

Seeking therapy can be an empowering step towards better mental health and wellbeing, but it's not always straightforward—especially for LGBTQ+ people over 50, many [inflammatory arthritis early diagnosis](#) of whom face unique challenges around trust, confidentiality, and equality in healthcare settings. If you're based in London or elsewhere in the UK, and wondering **how to screen a therapist** or bring up topics like *confidentiality therapy UK* and LGBTQ+ awareness, this guide will walk you through practical steps and trusted resources to make your counselling journey safer and more supportive.

Why Equality and Confidentiality Matter in Therapy

Equality and confidentiality aren't just buzzwords—they are the foundation of effective counselling. Without them, many LGBTQ+ people experience:



- **Distrust in healthcare providers:** Historical discrimination or insensitivities can make it hard to be open.
- **Late presentation and worse outcomes:** Fear of judgement can mean avoiding counselling until crises occur.
- **Isolation and living alone:** Particularly among older LGBTQ+ adults, isolation can compound mental health struggles.
- **Complexities around chosen family and legal standing:** Not everyone's next of kin is biological family, so confidentiality agreements must respect these relationships.

By prioritising equality and confidentiality, you create a safe, affirming space to share your experiences and heal.

How to Screen a Therapist for LGBTQ+ Competence and Confidentiality

Choosing the right therapist means asking the right questions upfront. Here are some practical steps for screening potential counsellors:

1. **Check their credentials and specialisms.** Look for counsellors who explicitly mention LGBTQ+ counselling London or UK-wide expertise in their profiles.

2. **Ask about confidentiality policies directly.** For example, “Can you explain how confidentiality works in your practice, especially concerning disclosure to family or other parties?”
3. **Query their experience with chosen family dynamics.** “How do you handle confidentiality when clients involve chosen family who might not have legal recognition?”
4. **Find out their stance on equality and anti-discrimination.** “How do you ensure an inclusive environment, and how do you handle discrimination if it arises?”
5. **Request a preliminary meeting or phone call.** This allows you to gauge comfort and clarity before committing to sessions.

Remember to keep a little checklist on your phone’s notes app or on paper so you don’t forget these questions when booking or attending initial sessions.



Sample Questions to Ask During Screening

- “Are you trained or experienced specifically in supporting LGBTQ+ clients?”
- “How do you protect confidentiality in cases where my chosen family might need to be involved, but aren’t legally recognized?”
- “What happens to my records if I move or stop therapy?”
- “How do you address unconscious bias and discrimination in your sessions?”
- “Do you offer any flexible appointment options for late presentations or crises?”

Trusted Services and Resources for LGBTQ+ Counselling in London and Beyond

If you want community-focused support alongside clinical options, these organisations in the UK can be great starting points:

Organisation	Description	How They Help
Opening Doors London	Charity supporting LGBTQ+ over 50s with social, mental health, and wellbeing services	Groups, befriending, counselling referrals, peer support to reduce isolation and validate chosen family
NHS Therapy Services	National Health Service counselling and mental health care	Referrals via GP, online information on confidentiality therapy UK standards, some LGBTQ+ specialised services

Addressing Isolation and the Importance of Chosen Family

Many LGBTQ+ people over 50 live alone or experience disconnection from biological family due to stigma. This isolation can make opening up to a counsellor even harder. However, your counsellor should recognise your *chosen family*—those friends, partners, or community members who provide love and support but may lack legal recognition.

When bringing this up, say things like:

“I want to make sure my chosen family are recognised in my confidentiality arrangements, as they are my main support.”

Good therapists will ask about your support network and work with you on confidentiality agreements tailored to your actual social context, not just legal defaults.

Overcoming Barriers: Trust and Discrimination in Healthcare

The NHS and private therapists alike are improving LGBTQ+ cultural competence, but not everyone experiences this equally. If you’ve felt dismissed or discriminated against before, it’s natural to be cautious.

Try to be upfront with your potential counsellor about your experiences:

“I’ve faced discrimination in healthcare before, and it makes me hesitant to open up. Can you share how you support clients who’ve had similar experiences?”

This invitation can help establish trust from the outset and signal to the counsellor that your feelings are important and valid.

Sharing This Guide: Useful Tools

If you know someone in the LGBTQ+ over 50 community who might benefit from this information, you can easily share this post using:

- **WhatsApp Share:** A quick way to send the link to friends, support groups, or chosen family on mobile devices.
- **Pinterest Share:** Pin relevant tips or infographics from this post to personal boards for easy reference and community sharing.

Summary Checklist: How to Bring Up Equality and Confidentiality with Your Counsellor

1. Identify potential therapists with LGBTQ+ counselling London expertise or NHS-approved cultural competence.
2. Prepare specific questions about confidentiality therapy UK standards and chosen family recognition.
3. Book a preliminary chat to assess comfort and response to your concerns.
4. Discuss your lived experience around discrimination and isolation candidly.
5. Confirm confidentiality agreements detail how your records, disclosures, and support network are handled.

6. Leverage community organisations like Opening Doors for additional social support and referrals.
7. Use NHS services for accessible counselling with legal protections.
8. Reduce isolation through events found on the Gay London Life Events Diary.

Remember, your mental health is your right, and finding a counsellor who respects your equality and confidentiality helps you exercise that right fully. Take your time, ask these key questions, and don't settle for less than an affirming therapeutic relationship.