



HOW TO CHOOSE A TREATMENT PROVIDER

Once you have decided what treatment you want to pursue, it is probably a good idea to contact two or three clinicians who are therapists with the particular expertise you are looking for – for example, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, behavior therapists, psychological counselors, etc. You can find a list of these professionals in the CAR Resource Directory™ within the CAR Autism Roadmap™, as well as from numerous sites on the internet. Take the time to interview each. From the way you interact with each other during the interview, you will learn if your styles are compatible and you will have the concrete and logistical information you will need to choose a treatment provider.

It is most important, as the consumer, to ask any and all questions to be sure that you:

- Will be getting the services and support you are seeking, and
- Hire a professional with experience treating individuals on the autism spectrum.

After these two points, the single most important question is: *Do you feel comfortable talking to this person?* Did he or she help make you feel comfortable asking your questions? Or did the therapist seem annoyed or bothered by your inquiry? It is most important to find a professional that you will be comfortable talking with and asking any and all questions of. Every question is an important one!

If the therapist you are considering passes the first screening, here are the next set of questions:

- Do you hold a license? If so which one (for example, psychology, neuropsychology, school psychology, social work, speech-language pathology, occupational therapy, etc.)?
- What is your area of specialty (for example, treating children, adolescents,

and/or adults?; treating individuals on the autism spectrum or a broader category of patients?)

- How much experience have you had doing this work?
- How much experience do you have working with individuals on the autism spectrum?
- Will you be doing all the treatment yourself, or do you work as a team with other professionals? What are their qualifications and experience?
- Can you provide me with references from other families you have worked with in similar circumstances to my own?
- Do you accept insurance, and if so which? Do you process the insurance payment or provide receipts for insurance reimbursement? (Be sure to check with your insurance company to see how much of the charge is reimbursable.)
- What and how do you charge for your services (for example, sliding scale based on family income, insurance, hourly fee)?
- Do you have a particular theoretical approach to treatment? If so what is it?
- Are your services considered evidence based treatment?
- Do you work with the family as a whole or just the individual on the spectrum? Are parents allowed/required to participate in or observe sessions?
- Do you provide 1 on 1 therapy or group sessions? If both, which do you recommend for my situation?
- How do you structure therapy so as to make it more accessible to an individual on the autism spectrum? Do you use visual supports?
- Do you assign “homework” or things to work on at home?
- How many other clients do you have?
- How frequently do you schedule appointments?
- How long are the appointments?
- Do you set therapy goals? How frequently do you evaluate progress and measure success?
- Do you have an estimated time frame for how long your services will be needed?
- Are you willing to work with my other therapists or educational professionals? (For example, are you available to attend school meetings or to conference with other treatment providers as necessary?) How do you see your role on my existing team?

Claims of cure or guarantees of success should be taken with skepticism. Offering hope is one thing, but promises of cure are another. If a guarantee is made, ask many questions about what it means.

If the treatment provider feels like a good match, go for it! Recognize, however, that it sometimes takes a few months to know if you have a good therapeutic relationship and that the therapy is working. Remember therapy is work; it takes effort from the clinician and client to progress and make change.

Related Articles:

- [Who Are All These Professionals?](#)
- [Evidence Based Practices](#)
- [The Importance of Data Collection in Measuring Progress](#)
- [How Do I Choose a Treatment?](#)

Recommended Link:

- [CAR Resource Directory™](#)

Additional Resources:

- [Guidelines for Choosing an ABA Provider](#)

The Center for Autism Research and The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia do not endorse or recommend any specific person or organization or form of treatment . The information included within the CAR Autism Roadmap & trade; and CAR Resource Directory & trade; should not be considered medical advice and should serve only as a guide to resources publicly and privately available . Choosing a treatment, course of action, and/or a resource is a personal decision, which should take into account each individual's and family's particular circumstances .