

The Twelve Greatest Mistakes Therapists Make

1. Practicing therapy when you are not healthy is not fair to your client—license or no license.
2. Having poor boundaries and relationship skills or knowledge how to have a clean fight will cause you to misrepresent yourself and give bad advice.
3. Having a weak theoretical background will create blind spots in perception.
 - A. You must understand the critical causes of personality in childhood from killers to saints.
 - B. You need to understand the importance of attachment theory, trauma theory and family systems or interaction theory in resilience and creating personality.
 - C. You need to be aware of theoretical issues of our culture:
 - a. The motives and ramifications in believing in beliefs in genetics
 - b. The myths, public relations and faulty research supporting genetics
 - c. The influence of the pharmaceutical industry on research
 - d. The influence of the medical model on treatment
 - e. The influence of the women's movement on daycare for infants
4. Lack of correct parenting information and failure to warn pregnant parents to do whatever they can to stay home the first three years
5. Failure to recognize the causes of children's acting out behaviors or to refer to an expert
6. Failure to understand clearly how the body works to heal emotional trauma
7. Failure to understand how wrong beliefs impact the healing process
8. Failure to understand the difference between assessment and judgment
9. Failure to understand the ethics of mental health
10. Failure to understand the impact of repression has on mental health
11. Failure to consult when you are over your head.
12. We become overly invested in confidentiality so that we unconsciously lead our clients into a secretive lifestyle instead of an open one.

How to Assess a Therapist

If I were in your shoes, I'd ask these questions and look for answers similar to what I offer after each question.

Do you believe a therapist has to have good mental health?

Yes. (Watch out for a hesitation.)

What do you think of putting an infant or toddler in daycare?

It's a bad idea if you can avoid it. If you can't avoid it try to make up for it any way possible (extra time, extra quality, extra understanding).

How do you handle a disagreement?

I never quit in the middle of an issue. I try to stick it out. I try to listen and understand. I try to explain my point in a respectful way.

What percent of a person's behavior do you attribute to genetics?

Very little, if any.

Do you judge your clients?

No, I try to understand them.

Do you judge their behaviors?

I believe bad behaviors are the result of a lack of mental health. I think it is important to teach healthy ethics sometime. Lots of times a change in ethics improves mental health.

How do you determine right and wrong?

My primary consideration is whether or not my actions can ultimately and predictably hurt someone. I hold others to the same standard. I treat bad behavior like addiction. I won't enable it.

Do you give advice that a good parent would give a child?

Yes. Everybody should have had good parenting. It's never too late for guidance.

What are the most important issues in parenting?

Attachment, safety, coaching, only disciplining a child who feels cherished, learning self-regulation, consistency of discipline, personal responsibility and providing safety to a child to tell the truth of one's feelings and thoughts, as long as it is respectful.

If I ask a relevant question will you answer it?

Yes, of course.

Do you believe it's important to understand the impact of childhood trauma?

Yes, of course.

How to Get Causal Therapy When there Are None Around

When it's legal for a California therapist (coming soon?) to Skype out of state of the country, it will be easier. Still, you will need to address the issue of couchwork. You can get instructions from *The Manual*, but you do need a witness.

You may want to use "How to Assess a Therapist" in order to interview therapists.

Some therapists are amenable to reading *The Manual* and applying the principles to their work with you. They may need to talk about the concepts with you, if you are appreciating something out of their "wheel house". A really good therapist won't need to be the expert at all times, but you must give them respect, especially if *you* are to grow.

This is an invitation to any therapist who has read *The Manual* or watched the tapes to notify us their name, office address, email and/or phone number.

Critical Reading List

I wanted to present a reading list of the thirty most game-changing books of which I know, so a reader could fill out their theoretical understanding in the most efficient possible way. It was a painful pruning process. A more complete list of the books that have aided my theoretical understanding of behavior are in the References section of my books. I have represented many of these essential texts in the books I have written. So, for these reasons I have 29 books on this list, five of which are mine, written for this very purpose to fill in the holes as efficiently as possible. I have included another eighteen articles. I have bolded my eleven most favorite books.

Articles

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