
Finding a Trauma-Informed Therapist

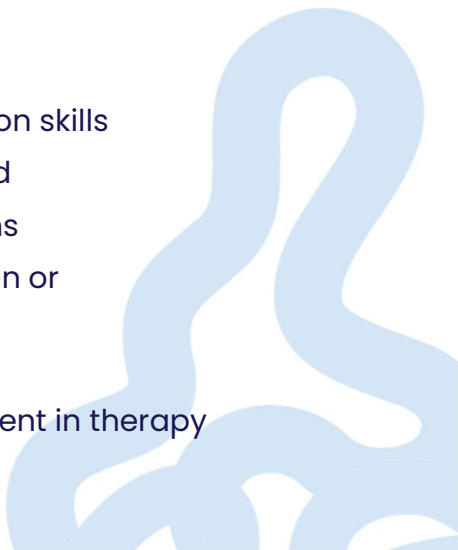
Many therapists describe their practice as “trauma-informed”. However, supporting people living with complex trauma or dissociation often requires specialist training and experience.

Look for a therapist who:

- Has specialist training and experience in supporting people living with the impacts of complex trauma
- Understands complex trauma and its long-term impacts on the nervous system, relationships and sense of self
- Is comfortable working with trauma and dissociation over the long term, rather than expecting quick results
- Is willing to focus on stabilisation and coping skills before trauma processing if needed
- Is open to consultation or further learning if complex trauma or dissociation arises in therapy
- Prioritises safety and stabilisation
- Respects your boundaries
- Moves at a pace that feels manageable and safe for you
- Works collaboratively with you

Signs of a Trauma-Informed Therapist

A trauma-informed therapist will:

- Explain the process of therapy clearly
 - Ask for your consent
 - Collaborate with you
 - Support you to develop grounding and emotional regulation skills
 - Adjust therapy if you become overwhelmed or destabilised
 - Checks regularly about how you are feeling during sessions
 - Helps you develop skills to manage flashbacks, dissociation or overwhelming emotions
 - Supports you to build safety and stability in everyday life
 - Is comfortable talking about boundaries, pacing and consent in therapy
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Signs a Therapist May Not Be Trauma-Informed

Possible red flags include a therapist who:

- Pressures you to discuss trauma immediately
- Dismisses dissociation or trauma impacts
- Minimises your experiences
- Moves too quickly into trauma processing
- Does not recognise or understand dissociation or its impacts
- Suggests that recovery should be quick or that you should “just move on” from trauma
- Does not adjust therapy if you become overwhelmed or destabilised

If Therapy Starts to Feel Overwhelming

Trauma therapy should move at a pace that feels manageable and safe. At times therapy can bring up difficult emotions. However, you should still feel supported and able to regain a sense of stability.

If therapy starts to feel overwhelming, you can:

- Tell your therapist how you are feeling and ask to slow down
- Ask to focus on grounding, stabilisation or coping skills
- Discuss whether trauma processing should pause for a period of time
- Seek a second opinion from another trauma-informed professional if needed

A trauma-informed therapist should be open to adjusting the pace and focus of therapy so that it remains safe and supportive. If you consistently feel overwhelmed, pressured or unsupported in therapy, it may be helpful to explore other options or seek advice from another professional.

You deserve therapy that feels safe, respectful and supportive. It is okay to ask questions, take time to find the right therapist, or change therapists if needed.