

Part II: Guidelines for Seeking Care

If you or someone you know may benefit from a counselor or mental health center, here are some questions and guidelines to help you find the right care.

Where Can I Go for Help?

Where you go for help depends on who has the problem (an adult or child) and the nature of the problem and/or symptoms. Here are some resources:

- Your local community mental health center
Find out which one is in your area by calling the Division of Mental Health at 303-866-7400
- Mental health professionals
- Your insurance carrier. Find out if your insurance covers mental health services and then get a list of providers from them; many have this information posted on their website
- Mental Health America of Colorado - call 720-208-2220 or 800-456-3249 or visit our webpage www.mhacolorado.org/GetHelp
- Mental Health America has an online database with detailed listings of therapists, marriage and family counselors and other mental health professionals by zip-code:
www.mentalhealthamerica.net/go/help
- Other mental health organizations or advocacy organizations
- Family physician
- Clergyperson/Spiritual Leader
- Family services agencies, such as the United Way (call 211), Catholic Charities, Jewish Family Services, Lutheran Family Services
- School guidance counselors and counseling centers
- Hotlines like 800-273-TALK, crisis centers, and local emergency rooms. If someone you know is in a mental health crisis, you can always call 911.

Which Mental Health Professional is Right for Me?

There are many types of mental health professionals. Finding the right one for you may require some research. Often it is a good idea to first describe the symptoms and/or problems to your family physician or clergy. He or she can suggest the type of mental health professional you should call.

Types of Mental Health Professionals

- **Psychiatrist** – A medical doctor with special training in the diagnosis and treatment of mental and emotional conditions. Like other doctors, psychiatrists are qualified to prescribe medication.
Qualifications: should have a state license* and be board eligible or certified by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology.
- **Child/Adolescent Psychiatrist** – A medical doctor with special training in the diagnosis and treatment of emotional and behavioral problems in children. Child/Adolescent psychiatrists are qualified to prescribe medication.
Qualifications: should have a state license* and be board eligible or certified by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology.

- **Clinical Nurse Specialist or advanced practice nurse** - A registered nurse who is educated in the practice of psychiatric and mental health nursing, including: diagnosis, individual and group counseling and is qualified to prescribe medication.
Qualifications: master's degree in science of nursing, certification, state license*.
- **Psychologist** - Counselor with an advanced degree from an accredited graduate program in psychology, and 2 or more years of supervised work experience. Trained to make diagnoses and provide individual and group therapy.
Qualifications: a state license*.
- **Licensed Clinical Social Worker** - Counselor with a masters degree in social work from an accredited graduate program. Trained to make diagnoses and provide individual and group counseling.
Qualifications: state license*; may be member of the Academy of Certified Social Workers.
- **Licensed Professional Counselor** - Counselor with a masters degree in psychology, counseling or a related field. Trained to diagnose and provide individual and group counseling.
Qualifications: state license*
- **Certified Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselor** - Counselor with specific clinical training in alcohol and drug abuse. Trained to diagnose and provide individual and group counseling.
Qualifications: state license*
- **Licensed Marital and Family Therapist** - A counselor with a masters degree, with special education and training in marital and family therapy. Trained to diagnose and provide individual and group counseling.
Qualifications: state license*
- **Pastoral Counselor** - Clergy with training in clinical pastoral education Trained to diagnose and provide individual and group counseling.
Qualifications: Certification from American Association of Pastoral Counselors.

*To check the status of any state licensed professional, call the Department of Regulatory Agencies Division of Registrations (303) 894-7800 or go to the website: www.dora.state.co.us

You Make The Call To The Mental Health Professional...Now What Do You Do?

Spend a few minutes talking with him or her on the phone, ask about their approach to working with clients, their philosophy, whether or not they have a specialty or concentration (some psychologists for instance specialize in family counseling, or child counseling, while others specialize in divorce or coping with the loss of a loved one.) If you feel comfortable talking to the provider, the next step is to make an appointment.

