



emotionsmatter

BPD advocacy • awareness • connection

www.emotionsmatterbpd.org

Peer Strategies for Finding a Therapist to Treat Borderline Personality Disorder

People with BPD might need different treatments at various stages of recovery. It can be challenging to find affordable, trained clinicians. Here are some tips from people with lived experience of BPD on this topic, as presented at Emotions Matter's Virtual Conference, **BPDFest22**.



Learn about BPD Treatments, and Research Therapists

- **Every case of BPD is different for each person.** Find a therapist who understands your specific BPD symptoms, and how they uniquely affect you.
- **There are five evidence-based treatments for BPD.** Consider what might be the best approach for you (<https://emotionsmatterbpd.org/what-is-bpd>).
- **Google is your best friend**, and a good source for finding therapists. There are also national databases to search for BPD trained clinicians (www.behavioraltech.org, www.nyp.org/bpdresourcecenter).
- **Consider Telehealth options** if you cannot find in-person specialists who can meet your needs. Some BPD providers in other states will take insurance across state lines.
- **Check your insurance provider's website** and explore the "Find a Provider" options. Sometimes your insurance company will list provider specialties in-network, and can be a good place to start to see who is covered by your plan.
- **Explore employer based mental health benefits**, which sometimes include free therapy, coaching or case management, for short-term support.



Interview Potential BPD Therapists

- **Meet with therapists before committing to work with them** by phone, Zoom or in person.
- **Meet with multiple clinicians**, if possible. More options give you more opportunity to find someone who will be a good fit for you.
- **Clarify your treatment objectives** with your therapist and develop recovery goals ahead of time.
- **Consider what other areas of expertise you may be looking for** in addition to BPD, which may include trauma, dual-diagnosis, alternative therapeutic approaches, or other issues that are meaningful to you.



emotions *matter*

BPD advocacy • awareness • connection

www.emotionsmatterbpd.org



Questions to Ask During the Interview

Ask therapists about their specific training and experience with BPD. For example:

- Are you comfortable treating BPD?
- What do you know about BPD, and how extensive is your training?
- Are you certified in any of the evidence-based BPD treatments?
- What is/are your therapy approaches?
- How available are you outside of session for coaching or consultation?
- How do you handle chronic self-harm or suicidality? Am I going to be hospitalized every time I bring that up?
- What is your approach to medication and/or collaborating with other members of my treatment team, such as a psychiatrist or case manager?
- How would we go about creating a safety plan and what would that look like?

Ask therapists about any insurance and payment related questions. For example:

- Do you take insurance and what are your insurance policies?
- What are the costs for each session?
- If a co-pay is owed at time of session, how can I pay this?
- What is your cancellation policy/are there cancellation fees?
- Where are you licensed to practice? Do you take patients from out of state? If so, what state?

Ask therapists about their experiences working with clients similar to you and your background. For example:

- Have you worked with (people with disabilities, adopted people before, people with complex trauma, LGBTQ+ people, people from __x__ cultural backgrounds, many people of color) before?
- Do you have fluency in languages other than English?
- Do you have specific training to work with people from diverse backgrounds?



I saw many therapists and I'm talking about dozens before I found a psychologist, not a psychiatrist, who did therapy with me and really helped me.

-BPDFest22 Panelist





emotionsmatter

BPD advocacy • awareness • connection

www.emotionsmatterbpd.org



Knowing if a Therapist is the Right Fit

- **It is important to select a therapist with whom there is a good fit.** The relationship between an individual with BPD and their therapist is central to recovery.
- **Pay attention to how you are feeling about the therapist** during the interviews. This may give insights into how a future relationship would turn out.
- **It may be the right fit if** the therapist is knowledgeable about BPD, compassionate and validating, offering a treatment plan to meet your needs.
- **Discuss how you feel about the therapist's responses.** If the therapist gives a response that feels invalidating, be direct and honest with them about how and why you felt invalidated. Understand that not all therapists are experienced in working with BPD patients and symptoms.
- **Don't take rejection personally.** If a therapist tells you they are not experienced in BPD, and may not be able to work with you. It may feel like a rejection, but it is better for you to know upfront about the therapist's training.
- **It's okay to meet with a new therapist** for a few sessions and see how it goes if things feel like they could be better in therapy.
- **Don't feel bad about dropping a therapist** after starting with them. If after a few sessions, things aren't clicking, it is also okay to give notice, stop seeing them, and continue your search.



It can be hard to find a good therapist. It took a while. I went through a lot of them before I found a good fit—someone who understands how I think and has experience treating BPD.

-BPDFest22 Panelist



Making a Decision - Trust Your Gut

- **Do what feels right to you.** Honor what you need, even if other people think differently.
- **It is ok to say "no"** to working with a therapist, if it does not feel right.
- **There is a therapist out there who will say "yes,"** who wants to work with you, and can help you manage your symptoms.
- **Every case of BPD is different,** so finding what feels right in your case is important. Ultimately, you know yourself, your symptoms, and how you are feeling better than anyone else. Trust your instincts about what you need in a therapist to move forward in your recovery.



emotionsmatter

BPD advocacy • awareness • connection

www.emotionsmatterbpd.org

Finding a Therapist Resources

New York-Presbyterian Hospital Borderline Personality Disorder

Resource Center: 1-888-694-2273

Email: bpdresourcecenter@nyp.org

Website: <http://www.nyp.org/bpdresourcecenter>

Behavioral Tech: <http://www.behavioraltech.org>

McLean Hospital in Boston, MA

<https://www.mcleanhospital.org/borderline-personality-disorder>

National Education Alliance for Borderline Personality Disorder

<https://www.borderlinepersonalitydisorder.org/list-of-recommended-bpd-resources>

About Emotions Matter

Emotions Matter, Inc. is a non-profit 501c3 organization founded in 2015 to advocate, educate and support those impacted by borderline personality disorder (BPD). Our vision is to create a world in which every person with BPD has access to treatment, resources or support to achieve recovery. We work toward this vision by offering BPD peer support group programs, stigma-free resources, and educational workshops.

Get Involved with Emotions Matter!

For more information:

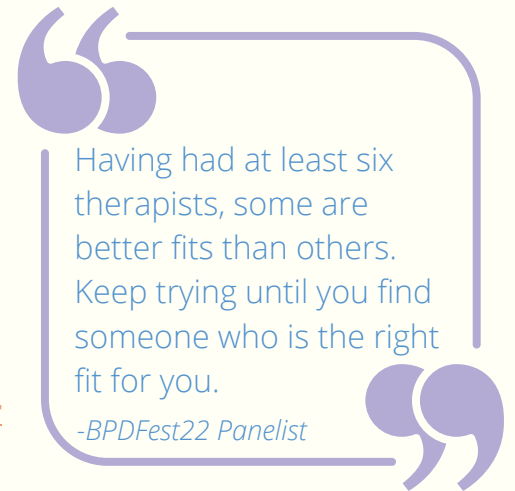
www.emotionsmatterbpd.org

info@emotionsmatterbpd.org

Emotions Matter, Inc.

PO Box 7042, Garden City, NY 11530

516-350-8387



Having had at least six therapists, some are better fits than others. Keep trying until you find someone who is the right fit for you.

-BPDFest22 Panelist