



ASK AMANDA JAYNE

I would love to hear from you and will reply to letters which, if we print them, will remain anonymous. Your details will be treated confidentially. Email me at harleysttherapy@gmail.com or ring me on 07760 669246. Take a look at my website at www.harleystpsychotherapy.com

Don't take a risk with those you are trusting to help you

The importance of finding an experienced and fully qualified therapist

More and more people are realising the benefits of counselling. Looking after your mental health is as important as looking after your physical health.

But the difficulty can be knowing what to look for in a counsellor. The right 'fit' for you is important and this will be explored in the first session.

It is vitally important however, to make sure that you are seeing a fully qualified, properly trained and experienced therapist.

This can be a minefield as the profession is not yet regulated. This means that anyone can undertake a home study or short online course from training providers who will give out 'certificates' or 'diplomas' stating that you have passed a course

to become a psychotherapist or counsellor. This does not mean that the 'therapist' is trained sufficiently to be able to deliver a professional service.

Lots of people mistakenly assume that being a therapist is about

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being kind, empathic and giving good advice. In fact, it requires rigorous training, years of self-development and the ability to be able to make psychological contact with a client; achieve unconditional positive regard and empathy without giving in to any urge to give advice or be swept away with your own subconscious unresolved issues.

Training providers should state whether or not you are qualified to practice following their course. For example, one of the 'schools' I have come across offers courses in counselling and psychotherapy. They are 15 to 20 home study lessons and distance learning and cost just over £100. There is no classroom practice or client work or personal development. They are not qualifications for becoming a counsellor and, when asked, they made it clear that you cannot practice as a psychotherapist after doing one of their courses but still give the impression that they are offering training as a fully qualified counsellor instead of making it clear that it is counselling skills which is very different. They have stated that 'counselling does not require an in-depth client treatment'. This isn't true.

There are people who do call themselves counsellors/ psychotherapists after doing such a course and who are offering this service in private practice; some not realising the in-depth training required for this



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