Center's SOS Crisis Hotline** (ages 5-17): (408) 272-2585

*Bill Wilson Center's 24/7 Teen Line for Youth* (age 5-17):

(888) 247-7717

*Bill Wilson Center TAY Support Hotline* (16-24): (408) 850-6140



# Mental Health Resources In The Bay Area (Outside of SF) Cont'd

## SAN MATEO COUNTY RESOURCES

**San Mateo Psychiatric Emergency Services:** (650) 573-2662

**Star Vista Crisis Line:** (650) 579-0350

**NAMI San Mateo Warm Line (non-crisis line):** (650) 638-0800

**Mental Health Services: Access Call Center:** (800) 686-0101

**Mateo Lodge:** (650) 368-3178

(24/7 Outreach services by Mobile Support Team)

**Serenity House:** (650) 204-9695 (24/7 Crisis residential center)

## SOLANO COUNTY RESOURCES

**Mental Health Access Line:** (800) 547-0495

*Crisis Unit:* (707) 428-1131 (24/7 Crisis services)

## SONOMA COUNTY RESOURCES

**24-hour Access Line:** (707) 565-6900 or (800) 870-8786

**24-Hour Crisis Services:** (707) 576-8181

*Crisis Stabilization Unit:* 2225 Challenger Way, Santa Rosa CA,  
95407

**24-hour Suicide Prevention:** (855) 587-6373

# General Therapy Resources, Directories, & Crisis Lines

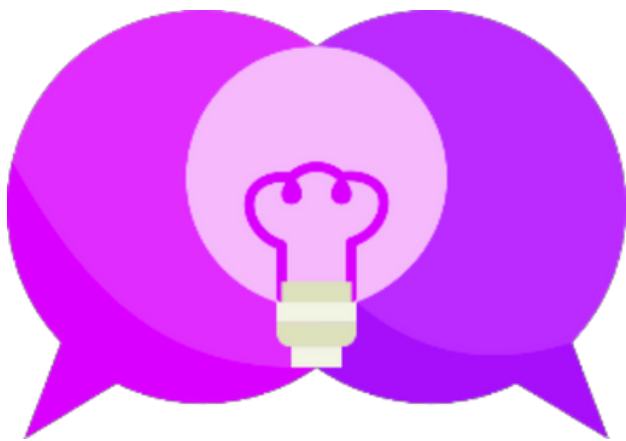
- **SF- MHASF WARM LINE**: (855) 845-7415 (*Warmline*; Call or text)
- Talk Space
- Betterhelp.com
- Psychology Today
- Open Path Collective
- **Substance Use Treatment & Referral Helpline**: 1-844-682-7215
- **National Crisis (Suicide) Hotline**: 988
- **California Youth Crisis Line**: (800) 843-5200
- **Domestic Violence Crisis Line**: 1-800-572-2782 or text START to 88788
- **Mental Health Crisis Text Line**: Text HOME to 741-741
- **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)**: 1-800-950-NAMI (6264) or info@nami.org
- **Boys Town National Hotline**: 1-800-448-3000 or text VOICE to 20121
- **Trevor Project Lifeline (LGBTQ crisis line)**: (866) 488-7386 or text 678-678
- **Trans Lifeline**: 1-877-565-8860
- **Spanish Language Lifeline Number**: 988 or text AYUDA to 741741

# So, You Found Some Therapist Options. What Next?

Once you find some therapists you are interested in working with, it's time to reach out and schedule a consultation. A consultation is basically setting up a one-on-one with the therapist to see if you are compatible and if they have the experience and skills needed to help you meet your goals.

FYI, you may have to reach out to multiple therapists, since sometimes therapists are at full capacity and/or they may not have the skills needed to help you meet your goals.

To help you in this process, we have created some Reflection pages and a Therapist Tracker Sheet on the following pages that can help you on your consultation scheduling journey.



