



QUESTIONS TO ASK A COUNSELLOR



A GUIDE FOR PARENTS OF NEURODIVERGENT TEENS

Finding the right therapist for your teenager can feel overwhelming — especially if your child is neurodivergent and has specific needs or communication styles. This guide is here to help you ask the right questions and feel empowered in your search.

A good counsellor will welcome your curiosity and be open about how they work. You're not being difficult — you're advocating for your child.

Connection Matters

Before we get to the questions, remember this:

The relationship between counsellor and client is the most important part of therapy. It's okay to prioritise warmth, understanding, and connection over qualifications alone — though those matter too!

Key Questions to Ask

Here are some helpful questions to ask when speaking to a potential counsellor. You can ask these during an initial call or email exchange, or even in the first session.

About Experience & Training

- Do you have experience working with neurodivergent teens (e.g., autism, ADHD, PDA)?
- What training have you completed in neurodivergence or neuroaffirming practice?
- Have you worked with young people who have sensory differences, social anxiety, or demand avoidance?

About Their Approach

- How do you tailor sessions to fit the needs of neurodivergent clients?
- What does a typical session look like?
- Are you comfortable with alternative ways of communicating (e.g., silence, drawing, using special interests)?
- How do you build trust with teens who may find therapy challenging or anxiety-inducing?

About Involvement & Boundaries

- How involved will I be as a parent or carer?
- How do you manage confidentiality with young clients?
- How do you communicate with families about progress or concerns?

About Flexibility & Accessibility

- Do you offer remote sessions if needed? Are they suitable for teens?
- Are you able to adapt your environment or approach for sensory needs?
- Can sessions include things like movement, fidgeting, or time away from eye contact?

About Values & Ethics

- Do you work in a neuroaffirming way?
- How do you support autonomy and self-advocacy in your clients?
- Are you a member of a professional body like the BACP?

What Does "Neuroaffirming" Mean?

A neuroaffirming therapist recognises that neurodivergence is not something to be "fixed" — it's a natural part of human variation. They'll validate your child's experience, work with their strengths, and never force them to mask or fit into rigid norms.

Tips

- Trust your gut — if something feels off or rushed, it's okay to keep looking.
- Include your teen — ask if they want to meet the counsellor before committing.
- Be patient — the right fit might take time, and that's okay.

You're Not Alone

Supporting a neurodivergent teen takes strength, love, and resilience. You deserve guidance and support too.

We run a free monthly support group for parents of neurodivergent teens — come join us:

Birkenhead Park Counselling Centre

4th Thursday of each month

Run by myself and Dr Lucy Hanson

We also offer The Stim Space – a monthly social group for neurodivergent teens.

Follow on instagram to find out more...

