



VARIOUS TYPES OF MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDERS

When to Seek Therapy

Psychotherapy is a process where someone seeks help for problems of an emotional nature from a trained professional. By establishing a positive, trusting relationship, the professional will try to help the individual cope with the problem, mature and grow, and learn about themselves.

Some of the most frequently experienced symptoms of poor mental wellbeing include:

- Loss of appetite
- Feeling low or constantly anxious or worrying
- Thinking negative thoughts about yourself
- Irritability or moodiness
- Finding it harder than usual to concentrate
- Not enjoying your life as much as you once did
- Finding day-to-day life difficult
- Trouble sleeping, or sleeping too much
- Seeing or hearing things that other people do not see or hear

Where to Start

If you've noticed changes in the way you are thinking or feeling over the past few weeks or months that concern you and cause you distress, you should consider going to see your Primary Care Physician.

Your Primary Care Physician can initiate a treatment plan if needed and refer you to the appropriate provider based on your symptoms. In addition, if you have an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), they may be able to initiate services via telephonic counseling as well as referral to local options that accept your insurance.

Questions to ask when choosing a mental health provider:

- Is my insurance accepted?
- What is your area of specialization?
- What is your experience with conditions like mine?
- What is your treatment approach and philosophy?
- How will the effectiveness of treatment be evaluated? How often will it be assessed?

Different Types of Providers

Choosing a mental health provider is a key component in ensuring quality care. There are many types of providers that you could work with. Have a discussion with your primary care provider about what type of mental health provider they suggest you speak with.

Psychiatrist

A psychiatrist is a physician (MD or DO) with at least four or more years of specialized study and training in psychiatry. Psychiatrists are licensed as physicians to practice medicine by individual states. "Board-certified" psychiatrists have passed the national examination administered by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology. Psychiatrists provide medical and psychiatric evaluations, treat psychiatric disorders, provide psychotherapy, and prescribe and monitor medications.

Psychologist

Some psychologists have a master's degree in psychology, while others have a doctoral degree (PhD, PsyD) in clinical, educational, counseling or research psychology. Most states license psychologists to practice psychology. They can provide psychological testing, evaluations, treat emotional and behavioral problems and mental disorders, and provide therapy.

Social Worker

Social workers have a bachelor's degree, a master's degree, or a doctoral degree. In most states, social workers take an examination to be licensed to practice social work (LSW or LCSW). The type of license depends on their level of education and practice experience. Social workers provide various services, including assessing and treating mental illnesses, case management, and psychotherapy.

Psychiatric Nurse

Psychiatric/mental health nurses may have various degrees ranging from associate's to doctoral degrees. Depending on their level of education and licensing, they provide a broad range of psychiatric and medical services, including the assessing and treating psychiatric illnesses, case management, and psychotherapy. In some states, psychiatric nurses may prescribe medication.

Licensed Professional Counselors

Licensed Professional Counselors (LPC) have a master's degree in psychology, counseling, or a similar discipline and typically have two years of post-graduate experience. They may provide services that include diagnosis and counseling for individuals, families, or both. They have a license issued in their state and may be certified by the National Academy of Certified Clinical Mental Health Counselors.

Finding the Right Provider

If you are looking to do additional research into providers, these resources are a great place to start.

Psychology Today

[Psychology Today](#) has a wide variety of resources and the ability to search for therapists, support groups, psychiatrists, and treatment centers based on your zip code.

Network Therapy

[Network Therapy](#) has an abundance of resources for individuals looking for one-on-one options, treatment centers, and group therapy. You can also look for practices that are affiliated with the site in your area.

American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy

The [American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy](#) (AAMFT) is an excellent resource for those looking for a therapist for family counseling. They have a large variety of available resources and the capability to search for therapists who specialize in marriage and family counseling in your area.

Good Therapy

[Good Therapy](#) is another online resource with a wide variety of written resources and the capability to search for therapists in your area. With their search capability, you can narrow down your results by insurance accepted, specialization, types of treatment, and much more.