

An FAQ to Choosing a Kink Aware Therapist How Do I Actually Find a Therapist?

First of all, you can use the [Kink Aware Professionals](http://www.ncsfreedom.org/index.php?option=com_keyword&id=270) website owned by the National Coalition for Sexual Freedom (NCSF). (http://www.ncsfreedom.org/index.php?option=com_keyword&id=270)

This website allows you to search for kink-aware professionals across the United States and some other countries as well. Depending upon the size of your metropolitan area, you may be able to find someone. If you find someone who is not in your immediate vicinity, don't despair. Try calling that practitioner and asking them if they can recommend a therapist in your location..

Local BDSM groups would be your next good choice for seeking a good therapy referral. If you are fortunate enough to live in a community that has these resources, you can ask on a message board or via an email list. Your local LGBT resource center may be another good referral source. If you are unable to find a kink-aware professional, a therapist who maintains an LGBT-friendly practice may be a good choice.

Another way to find a therapist is to ask your friends and family if they have worked with someone they like. When taking a referral from a friend or family member, it's always a good idea to consider whether you or the referral source will feel comfortable working with the same therapist. It is up to you (and your friend or family member) to decide whether the benefits outweigh the risks. Some therapists also have their own policies about whether they will treat people who are closely involved with one another.

Once you've got some names, you may want to decide whether the therapist's degree and training matter to you. It is a matter of personal preference. Some people prefer to work with those who hold doctorates, some prefer those who have had different types of training. Many people decide that ultimately, the level of training matters less than personality and how it feels to sit in the same room as the therapist. To learn more about what all those degrees mean, see the complete ***Guide to Choosing a Kink Aware Therapist.***

It is perfectly acceptable to call a few therapists when you are trying to make that first appointment. Make a list of your questions. Some question to possibly have on your list are:

- 1) What is your license?
- 2) How long have you been practicing?
- 3) What theoretical model do you use?
- 4) Can you describe your style?
- 5) Do you do short or long-term treatment? How frequently do you meet with your clients (once a week or more)?
- 6) What do you charge?
- 7) What is your payment policy?
- 8) What is your cancellation policy?
- 9) Do you have an area of expertise or specialty?
- 10) Is your practice LGBT friendly?
- 11) Are you familiar with BDSM? What are your beliefs about it?
- 12) Do you consider your practice kink-friendly? How many kinky clients have you seen?

It is ok to say no. It is completely appropriate to speak briefly with a therapist on the phone and decide to decline their offer of an initial appointment. You can say that you don't think you're a good fit. However, sometimes the fit must ultimately be assessed by how you feel when you sit in the room and talk to this person. Do you feel listened to? Understood? Do you have a good feeling from the interaction? Be aware that if you are in the middle of a painful process, that therapy can often leave you with difficult feelings of sadness, anger, or pain, but you should not be feeling that the therapist him or herself is causing these feelings.

You should also be aware that while it is okay to meet with several different therapists when you are looking for one with whom you are comfortable, once you've decided to continue with someone, you should not meet with more than one person.

Kinky is NOT a diagnosis.

It's important to find a therapist who is understanding and supportive of your lifestyle. BDSM is not in and of itself a pathological disorder but is, rather, something that can be a healthy part of your life and identity. You deserve to find a therapist who has information about the diversity and range of sexual expression.

To make a more educated choice see the [Guide to Choosing a Kink Aware Therapist.](#)