

## Building a Good Rapport from Your First Session with a Therapist

When going to see a counsellor or hypnotherapist for the first time, your initial consultation is important for both yourself and them for a number of reasons; not least because it is a chance for both of you to see if you can work together and strike up a rapport.

Rapport is a mutual trust and confidence between two people and is extremely important for effective therapy to take place. You need to trust your therapist in order to open up and share with them some sometimes very personal information.

Rapport starts from the very moment you meet your therapist. He or she should present themselves as friendly and professional. They will want to gain your trust, because the more you relax, the better and faster you are likely to get benefit from the therapy sessions.

A large proportion of clients coming to see a counsellor or hypnotherapist will never have experienced this kind of therapy before, and may be nervous or anxious and not entirely know what to expect. It is the therapists' responsibility to put their mind at ease, to reassure them and help them to address any questions or concerns that they may have regarding counselling or hypnosis, in this initial session.

Sharing very personal, embarrassing or sometimes painful information with a stranger can sometimes be difficult. A good therapist will be aware of this at all times and will not lose sight of the fact that the entire process is very important to the individual who has chosen to come to see them.

Sometimes you may feel that there is very private or confidential information that you don't want to blurt out on the first session. That's fine; this is why therapists see you for a number of sessions. The initial session is there for you to start to tell your story, but you don't have to rush at all out at once, you can take your time and work through your problems in the safety of their office, just at the right pace for you.

The therapist should look professional; perhaps smart-casual in appearance and clean and tidy.

The environment in which the hypnotherapy takes place should also appear professional, clutter free and a comfortable, relaxing space to be. Perhaps the therapist will provide you with a reclining chair or a comfortable sofa on which to relax, a cushion and a blanket, perhaps a glass of water.

In the first consultation the therapist will often fill out a client questionnaire. It is at this time that information such as your name, address, Doctors details etc can be gathered.

Additional, more in-depth information can also be asked, such as what kind of issues you would like to address, and a history of how these issues are presenting themselves in your life.

You may also be asked about previous therapies you may have tried, and how effective those were for you.

The initial consultation is also the perfect time for you to ask about client confidentiality. It's important that you know how your information will be shared. Usually, the therapist is bound by his or her code of ethics to keep your information totally confidential, with very few exceptions. You should ask all about these things and be comfortable with how your therapist operates before continuing with your sessions. Some therapists actually have a hand out that they give you, or get you to sign on your first session; this is so that they know you understand their procedures.

Good therapists will ensure that they work at all times in a professional and competent manner. This means working within a code of ethics as set out by a governing body. These societies publish a code of ethics to help registered therapists practice within a set of professional boundaries.

The initial consultation is also a good opportunity to talk about the length of therapy that you may need and the costs involved.

Remember, when you are going to see your therapist for the first time, you can ask absolutely anything you wish. You may like to jot down a few notes to take with you. Rest assured, it won't be the first time that the therapist will have had clients bringing notes to a session.

Your therapist is there to ensure that you have a safe place where you can explore ideas and feelings, emotions and worries. You should have built up a nice friendly rapport with them by the time the initial session is over and be looking forward to your next session together!

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