On your first visit, the provider will disclose a confidentiality statement and provide proof of credentials. He or she will want to get to know you and why you called, what you think the problem is, learn about your life, what you do, where you live, with whom you live. It is also common to be asked about your family and friends. This information helps the professional to assess your situation and develop a plan for treatment.

If you don't feel comfortable with the professional after the first, or even several visits, talk about your feelings at your next meeting. Don't be afraid to contact another provider. Feeling comfortable with the professional you choose is very important to the success of your treatment.

Types Of Treatment

Psychotherapy is a method of talking face-to-face with a therapist. The following are a few of the types of available therapy:

- **Behavior Therapy** - Includes stress management, biofeedback and relaxation training to change thinking patterns and behavior.
- **Cognitive Therapy** - Seeks to identify and correct thinking patterns that can lead to troublesome feelings and behavior.
- **Family Therapy** - Includes discussion and problem-solving sessions with every member of the family.
- **Group Therapy** - Includes a small group of people who, with the guidance of a trained therapist, discuss individual issues and help each other with problems.
- **Movement/Art/Music Therapy** - Includes the use of movement, art or music to express emotions. Effective for persons who cannot otherwise express feelings.
- **Drug Therapy**--Drugs can be beneficial to some persons with mental or emotional disorders. The patient should ask about risk, possible side effects and interaction with certain foods, alcohol and other medications. Medication should be taken in the prescribed dosage and at prescribed intervals and should be monitored daily.
- **Electric Convulsive Treatment (ECT)** -- Used to treat some cases of major depression, delusions, and hallucinations, or life-threatening sleep and eating disorders that can not be effectively treated with drugs and/or psychotherapy. Discuss with your physician about the risks and side effects of ECT.

How Much Will Therapy Cost?

The cost of treatment depends on many factors including: the type of treatment, the therapist's training, where treatment takes place and your insurance coverage. The following is a description of typical treatment costs:

- **Community Mental Health Center** - Fees are determined on a sliding scale based on personal income and medical expenses. Fees range from \$5 to \$50 per hour. Families covered by medical assistance pay no fee.
- **Private Clinics** - Established fees range from \$50 to \$100. Some non-profit agencies have a sliding scale system that may qualify individuals for a lower rate. Fees for group therapy may be lower than for individual therapy.
- **Private Therapist** - Fees generally range from \$80 to \$300 per hour. Rates for psychologists and psychiatrists are higher than rates for social workers, counselors and psychiatric nurses.
- **Hospitalization** - Fees for inpatient care range from \$400 to \$550 per day and vary depending on the setting.
- **Partial Hospitalization** - Typically, day treatment programs are similar to hospital care. Fees range from \$95 to \$175 per day.

Am I Getting The Care I Need?

As you progress through the therapeutic process, you should begin to feel gradual relief from your distress, to develop self-assurance, and have a greater ability to make decisions and increased comfort in your relationship with others. Therapy may be painful and uncomfortable at times but episodes of discomfort occur during the most successful therapy sessions. Mental health treatment should help you cope with your feelings more effectively.

If you feel you are not getting results, it may be because the treatment you are receiving is not the one best suited to your specific needs. If you feel there are problems, discuss them with your therapist. A competent

therapist will be eager to discuss your reactions to therapy and respond to your feeling about the process. If you are still dissatisfied, a consultation with another therapist may help you and your therapist evaluate your work together.

What About Self-Help/Support Groups?

Self-help support groups bring together people with common experiences. Participants share experiences, provide understanding and support and help each other find new ways to cope with problems. These groups are lead by peer leaders and/or mental health professionals.

There are support groups for almost any concern including alcoholism, overeating, the loss of a child, co-dependency, grand parenting, various mental illnesses, cancer, parenting, and many, many others.

Mental Illness in the Family: Part II: Guidelines for Seeking Care is one in a series of pamphlets on helping family members with mental illness. The other titles include:

Mental Illness in the Family: Part I Recognizing the Warning Signs and How to Cope

Mental Illness in the Family: Part III Guidelines for Hospitalization

For More Information:

For a free and confidential mental health screening, go on-line to www.mhacolorado.org.