

How did you know it was time to find a therapist?

Things weren't going back to "normal" - poor quality of life

I was having frequent triggers, panic attacks, nightmares, & flashbacks, that interfered with my daily life (sleeping, eating, taking care of my family, working, errands, etc.)

I was angry/ negative/ agitated all the time

I felt numb and was unable to connect with others

Had unhealthy behaviors to avoid thinking/ feeling - such as abusing substances, self-harm, disordered eating, working too much, etc.

How did you know that you needed a different therapist?

It just didn't feel right

They couldn't handle my trauma (they reacted by either crying, saying something offensive, appearing horrified, said they could not treat me)

They seemed too curious or fascinated by my story

They do not have any/enough experience working with trauma

They did not adequately explain or change their approach (with EMDR or other tactics) to meet my unique needs/ beliefs

I wasn't making progress because we were just having conversation

Entering therapy after experiencing a mass tragedy can be a vulnerable and difficult process for some. Knowing that you've found a proper therapist for your specific needs can drastically improve your experience in healing & recovery. You may not even know exactly what your needs are upon entering help - and that's okay. Feeling as though you're developing a safe space & relationship with those who help in your recovery is key. We hope you see this as a helpful guide in terms of how numerous survivors of mass tragedy discovered whether they were receiving proper help in their healing.

How did you know that you found the right therapist?

Experience/ expertise working with survivors of mass tragedies or had specialized training in treating trauma

Listened to my story without having their own emotional reaction

The questions they ask correlated well with my trauma & I wasn't shamed if didn't have answers

Good availability - stayed consistent, weekly appointments, open to being contacted outside of sessions if necessary

I felt comfortable with them - good connection / good fit

The therapist is likable, trustworthy, genuine, honest, listens without judgment

How did you know that therapy was helping?

I was more present in my life (at work, with family, in relationships, in friendships & in daily routines)

I was sleeping, eating, & socializing regularly

I wasn't having as many or any triggers, nightmares, panic attacks, flashbacks, etc.

I can stay calm/ grounded when I am triggered, and my reaction does not last very long

I can laugh without feeling guilty

My emotions stopped being unpredictable or all over the place

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