

# SANE AUSTRALIA

SANE Australia Online Peer Group

Date: 24/02/2022

**Topic:** Finding The Right Therapist For You

**Description:** It can be difficult to find a therapist who feels like the right fit for you. In this discussion, we will talking about ways to select the counsellor/ psychologist who best suits your needs.

mrnobody2021(PSW)

Thank you for joining, and we hope you enjoyed the discussion 😊 If you'd like to be informed when our next Peer Group Chat will be taking place, you can sign up to our mailing list here <https://www.sane.org/peer-support/online-mental-health-meet-up>. You can also ask questions for us to discuss in future peer chats!

Welcome everyone to today's Peer Group Chat talking about finding the right therapist for you. This is a new peer support service we are trialling. Because of this, we really value your thoughts on how it goes, so we will send a link to a short survey at the end of this event for you to complete. While this survey is optional, it is a chance to provide feedback for us to improve our services. In case you might need to leave part way through the event, you can find the survey here now: [https://sane.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_5uUF0sHJRKQ6wyW](https://sane.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5uUF0sHJRKQ6wyW)

mrnobody2021 (PSW)

Tonight, peer support workers @TideisTurning (PSW) and @mrnobody2021 will be facilitating a discussion around the topic of Finding The Right Therapist For You. Whether you have lived experience of complex mental health issues, you care for someone who does, or both. We'll be moving through a number of discussion questions tonight,

and it's entirely up to you how much or how little you are comfortable with sharing. Some of the conversation may be heavy in nature as we talk about mental health struggles.

@Jynx who moderates on the SANE Forums, is working behind the scenes to ensure our safety. If you're having any technical difficulties, please see our FAQ (<https://www.sane.org/peer-support/peer-group-chat/chat-faqs#what-if-i-am-having-a-tough-time-and-need-immediate-support>) or message @Jynx.

**mrnobody2021 (PSW)** We will be starting the discussion shortly, and will just allow a bit more time for people to log on and join 😊

**TideisTurning (PSW)** Hi @Millieme :)

Millieme Hi

**mrnobody2021 (PSW)** Welcome everyone! Feel free to introduce yourselves. I'm @mrnobody2021

Millieme Im millieme

**mrnobody2021 (PSW)** Nice to meet you Millieme! Thanks for joining :)

Millieme i havent 'been' to one of these before

Jynx

(Moderator) Hey gang! I'm Jynx, I'll be your resident moderator and occasional contributor ;)

**mrnobody2021 (PSW)** **OK lets get things started :) What are you looking for in a therapist?**  
someone who understands? or knows what your might need/benefit from to progress, or function or im not sure maybe,

Millieme

**TideisTurning (PSW)** What I look for is someone to support and work with me as I navigate life. I really appreciate therapists who can provide space and validation as well as working together with me to find strategies to help me move forward.

**mrnobody202**

**1 (PSW)**

Absolutely @Millieme :)

**TideisTurning**

**(PSW)**

Absolutely @Millieme Someone to help be a guide perhaps?

Millieme

yes, i think you said it well Tideis Turning

**mrnobody202**

**1 (PSW)**

**What have your experiences been finding a therapist (psychologist, counsellor) in the past?**

**TideisTurning**

**(PSW)**

Hi @Shaz51 :) Welcome

Millieme

am in country area so havent had 'options' just who was physically here

Shaz51

Hello @TideisTurning (PSW)

**mrnobody202**

**1 (PSW)**

Oh thats interesting @Millieme . So I assume you have very few therapists to chose from if you want face to face sessions?

**TideisTurning**

**(PSW)**

That's tough @Millieme having those limitations.

Millieme

that probably sounded terrible, i have had two very wonderful psychologists

**mrnobody202**

**1 (PSW)**

Well thats good to hear :)

**Jynx**

**(Moderator)**

I think it's only been through having seen quite a few therapists over the years that I now know what I'm looking for. I've been referred so many times but my latest therapist is someone I found myself, online, and honestly it's been so much better.

Millieme

but they dont stay in country areas either

**TideisTurning**

**(PSW)**

Not terrible. It can be hard when there's a limited pool of professionals to choose from, and when they move out of area!

