

SIX SIGNS YOUR THERAPIST IS CULTURALLY SENSITIVE

Use this checklist when choosing a therapist to work with. You may observe these elements in a initial consult or during your first sessions with a therapist. These factors may also help guide you in finding a therapist.

THEY KNOW THEY DON'T HAVE ALL THE ANSWERS.

Humility can be the foundation of a great therapist. When your therapist welcomes feedback and embraces growth, it doesn't make you feel like they have all the answers about you and your culture. Therapy works well when you work with your therapist as a team.

THEY ACKNOWLEDGE THAT DISCRIMINATION IS REAL.

Your therapist understands that discrimination is a common experience for a member of a marginalized community. When you discuss these experiences, they don't try to convince you it's all in your mind, but instead try to understand how these experiences have affected you.

THEY ASK AND TALK ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND AND IDENTITY.

Cultural background and various aspects of your identity are topics that are openly discussed in your sessions. Your culture, background and identity may even be considered in your treatment plan.

THEY USE WORDS THAT MAKE YOU FEEL SAFE AND UNDERSTOOD.

While many therapists are well-intentioned, the language they might use to describe you, your family or your culture could be offensive or feel biased. It's hard to develop psychological safety when this happens.

THEY RECOGNIZE STRENGTHS OF YOUR CULTURE AND IDENTITY.

Culture is not something that needs to be wiped away, but something that can be celebrated. This is especially true with the aspects that resonate with you and the values you align with. A culturally sensitive therapist will help explore this with you.

THEY DON'T MAKE ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT YOU.

Yes, you're from a specific background or identify with a specific community, but it doesn't mean everyone from your culture or community is the same. You don't feel stereotyped or judged wrongly by your therapist because their approach to culture is nuanced.