# How To Prepare For Your Consultation

Your first session/consultation will likely be very different from future sessions. In this session, your therapist will ask lots of questions to get an idea of what has brought you to therapy and what kinds of symptoms you are having. It's ok to be nervous, and it's also ok to tell your therapist if there are things you'd prefer not to share in the first session. But, the more you share, the better they can help you. The questions below will help you prepare for your first session.

**What are the main issues guiding you to seek therapy right now? How long have these issues been going on?**

**What are your goals for therapy and how will you know you've reached them? (Your therapist can also help you figure this out if you're not sure.)**

**Is there anything you want to know about your therapist? (Ex: Sex, Gender, Race, Culture, Etc.)**

# Therapist Tracking Sheet

The process of finding a therapist can sometimes take a while. Make copies of this tracking sheet to take notes of the therapists you've spoken with to help your decision-making.

**Therapist Name:**

**Telephone #:**

**Email Address:**

**Website:**

**Cost per session:**

**Accept your insurance? Y / N**

**Do they have sliding scale/ income based fee? Y / N**

**Date called / emailed:**

**How soon is their next available appointment?**

**Do they have a waitlist? Y / N**

**Do they recommend any other therapist? Y / N  
Who:**

**DO THEY HAVE EXPERTISE WORKING WITH YOUR CONCERN?**

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**WHAT VIBE DID YOU GET FROM THE CONVERSATION? WAS IT COMFORTABLE SHARING WITH THEM? WOULD BE COMFORTABLE MEETING THEM AGAIN?**

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# Post-Session Reflections

You're likely to feel a range of emotions after your first consultation/session, possibly relief for finally getting some things off your chest, and maybe even a little overwhelmed. All of these things are completely normal. As soon as you can after your session, answering the questions below may help you continue making the most out of your sessions. You may even want to share some of these things in future sessions with your therapist.

How do you feel now that you've finished the first consultation/session (Understanding that opening up may take some time)?

Are there things you wish you would have said or asked and would like to discuss next session? List them here.

# Post-Session Grounding Activity

Take a moment and find your breath. If accessible, inhale through your nose and slowly exhale through your mouth. Once you find your breath, go through the following steps to help you ground yourself, through using your senses:

5: Acknowledge **FIVE** things you **see** around you (Ex: trees, birds, light switch)

4: Acknowledge **FOUR** things you can **touch** around you (Ex: feet on grass or ground, back on a pillow, fabrics around you)

3: Acknowledge **THREE** things you **hear** (Ex: cars, the wind/breeze, birds chirping)

2: Acknowledge **TWO** things you can **smell** (Ex: fragrances, food cooking, the smells of nature)

1: Acknowledge **ONE** thing you can **taste** (Ex: flavored drink, sweets/candy, a snack of choice)

# Is This Therapist Right For You?

Sometimes it's hard to determine if a therapist is right for you. Here are some things to consider when making your decision. Take a moment to reflect if the therapist you've found:

- Validates your experiences
- Uses proper pronouns and names
- Asks questions to learn more about you, where you come from, and how experiences have shaped your perception of the world
- Supports you through difficult emotions/moments in therapy
- Challenges you
- Actively listens to you
- Helps you better understand what may come up in sessions



# Is This Therapist Right For You? (Cont'd)

- Helps you set goals to meet your desired outcomes
- Is culturally humble to your needs and experiences and doesn't make assumptions about who you are or are not
- Understands their own culture, biases, beliefs, etc., and how it impacts their work as a therapist
- Holds intersectional understanding of your identities
- Isn't making life decisions for you
- Helps you discover your own answers
- Gives recommendations in line with your cultural and spiritual beliefs and practices
- Has the skills and experience you need to work towards your goals
- Is intentional about understanding your belief systems and culture
- Referred you to someone else if they do not have the necessary experience to help you work towards your goals

# How To Tell Your Therapist It's Not Working Out

Sometimes it just doesn't work. It's normal and human not to vibe with everyone you meet; the same is true in this process. If you've had 3 or more sessions with a therapist (it's usually recommended to try it out for at least 3 sessions) and it still doesn't feel like your vibe, you could:

- *TELL THEM IN PERSON.*
- *SEND THEM AN EMAIL.*
- *TELL THEM OVER THE PHONE.*
- *REQUEST A CLOSING SESSION.*
- *DON'T SAY ANYTHING & FIND A NEW THERAPIST.  
(MOST COMMON & NORMAL)*



No worries about doing any of the above. Therapists are trained to deal with these situations. Trust that you are likely not the first and definitely won't be the last client to do so. They will be ok and will often try to refer you to someone you will click better with.