**mrnobody202**

**1 (PSW)**

Welcome @Shaz51 :D

Shaz51

Hello @mrnobody2021 (PSW)

yes, i think right now there are 3 therapists in my area. (within 100km), one is just about to finish. my son has been on waiting list for 9 months to see someone. online is not option really for me because struggle with

Millieme

communication speaking

**mrnobody2021 (PSW)**

Yeah wow that's really tough @Millieme There really needs to be more resources available to people living regional/rural areas

**mrnobody2021 (PSW)**

**What are some of your needs you need to consider when you are finding a mental health professional? For example, financial limitations, availability, expertise, competence in working with particular communities you are a part of such as CALD, LGBTIQA+, disability?**

Millieme

for me, i find it very hard to feel safe with males (i know rationally that isnt fair to them), need a lot of patience and time to be able to feel safe enough and long term enough to get to that point where it can feel helpful so probably someone with trauma awareness and understanding of communication challenges

Millieme

financial is also a big issue

**Jynx (Moderator)**

That's not uncommon @Millieme to want a specific gender. Everyone has a right to feel safe and supported with their therapist after all ;) For me I'm typically looking for someone who is neurodiverse, or extremely well-versed in neurodiversity, so they can understand how my brain functions.

**TideisTurning (PSW)**

That's a really good thing to know @Millieme, and know that's ok too. It's ok to seek out what you need for therapy to be most effective and safest for you :)

**TideisTurning (PSW)**

For me, one of the biggest considerations is flexibility, both in willingness to be flexible with their approach (for example, tailoring it to suit my needs and going with me where I'm at rather than being rigid with an idea of how a particular modality 'should' go). Also in terms of appointment times, and options like telehealth, to allow me to continue accessing support in and around other things like work (i.e my wonderful therapist was able to provide a telehealth session this afternoon rather than face to face, which allowed me to be here with all of you now)

Millieme

i sorry have to go kids are needing me thank you for chat

**Jynx (Moderator)**

No worries @Millieme take care <3

**mrnobody2021 (PSW)**

**It's also important to let your health professional know if you aren't happy with the progress you're making. They may be able to adapt their structure, strategy, style or tone to something that's more effective for you. Have you found yourself in this situation before? If so, how did you give this feedback?**

**TideisTurning (PSW)**

I have, many times, though it doesn't occur to me to actually have that conversation with them to see if they can adapt what they're doing to better suit me. Usually, I will see out the rest of the referral/ sessions I've booked then seek out someone new. I think though, in future, this is definitely something worth looking into and doing more.

**Jynx (Moderator)**

I used to be scared to, actually. I mean, there is a power dynamic at play, and I was such an anxious mess that I always just assumed that the trained

professional knows best. So when a therapist actually invites me to give feedback, and opens that door for me, it's waaayy better, because the invitation in itself has grown my confidence I've felt more capable of just asking straight up, but yeah, something that I feel more therapists should do.

**TideisTurning  
(PSW)**

Hi @tyme :)

**tyme (PSW)**

Hello Everyone!

**Jynx**

**(Moderator)**

Welcome @tyme (PSW) ! :blush:

**mrnobody202**

**1 (PSW)**

Hey @tyme (PSW) :)

**mrnobody202**

**1 (PSW)**

Yeah @Jynx (Moderator) I've also felt fear around the power imbalance and even had therapists who weren't particularly open to feedback.

In terms of the question we are looking at, for me, giving my health professional feedback is what actually builds connection. They are often very grateful for it and want to work with the individual. I used to think I should keep quiet because I don't have 'Dr' in front of my name. Bit overtime, I realised the importance of transparency.

**tyme (PSW)**

**mrnobody202**

**1 (PSW)**

Yeah @tyme (PSW) the best therapists are usually very keen to get feedback

**Jynx**

Yeah it's super important hey! I think if a therapist isn't open to feedback it might just be a red flag

**(Moderator)**

**tyme (PSW)**

Yes, I agree!

A health professional may be really knowledgeable in their field, but it takes more than that - they need to be able to build a rapport with the individual seeking support.

**tyme (PSW)**

**TideisTurnin**

**g (PSW)**

Yes! Theory and knowledge is just one part of the equation.

**mrnobody202**

**1 (PSW)**

**Many therapists provide their qualifications, experience and specialties on their practice's website. This can help to inform your decision when trying to find a therapist that best suits your needs. Have you taken this approach before? If so, what was the outcome?**

**Jynx**

**(Moderator)**

Yeah my current therapist I found in a database online, and it was much better - I had more control, I could see the profiles of each therapist and most also had a photo up, and it was just all round much better for me than getting a referral to a rando from a GP.

**TideisTurning**

**(PSW)**

This is actually a huge part of my usual approach to finding a therapist. Because of the amount of therapists I've tried over my life, I've also done research on modalities and consider what modalities I might like to try and which have worked- my current therapist provides a mix of a modality I was interested in along with modalities I know have been effective for me previously.

