



## Next Steps Toward Healing



The sole fact that you are reading this article is a reason to feel encouraged. That means you have come to a place of understanding that these habits, this life, is not the one you want. Hold onto this feeling. The feeling of hope that inspires you to move forward and run the race of recovery. Here is where we recommend you look next.

This journey requires more than a white-knuckle approach. Even if you are one of the few who is able to quit behaviors cold turkey, it's not the method we recommend. Yes, we want the behaviors to cease but we also want you to spend time properly healing and recognizing the needs which led you here in the first place. We recommend doing this by finding a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) or a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT).

**This journey requires more than the white-knuckle approach.**

Looking for a therapist can be overwhelming if you do not know what to look for. Many well-intending people and organizations advertise their counseling services out of a desire to help others, but for what you are enduring we recommend the Mental Health Professional you seek out is either licensed or under the direct supervision of a licensed professional. If someone is “in supervision,” as the industry defines it, it will be clearly indicated on their website, profile, or you certainly have the right to ask.

We are specific in recommending this because being licensed or under supervision guarantees accountability for the therapist and protection for you. This means they are required to renew their license, keep with continuing education courses (just as those in the medical or education profession) and they have a code of ethics they have pledged to abide by. Anyone else who advertises as a counselor, life-coach, social worker, pastor, or others without a license by their State's respective counseling board is not bound by these higher tiers of accountability. We are not doubting their abilities in their respective fields and are fully recognizing the need for each of these professions. Simultaneously, we acknowledge that licensed therapists have the ability and expertise to train in areas of sexual addiction, sexual trauma, and other specified areas that will be essential in the process of healing.

Websites such as [www.Psychologytoday.com](http://www.Psychologytoday.com) are a great place to start. You can search by your location, preferred qualifications of a therapist, and clearly see their license status and areas of specification. Anyone on Psychology Today has had their license number verified and confirmed.



Having an individual therapist can help you navigate the logistical decisions of how/when to disclose your circumstance to a spouse or family, how to find a group to do recovery with, how to put protective software on your tech devices, and how to find additional resources. Combining this with the techniques and skills to help find the root of the problem, rather than simply attempting to extinguish a symptom is the best approach.

When it comes to doing group therapy, we are strong supporters. We believe the best route to recovery often includes individual therapy and group therapy. Recovery always happens in community. We believe this applies perfectly here. There are multiple groups available: christian vs secular, free vs paid, gender specific, process vs psychoeducational groups. Always consult with a mental health professional to determine which group could be best for you, but know there are options!

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If you're feeling overwhelmed, take a deep breath. In my opinion, showing up for that first session can often be the hardest part of starting recovery. It's okay to be feeling a wide range of emotions right now. So as the saying goes, take it one day at a time.

If the structure helps, spend about an hour researching therapists. Write down who they are, what you liked about their bio, and how to contact them. Next, contact each of the therapists. Prioritize your needs. The therapist you liked the best might not be realistic if they are on a 6 week waiting list and are out of your price range. If you have insurance, have your card ready when you call so they can determine if you can file insurance or if you would need to pay out of pocket. If you do not have insurance, look for masters level interns (under the supervision of a licensed professional) or community mental health centers who often do sliding-scale rates. From there, set your appointment and don't miss it.

Capitalize on your momentum after reading this article. Don't wait for days to pass and doubts stating "do I really need this?" to creep in. If you've come this far, you need help. And that's okay, we all do at some point in our lives. We hope this article has been helpful in guiding you towards your first step of recovery. Know that you are not alone. If we did not believe in second chances, we would be in the wrong field. You are not too far gone. So take a risk, make the calls, and move towards healing!



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