



# **mental health match**

**Profile picture tips  
for quality matches**

For the past 6 years, our internal data has shown that a good profile picture can make all the difference when it comes to clients reading your profile, or moving on to their next match.

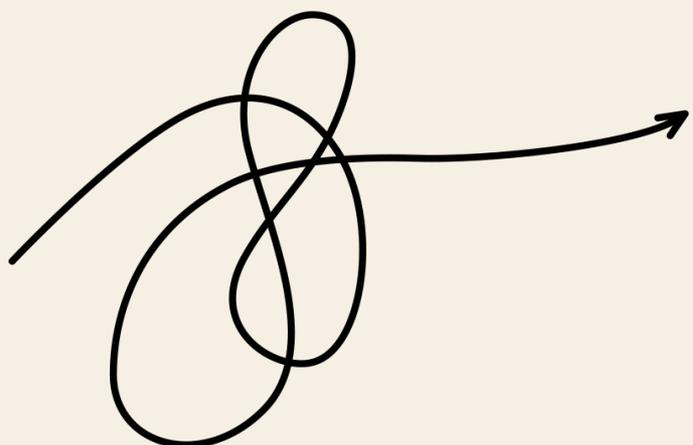
Seeking therapy can be overwhelming for a client. It's important that they start to feel at ease right from the first impression, and that first impression is your MHM profile picture.

Consciously or not, your future client matches will evaluate their level of comfort based on your photo:

- Do you look safe and inviting?
- Does your presentation inspire confidence?
- Do they feel like they might relate to you?

A welcoming face goes a long way in starting your therapeutic alliance. You can hire a professional photographer, but there are simple ways to make a great headshot.

**So here are 4 tips for a great portrait,  
which will help you get even more  
matches on MHM**



# Make eye contact with the camera

A photo with clear eye contact creates a personal and emotional connection with prospective clients, building a sense of trust in you as a clinician. Pretend there is a client on the other end of the camera lens. Look at the camera as you would a client in the room with you - with direct eye contact and a soft, warm smile.



## What Works



This person's eyes feel like they are seeing you through the screen. They are centered in the photo, and the darker shirt and background help make their eyes pop in the photo.

This person's eyes are wide open and looking right at you. They've even used a subtle blue makeup around their eyes to further accent their eyes and draw the viewer in.



## What Could Be Better



While the feeling of the photo is warm, this person is looking away from the camera and the photo itself is dark. It is a missed opportunity to create an emotional connection with the viewer.

While this person is looking directly at the camera, the glare on their glasses interrupts the eye contact. The bright color of the glasses frames also distracts the viewer.

# Look like you do everyday

Pick clothes and accessories in which you feel comfortable and look the way you usually present yourself to clients. The idea is simply to look professional, natural and consistent with the kind of clients you work with. For example, working with teenagers allows for a more casual look, but if you work with burnt-out CEOs, you might want to present a little bit more formally.



## What Works



This therapist works with teens and their presentation works well for that population. The therapist's casual cloths and necklace feel relatable, and their slightly forward stance feels like they are leaning in to listen to you.

This therapist works primarily with people in high-pressure jobs. The sharp, stylish, and formal outfit is relatable to other business professionals and creates a sense of a shared foundation. Unfortunately, the shadow on the right side gets in the way of clear eye contact.



## What Could Be Better



The reclining posture, bold eye makeup, and serious facial expression make this photo feel more like a model shot than a professional therapist. The person appears glamorous, but not professional or welcoming.

The combination of crossed arms and a gaze that looks downward into the camera makes this therapist come across as judgmental, instead of empathetic and understanding.

# Keep it natural

Artificial lighting can look harsh or fake. Take a photo outside, or an inside spot with lots of natural light coming in. Overcast days can provide a more diffused light that often works well. Avoid the shadows that can appear on your face from the bright sun. Ideally you should be facing the light. However, if the light or the sun is too bright, you'll end up squinting or feeling uncomfortable. A nice warm, natural light will add to the welcoming, open, and confident feeling of your photo.

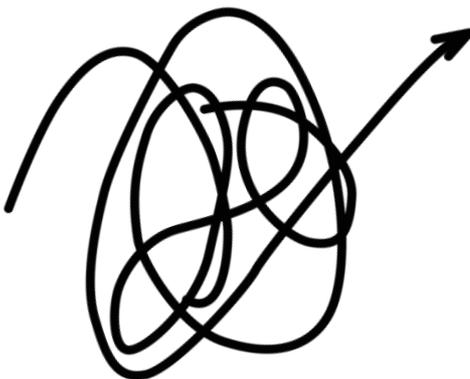


The natural lighting works because their face is well lit without the lighting being harsh. The soft light combines with their soft smile to give the impression they are a soft, gentle person to work with.

## What Works



The combination of the studio lighting and dark jacket makes their face pop in the picture. There are no busy colors or patterns in the background to distract the viewer.



## What Could Be Better



The shadows across their face are distracting and make it hard to see their eyes. The bright glare on their forehead also draws the viewer away from their eyes.

# Use a background with no distractions

Your expertise in creating and holding space for your clients should shine through your picture as well. Avoid a busy background that can distract from your inviting gaze and can feel confusing to a potential client. If the first thing a client sees in your photo is something in the background, you're missing an opportunity to connect.

- Consider natural areas like trees and hedges, office environments that are simple and uncluttered, or solid single-color surfaces like walls, brick, or wood.
- Avoid cluttered indoor spaces, brightly colored or dated studio backgrounds, and candid shots or selfies from public places like bars and restaurants, from your car or even worse, on vacation.



The background is bright, green, and calming - without distracting the viewer from the therapist and their eye contact.

## What Works



The background is a solid, neutral color. It brightens up the photo while allowing the viewer to stay focused on the therapist and their eye contact.



This therapist's eye contact is great, but the viewer gets immediately distracted by the people in the background.

## What Could Be Better



This photo is too zoomed in and cropped too close. The viewer misses out on added context that can be provided with body language, dress, and background. This photo does not give the prospective client an idea of how they might show up in the therapy room.

# Finally,

Take a good number of photos, try a few things in a couple of different spots, sleep on it and pick a few that you like best a couple of days later. You can also ask a friend or a colleague who knows you well and can help you pick the one that looks like you the most. And you can always try one on your MHM profile, see how it does, and then try another one a few weeks later.

Looking forward to seeing you!

Team MHM