**TideisTurning (PSW)**

Hey @bow! Great to have you here with us :)

**tyme (PSW)**

Hi @bow!

**mrnobody2021 (PSW)**

Yeah I agree, I think its the best approach! It's how I found my most recent psychologist. I was really interested in acceptance and commitment therapy and was lucky to find someone with a lot of experience in my area.

**mrnobody2021 (PSW)**

Welcome Bow :D

**tyme (PSW)**

I can't say I've taken this approach. My therapists have always been ones I've been referred to especially for my needs...

**tyme (PSW)**

I don't think I have the confidence to find my own therapist - yet

**mrnobody2021 (PSW)**

Thats fair enough @tyme (PSW) I only did it for the first time last year

**TideisTurning (PSW)**

That's ok @Tyme Referrals and recommendations can be good too! :)

**Jynx (Moderator)**

Yeah there is such a thing as paralysis of choice too, it might be way easier to have that all taken care of for ya

**tyme (PSW)**

Definitely! When things are tough, the last thing I feel I'm able to do is go to find-a-therapist

**tyme (PSW)**

Also, I feel that when I get referred, I don't need to start my story ALL OVER AGAIN! The documents are sent with the referral so I don't need to deal with it!

**mrnobody2021 (PSW)**

Yeah very true @tyme (PSW)

**Jynx (Moderator)**

For sure @tyme (PSW) so helpful!

**TideisTurning (PSW)**

Oh my goodness. That is such a brilliant point @tyme (PSW). That can be one of the most challenging aspects of starting over!

**mrnobody2021 (PSW)** **What are some highlights or achievements from your therapy journey that you are proud of?**

**TideisTurning (PSW)** Hmm... This is a tough one! I think one thing I'm really proud of is trying again after I've had difficult experiences with therapists rather than giving up, which is very easily done! Trying again has allowed me to find therapists who are better suited to me and to receive the professional support I need when I need it rather than continuing to struggle along by myself.

**tyme (PSW)** A major highlight for me was having had the 'right' therapists for my needs, all through the public mental health system. They were ones who genuinely cared for me as a person and not a number. Looking at it now, I think much of it was the way I approached therapy - to a point where therapists WANTED to work with me (or so they say ;))

**tyme (PSW)** The therapeutic relationships built were an essential part of my recovery

**Jynx (Moderator)** Nailed it, both of you @TideisTurning (PSW) and @tyme (PSW) ! Yeah I think when it's right, you will know, cos you just get that nice balance between feeling safe and held, but also being appropriately challenged.

**Jynx (Moderator)** Persisting in my therapy journey despite having a number of hiccups is probably my achievement of note!

**Bow** Hello

**mrnobody2021 (PSW)** For me it was also finally feeling like I had found the "right" psychologist after lots of research

**tyme (PSW)** Good on you @jynx! That's a hard one!

**tyme (PSW)** It's a relief when you find the 'right' therapist

**TideisTurning (PSW)** Hey there @Bow :) We're just talking about highlights of our therapy journeys :)

**Bow** Ok

**tyme (PSW)** Awesome work persisting! Even if you can't respond, feel free to read along!

**tyme (PSW)** Great to have you @Bow

**Bow** I have finally found an amazing therapist.... 3rd in a year

**mrnobody2021 (PSW)** Thats awesome to hear Bow!

**tyme (PSW)** That's so good to hear @bow!

**TideisTurning (PSW)** Oh yay!! I'm so happy to hear that. :)

**tyme (PSW)** It's so good to be treated as a person and not a number. That makes the biggest difference for me.

**Bow** Same

**mrnobody2021 (PSW)** [Here are some tips SANE Australia has provided regarding finding a therapist that is right for you https://www.sane.org/counselling-support/sane-support-services/your-recovery/2238-treatments-and-health-professionals?\\_ga=2.113260231.1312912758.1645688277-1462466113.1645688277](https://www.sane.org/counselling-support/sane-support-services/your-recovery/2238-treatments-and-health-professionals?_ga=2.113260231.1312912758.1645688277-1462466113.1645688277). Do you have any advice or suggestions of your own that you'd like to share?

**tyme (PSW)** Also, I have to say, the break through with therapists is when they see the real YOU despite all the challenges. They look beyond the label to see your strengths. And they work with those strengths.

