



## HEADINGTON INSTITUTE

*Care for Caregivers Worldwide*

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### FINDING A COUNSELOR WHO SUITS YOU

Selecting a counselor is an important and individual process. A counselor who works well with one person may not be the best choice for another person. If you see a counselor listed in CARD with whom you may be interested in making an appointment, you might wish to contact him/her by phone or email first to find out more about the counselor's licensure, approach to counseling, level of training, experience with certain issues, or billing practices.

You can let the counselor know you're thinking of making an appointment and ask if s/he has a couple of minutes to talk with you before you make a decision. You should not use all of this time to explain at length why you want to make an appointment. If you *do* end up making an appointment, then you can discuss this during your counseling session. Instead, you might want to ask some questions that can help you get a better feel for this counselor and whether you feel comfortable talking to him/her.

Here are some questions you could ask:

- Can you tell me a bit more about your training and experience? Are you a licensed mental health professional?
- Can you tell me a bit more about your general approach to counseling?
- What do you enjoy about counseling?
- *If you feel comfortable naming the issue that you want to work on in general terms (e.g., "issues related to humanitarian field work," "child-rearing problems," "marital issues"), you might ask, "How much experience do you have working with people with this concern?"*
- How long (over time) do you generally like to see clients?
- Can you tell me more about your fee structure/how you handle billing? (*Either on the phone or in your first meeting, the counselor should provide information about procedural matters – fees, meeting times, availability, confidentiality, etc.*)

When you meet with a counselor, you might want to ask yourself whether this is a person with whom you feel comfortable talking. You may need to talk with the counselor more than once to know the answer to that question. Do you feel the counselor is listening to you? Does the counselor treat you with respect? Does the counselor respond to your questions constructively?

If you have any concerns about the competency or legitimacy of any particular counselor, you should contact a different counselor.

Remember that the Headington Institute does not examine, determine, or provide a warranty with respect to the competence of any counselor listed in CARD, neither can we verify that they have the experience and training they have listed in the CARD directory. It is up to you to determine the competence and suitability of the counselor you are contacting.

All the best,  
The Headington Institute