

Best
Questions
Therapists &
Counselors
Ask Clients



Therapy Questions To Ask Clients



The Importance of Questions in Therapy & Counseling

Asking the right questions in therapy is considered to be one of the basic counseling and therapy skills.

Well-thought-out, mindful therapy questions allow counselors and therapists to learn more about their clients which is of great importance in the information gathering stage of therapy.

This guide includes some of the basic questions therapist and counselors ask.

Overview of Best Questions Therapists & Counselors Ask Clients



Questions therapists ask will vary depending on the scope of therapy, but regardless of the situation, they will allow you to learn more about your clients and set the tone for subsequent therapy sessions.

While each assessment and the questions asked will vary according to the client's situation and individual needs, we've categorized potential general questions to use in therapy.

- Questions to Ask on the Phone
- First Therapy Session Questions to Ask
- Group Therapy Questions
- Family Therapy Questions to Ask Clients
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Questions to Ask Clients
- Gestalt Therapy Questions to Ask Clients
- Therapeutic Questions for Depression
- Questions to Ask a Resistant Client
- Miracle Questions

Open-Ended and Close-Ended Questions in Therapy and Counseling

In therapy session, you want to gather as much information from the subject as possible.



Use open-ended questions to invite more detailed responses.

There are two main types of questions to ask clients in therapy:

- **Closed-ended:** Are you feeling better today?
(client can give a yes/no answer)
- **Open-ended:** How are you feeling today?
(invites client to elaborate more)

It's up to the therapist to recognize and best determine when to use open and closed questions in therapy. However, therapists are more likely to get the constructive conversation going if they're asking open ended questions.

Questions to Ask on the Phone | Questions Therapists Ask

Most therapists and counselors will offer clients a complimentary phone call so they can get a sense of each other before the first therapy session.

Here are some questions to ask on the phone:

What made you consider therapy now?

Have you been in therapy or counselling before?

What has worked/not worked for you in the past counselling sessions?

What are you looking for in a counselor or therapist?

Do you have any questions for me?

Do you want to schedule an in-person appointment?



A phone consultation involves a short discussion to assess whether there is compatibility between you and the therapist you may collaborate with.

First Therapy Session Questions | Questions Therapists Ask



Typically, the majority of the first therapy session will be dedicated to questions to gather pertinent information about the client.

Why made you seek therapy/counselling now?

What do you expect from therapy/counselling?

How have you been coping with problems that made you seek counseling?

Have you been in therapy/counselling ever before? What was that experience like?

What do you hope to accomplish in therapy/counselling?

How is your relationship with your family?

How do you cope with stress?

What are some of your strengths?

Group Therapy Questions | Questions Therapists Ask



Group therapy questions will vary based on the type of group (i.e., Psychoeducational groups, Cognitive-behavioral/problem-solving groups, Support groups, etc.).

Is it your personal decision to come here, or did someone else encourage or force you to do so?

What do you like best about group therapy session?

What coping strategies are you using to cope with and manage your addiction/behavior triggers?

What are you grateful for in life and why?

What are some things that make you feel stressed? How are you coping with stress?

What are 3 things you like about yourself? Explain why.

Discuss goals you want to achieve in group therapy.

What are three bad habits that you'd like to replace with good ones?

What are the good habits you can replace the bad ones with?

Family Therapy Questions | Questions Therapists Ask



Family therapy is a type of counselling that helps families address and solve conflicts and improve communication.

Why are you seeking family therapy?

What changes do you want to see within your family?

What do you expect from the family therapy?

What are you willing to do to make the changes happen?

What have you done as a family so far to improve the situation?

Does everyone in the family therapy session agree that changes need to happen?

What will be different if the family decides to make the changes?

What do you want to see improved for each family member?

How is each family member progressing?

How do you think you can rebuild the relationship?

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Questions | Questions Therapists Ask

There are 3 most commonly asked cognitive behavioral therapy questions to ask clients are also known as the “Three Rational Questions” technique.

Therapist instructs the client to ask themselves the following 3 cognitive behavioral therapy questions:

- Is the thought I’m having based on fact?
- Does that thought help me achieve my goals?
- Does that thought help me feel the way I want to feel?

If the client’s response is a “No” to at least two out of these three cognitive behavioral therapy questions to ask clients, then they know the thought they’re having is irrational.



Cognitive behavioral therapy is a type of therapy where therapist or counselor works on producing change by helping unlearn behaviors that don't serve them and helping them relearn specific behaviors.

Gestalt Therapy Questions | Questions Therapists Ask

The point in Gestalt therapy questions to ask clients is for therapist to guide them toward better understanding of the life they're currently living. Since this type of therapy focuses on "right now" vs "past", Gestalt therapy questions to ask clients are "what" and "how" types.

How are you feeling now?

What are you thinking right now?

How does your body feel at the present moment?

What mood is evoked now?

How should I support you?

What are your body language and facial expressions saying right now?



Gestalt therapy is a humanistic, individual-centered type of therapy that focuses on person's present issues vs digging into their history of issues and experiences.

Therapeutic Questions for Depression | Questions Therapists Ask

There are many different types of questions for depression that therapist or counselor may ask their clients.

Questions therapists ask depressed patients will vary but some of the most common therapeutic questions for depression are:

What are the issues or problems that brought you to therapy?

What's your family history?

Have you attempted harming yourself?

How is your relationship with others around you?



Most mental health practitioners will conduct one of many types of depression screening questionnaires to best determine what depression symptoms client has been experiencing.

Questions to Ask a Resistant Client | Questions Therapists Ask

Resistance usually comes when a particularly distressing and uncomfortable issue is brought up during a therapy or counselling session.

When such issue arises, what questions to ask a resistant client? Or what not to ask?

It is widely recommended that instead of thinking about what questions to ask a resistant client, therapists and counselors should aim to use statements that encourage clients to open up.

Guiding clients to explore their own ability reason, desire, and need to change is far more effective in reaching resistant client than pondering on what question to ask a resistant client (and potentially causing even more distress).



The term "resistance" is interpreted as indication of therapist conduct rather than client characteristic.

Miracle Questions | Questions SFBT Therapists Ask



Solution focused brief therapy (SFBT) is a type of therapy based on building solutions rather than problem solving.

“Miracle Questions Technique” is used to help clients think outside the box.

Imagine that one night the miracle occurs and your depression is entirely gone! When you wake up in the morning:

How do you know that this miracle has truly happened?

What’s different in how you feel?

What’s different about your life?

What will others notice about your new self?

By allowing the client to visualize themselves depression free, clients can create some space between themselves and their depression. In return, this method allows them to distance themselves from their depression and allows them to set future goals.

Conclusion

These therapy and counseling questions are designed to get you started thinking about the scope of the questions in therapy and counseling sessions.

While not all of the questions will apply to every therapist's sessions, it is essential to be aware of different types of questions and adjust them to client's unique situation and needs.

You can find further information on therapy, counseling, and social work assessments, intake forms, best practices, and more at [Socialworkportal.com](https://www.socialworkportal.com).



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