**TideisTurning (PSW)** Aww!! That is so wonderful. Everyone deserves to have that :)

**Bow** It's really hard, but persistent. It's rough having to start all over again with someone new, but it's sure been worth it for me to find who I have now

**mrnobody2021 (PSW)** Absolutely spot on @Bow !

**TideisTurning (PSW)** I feel that @Bow :) Persistence can pay off in the end, but it can also feel like a super rough road to get to that end 'pays off' point

**Bow** For sure

**tyme (PSW)** Persistent is sooooo important! Sometimes, I'd walk out of a session thinking, "I'm never going back!", however, persistence made me go back. And here I am to tell the story!

**Jynx (Moderator)** I saw a quote recently that said "Even if you have to start over, you're not starting from scratch. You've still grown from that experience and will again" and I think that was so important for me

**tyme (PSW)** Persistence definitely looks like one of your strengths @Bow!

**tyme (PSW)** So true @Jynx

**TideisTurning (PSW)** For me, as I've mentioned, a lot of my own approach comes down to doing a lot of research beforehand. Apart from that, something I try to do is to give a therapist at least 3 sessions before I start to even think about changing. Also, checking in with myself following and in between sessions to see how I'm left feeling- better, or worse? Were the exercises or strategies provided helpful?

**tyme (PSW)** @Bow, if you don't mind sharing, how did you find your current therapist?

**TideisTurning (PSW)** Hi @Eve7 :)

**tyme (PSW)** Hi @Eve7! Welcome

**Bow** My first was a Christian lady, I really liked her. But I was too high needs for her. She said not to come back. It was pretty brutal and I was really hurt.



Other one was at a large psych practice, just felt like a number to her and really didn't feel like she was a good fit. But kinda felt stuck cause I didn't know where else to go. I was banging on the door of community mh asking... begging for help. But they kept saying no. But after an admission after an Od, they decided to take me on, allocated a psych and she is perfect fit.

**mrnobody2021 (PSW)** **Have you learned anything helpful from others' experiences here tonight that you might be able to apply in your own life? If yes, what did you learn?**

**tyme (PSW)** That's so good to hear @Bow!

**tyme (PSW)** All things work together for good, eh? @Bow

**TideisTurning (PSW)**

What a journey @Bow. I'm so glad it worked out in the end! And once I got my foot in the door, I've been able to see a psychiatrist there, I have a case manager there and they have referred me to other services. And everyone has been great. They understand EDs and I finally feel heard and supported :)

Bow

**tyme (PSW)** That's the main thing @Bow. Feeling heard and supported

**mrnobody2021 (PSW)**

Thats such an excellent outcome @Bow :)

**Jynx (Moderator)**

Wish it hadn't taken such dire circumstances to get you where you needed to be, @Bow but it sounds like you've found someone who is gonna be amazingly helpful for ya. So happy for you!

Bow

Yes.

**TideisTurning (PSW)**

Yay @Bow! :)

Bow

I have to run sorry. My step dads in hospital and need to go drop something off. Thanks for having me if only very briefly

**tyme (PSW)**  
**mrnobody2021 (PSW)**

Great to have you @Bow

Thank you for joining us and sharing your experience @Bow !

**TideisTurning (PSW)**

Great to have you with us @Bow :) Hope you have a great night. Take care

**Jynx (Moderator)**

Take care @Bow all the best for your step dad too

**mrnobody2021 (PSW)**

**Tonight's topic may have brought up some heavy feelings as we talked about finding the right therapist for you. Would some self-care be helpful for you after we finish? If so, what might you do? 😊**

**tyme (PSW)** I think I'll spend time with some mindfulness exercises before going to bed.

**Jynx**

**(Moderator)** Feed my kitty cat and play some ps4!

**TideisTurning**

**(PSW)**

I'll possibly read for a bit. Then sleep :)

**tyme (PSW)**

Sounds great @Jynx and @TideisTurning

[We'd like to invite you to complete a survey reflecting on your experience in this Peer Group Chat. As we're trialling this service, we'd love to hear any feedback you may have. It will only take a few minutes to complete. Please click this link: https://sane.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_5uUF0sHJRKQ6wyW](https://sane.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5uUF0sHJRKQ6wyW)

**mrnobody202**

**1 (PSW)**

Thanks for tonight everyone!

**tyme (PSW)**

**mrnobody202**

**1 (PSW)**

Thanks for joining @tyme (PSW) !

**Jynx**

Thanks gang, always a pleasure to see everyone, and get to hear about your experiences!

**(Moderator)**

Here are some further resources we recommend having a look

**mrnobody202**

**1 (PSW)**

at: <https://www.abc.net.au/everyday/finding-the-right-psychologist/10139160> <https://ideas.ted.com/how-to-find-the-right-therapist-for-you/>

**TideisTurning**

**(PSW)**

Thabks everyone for sharing and being with us :)