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# **5 Questions for INTERVIEWING a new Therapist** 💚💚💚

### **First off, definitely make sure that any potential therapist has at least a Master's Degree and also a license to practice in your state. Make sure that this person works primarily with children and families.**

***1. "What specific trainings do you have for working with traumatized children? Can you explain the duration of the trainings you have received, including any supervision specific to those models?"*What you should be looking for is extensive, hands-on training in models that are widely supported by the general research community. Some therapists will take a 3 hour online class in trauma or attachment issues and advertise themselves as trauma/attachment therapists. But because children with severe attachment problems tend to be so challenging (for parents and therapists alike), I wouldn't bring my child to anyone who wasn't highly trained.**

***2. "When working with attachment problems, do you work with children and parents together, or just children?"*Therapists should be primarily working with children and parents together, and sometimes with parents alone. Attachment problems are relationship problems, not child problems. And parents have the most power and resources within that relationship. As a parent, you are the center of your child's emotional world. A therapist who excludes you from the process of change will not be as effective as one who partners with you.**

***3. "Do you regularly recommend behavioral approaches such as sticker charts and time-outs? What is the most severe consequence you recommend to parents?***

**The danger here is when behaviorally-based therapists think that their approaches aren't working because they aren't intense enough. They might believe that severe consequences will work. They might not have any other therapeutic tools to draw upon. But it's dangerous. This is how we end up with therapists who recommend punishments for children such as: withholding food, sleep, touch, eye contact, affection, or social experiences outside the family; not allowing the child to sleep indoors or sit on furniture; forcing repetitive and demeaning manual labor; using time-outs lasting for hours; or sending the child to live elsewhere for minor misbehaviors. (Yes, these are all real "interventions" that real therapists have recommended in the past 5 years). If your child has attachment related problems, please approach any behaviorally-based therapy with great caution.**

***4. "What percentage of your caseload would you classify as having a Reactive Attachment Disorder, as described in the DSM-V?" Or Developmental Trauma Disorder if that was an option?***

***Listen closely as they answer this question. You don’t want to hear how rare it is and there is no way that your child has it. Attach Families truly believes that it doesn’t matter what it is called we need it to be taken very seriously. So you want your therapist to understand and empathize with how difficult this is for both the child, the siblings, the parents/caregivers, and the family as a whole.***

***5. "Which therapists, thinkers and writers on attachment do you follow?"***

**This will give you an idea of what belief systems the therapist may be applying to their work. Feel free to ask Attach Families Inc. and other families in our support group if they have heard of these.**

**We highly recommend you stay away from any therapist that still believes in old school practices, or severe behavioral punishment. It has been our experience that the more the PARENT changes their parenting style to a more therapeutic parenting approach, the more change 8s seen in the child.**