

How to Find a Mental Health Provider

Mental health care is a collaboration between you and your provider so it's important to start with trust, safety, and comfort is important. The goal is to find someone who puts you at ease and has the experience and training to help meet your goals.

Consider what you want help with

- It can help if you are able to describe what's been bothering you or what you hope to improve in your life. Things like better sleep, decreased anxiety or stress, coping with loss, decreasing loneliness, increasing motivation, improving your relationships, reducing alcohol use, etc.
- Consider if you are looking to vent, seeking to understand yourself better, or hoping to learn skills to help you make change.
- It is completely fine to be unsure about what you want or need. A good mental health provider can work with you to figure out what is going on and what might help.

Consider your preferences

- Do you have gender, cultural, age, religious, or other preferences for a mental health provider? Do you want to receive care in-person, via telehealth or a combination of both?
- Some people want a provider who is familiar with their community or who has a similar background. This may or may not mean that they are a member of your community but have the training and experience to understand your perspective and/or life experience.

Starting your search

- Ask friends, family, or a trusted medical provider for recommendations. Your primary care provider may have behavioral health services as part of their clinic so ask them, too.
- Call your insurance company or review their website for a list of in-network providers.

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- Use online mental health search tools, many of which let you narrow down your search by insurance, the issues you want help with and other preferences. Some common filters and provider profiles to consider:
 - Insurance(s) accepted*
 - Type of provider you're seeking (e.g. *psychiatrist, psychiatric nurse practitioner, psychologist, social worker, etc.*)
 - Age groups served
 - Issues addressed (e.g., *anxiety, addiction, depression, trauma, etc.*)
 - Ethnicity, faith, language, etc.
 - Geographic location, telehealth, in-person or hybrid options
 - Types of therapy offered (e.g., *CBT, DBT, ACT, etc.*)

- * It is advised to confirm with your health plan that a provider is in network for your specific mental health benefits and plan **before** beginning care.

- Included here are just a few mental health provider web-based search options. They vary in their search and filter options, the number and type of providers available, the populations they focus on, etc. Some will link to a providers' individual practice website that may include more details about their work and training to help in your process.

[Asian Mental Health Collective](http://www.asianmhc.org)

www.asianmhc.org

[Multicultural Counselors](http://www.multiculturalcounselors.org)

www.multiculturalcounselors.org

[Good Therapy](http://www.goodtherapy.org)

www.goodtherapy.org

[Open Path Collective](http://www.openpathcollective.org)

www.openpathcollective.org

[Inclusive Therapists](http://www.inclusivetherapists.com)

www.inclusivetherapists.com

[Psychology Today](http://www.psychologytoday.com)

www.psychologytoday.com

[Ingersoll Gender Center](http://www.ingersollgendercenter.org/ingersoll-directory)

www.ingersollgendercenter.org/ingersoll-directory

[Therapy Den](http://www.therapyden.com)

www.therapyden.com

[LatinX Therapy](http://www.latinxtherapy.com)

www.latinxtherapy.com

[Therapy for Black Girls](http://www.therapyforblackgirls.com)

www.therapyforblackgirls.com

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The UW Medicine Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences does not have an investment in any of the programs and their inclusion is not meant as an endorsement of any of these services or their work.

Understand and confirm your insurance coverage

- Information on insurance and therapist websites can be out of date. It is important to confirm benefits and coverage for a specific therapist before you begin care to avoid unexpected costs.
- If you find a therapist you like who is not in-network for your plan, ask your insurance company if you have **'out of network benefits'** where a portion of the costs would be covered by insurance, and you pay the rest. Ask your insurance what percentage they would cover, and what percentage would be your responsibility.
- Most providers who are out-of-network won't bill your insurance but instead you pay the full cost of the treatment, and then seek partial reimbursement directly from your insurance company. Ask your insurance carrier and your provider to explain their specific processes to you.

Contact and interview potential providers

- Using your treatment goals or symptoms as a guide, reach out to providers who look promising. Briefly explain your reason for seeking mental health care, indicate scheduling preferences if you have them, and include your insurance information and any other 'must have' preferences.
- **With demand for mental health care so high right now, consider writing a summary of yourself and what you're seeking to use for email or online contact forms. This allows you to quickly contact many providers to hopefully find a few who meet your criteria and are accepting new patients.**
- Many providers offer a free 15-30 minute "get to know you" phone conversation – a chance for both of you to see if you're a good match for working together. Be prepared

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that you may need to repeat your story a few times, but it can be worth it to find the right provider for you.

- This first meeting doesn't need to include your deepest disclosures. It's fine to keep it at a high level at this stage.
 - Here are some questions to consider asking:
 - What is their experience working with people with similar symptoms?
 - How might they approach treatment with you?
 - How do they determine fit with a client?
 - How do they check in with clients about progress?
 - As you listen to their responses, think about if they seem like someone you can be vulnerable with, someone with whom you can be completely honest.
 - The introductory call may not be enough to help you decide, and you may need to have a couple of sessions before confirming true fit and that's ok. You can always decide later and move on to another provider.
- If you do find a provider you like but who does not have current openings, ask if they have a waitlist.