# If You've Found A Therapist You Like

KEEP GOING! There will be moments you feel like quitting. DON'T! You have the right to considerate, safe, and respectful care, NO MATTER WHAT! With that said, sometimes this process gets tough, and we may experience resistance to engage. Resistance is a normal part of the therapy process and change. If you tell your therapist, they can help you find where those feelings are coming from and often work with you to move past them.

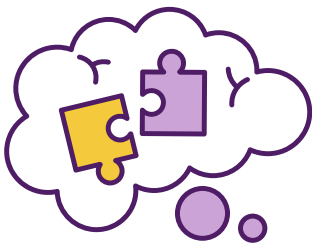
## THIS IS NORMAL IN THERAPY:

- **To experience triggers.**
- **For there to be periods of silence.**
- **For you to answer a lot of questions.**
- **For you to not feel an immediate change.**
- **For you to experience nightmares, especially when working through trauma.**
- **For you to make some changes, then revert back to old habits, behaviors, or patterns.**
- **For you to have trouble expressing your feelings in the beginning & sometimes throughout.**
- **For you to be confronted in a non-confrontational way about negative patterns, beliefs, or behaviors.**

# What To Expect When You Are In Therapy

(IN NO PARTICULAR ORDER)

- **Your point of view changes.**
- **You try a new coping skill, and it doesn't work.**
- **You feel nervous about opening up to a stranger.**
- **You have initial feelings of anxiety or uncertainty.**
- **You feel like a weight was lifted off of your shoulders.**
- **You show up feeling like you have nothing to talk about.**
- **You feel tired or emotionally drained after your session.**
- **You tell your therapist things you've never told anyone.**
- **You come to a harsh realization about something or someone.**



from: @ablackfemaletherapist, [www.bewellmentalhealth.org](http://www.bewellmentalhealth.org)



# Other Supportive Digital Resources:

Below are some additional resources which may be supportive in your therapy journey:

- **Calm**- app with sleep stories, guided meditation, & soothing sounds
- **Insight Timer**- app that helps with meditation, sleep & yoga
- **Journaly**- app for digital journaling
- **imi.guide**- guides built for and with LGBTQ+ teens to help you explore your identity & support your mental health
- **Headspace**- app that has meditation/mindfulness skills/sleep guidance
- **Shine App**- app for daily meditation, community support, & getting tools you need
- **They2ze**- app built for and with LGBTQ+ teens to help you explore your identity & support your mental health
- **MoodMission**- app that can help develop positive coping mechanisms for anxiety & educate about psychology
- **Moodfit**- app for mood journaling, gratitude journaling, CBT, mindfulness, breath-work, sleep & lifestyle
- **Me Too Healing Resource Room**- virtual room featuring guided meditations, healing playlists, journaling, & other activities. Almost every object in the room is clickable, and will transport you to an activity, resource, or tool to support folks healing

# Other Social Media Supportive Resources:

Below you will find some additional social media resources which may be supportive to you in your therapy journey:

## **Instagram Resources:**

[@wetheurban](#)

[@thecurvey](#)

[@decolonizingtherapy](#)

[@queersextherapy](#)

[@somaticexperiencingint](#)

[@alexjenny\\_](#)

[@tbuddy\\_](#)

[@trans.peer.mentor.program](#)

[@trans in color](#)

[@seektherapypodcast](#)

[@TCTSY](#)

[@nqttn](#)

[@la.cultura.cura](#)

[@inclusivetherapists](#)

[@mytherapisthelps](#)

[@folxhealth](#)

[@prentishemphill](#)

[@translifeline](#)



# Coloring Activity Page

Take a beat to decompress.

