



Finding a Mental Health Therapist for Your Child

We understand that your child is struggling and want you to find a helpful, supportive therapist that can guide you and your child to a healthier, happier life. Here are some tips to consider when setting up therapy, whether at our clinics or with another local provider.

Types of Therapists

First, there are several different types of people who can provide therapy or counseling. These include social worker, psychologist, psychiatrist, marriage and family therapist, or licensed practicing counselor. Each has different methods of training and different credentials (those fancy letters after their name). Whatever their training, it is important that you develop a good working relationship—they don't have to be your best friend, but they are supposed to help you reach your goals.

Types of Therapy

There are also many types of therapy. Common therapies include:

- **Behavioral management**—teaching adults how to change the situation/environment and how we respond to children to shape new healthy behaviors.
- **Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)**—learning to identify unhelpful ways of thinking or unhelpful patterns of behaving that upset you or make life harder. Newer versions of CBT often have other labels, such as dialectical behavior therapy (DBT), mindfulness training, and acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT).
- **Group therapy**—Often CBT provided with other adults/children who struggle in a similar way. Children often gain additional support as well as learn from other children in the group.
- **Family therapy**—Working with several individuals in the family to identify how the family may change patterns of how they behave to meet clinical goals.
- **Play therapy**—using toys, dolls, games, art or other interactive tools art to help identify, express, and deal with emotions.

Your doctor may know the type of therapy that would work best for your child, but one very helpful resource to learn more about the **types of treatments that research has shown to be helpful for children various conditions can be found here:** www.effectivechildtherapy.org

Locating a Therapist

It can be difficult to find a trustworthy, caring, and helpful individual when you or your child are struggling. Below are a couple of suggestions of how to find potential therapist who can be a good fit for your child:

- **Talk with your child's pediatrician**—Often, the doctors have heard "the good, the bad, and the ugly" about therapists in your local area. Your doctor also likely understands your child and their needs and interests.
- **Talk with your school**—In a similar way, school teachers and school counselors have had some time to watch your child and see how they interact with other adults. They have also likely heard both positive and negative reviews of therapists in your community.
- **Trusted friends**—Fortunately, it is more common today for individuals to talk about mental health openly, as well as the need for therapy to treat mental health concerns. In this way, some friends and members of your community may identify therapists they

have personally benefited from. However, it is important that you are careful how you discuss the situation, as your child may be sensitive to discussing their personal difficulties with a neighbor or a friend's parent.

- **Health insurance company**—Your insurance company is familiar with many health providers in your area. You may want to ask not only what services they will help pay for, but which therapists they have had a good relationship with in recent years.

You may also locate mental health providers in your area by using these websites:

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists>

<https://locator.apa.org/>

<https://findtreatment.gov/>

<https://effectivechildtherapy.org/tips-tools/locate-a-psychologist-near-you/>

Deciding on the Best Fit for a Therapist

Working with a therapist involves developing an open and trusting relationship, and your child will likely have to discuss some sensitive issues. It may be worth it to ask some key questions to help you develop this type of relationship with your child's therapist. There is no harm in asking... even before your first appointment.

- *What days and times are you available? Can you be flexible around school hours? Are you available on nights or weekends?*
- *What is the best way to contact you if I the parent have questions or concerns?*
- *What insurance do you accept and what is your hourly rate?*
- *What is your training background?*
- *How many years have you worked with children?*
- *Do you have a certain area of children's health that you are trained in? Do you have an area of expertise?*
- *Do you work with adults as well as children?*
- *What is your experience working with someone of my race, nationality, religion (or any other factor important to you!)?*
- *Can you provide therapy in another language or can I access an interpreter?*
- *What is your model of therapy with children?*
- *Will you meet with the parents? And how will I be a part of my child's care?*
- *How do you interact with school systems or other providers?*
- *How long do you anticipate my child to be in therapy? Can we find a shared goal for therapy?*
- *Are you familiar with [state your child's health condition]?*
- *What are your thoughts about medication?*
- *What are other therapists or providers that you often work with?*

Please know, at any time:

- *You need urgent medical care, you can **call 911** on your phone.*
- *You need mental health support urgently, you can **call or text 988** on your phone (<https://988lifeline.org/>).*
- *You may also contact the Crisis Text Line by texting **HOME** to **741741**.*