

WHY WOULD MY CHILD NEED A THERAPIST?

Children are often hesitant to share their concerns, worries and feelings with parents because they don't want to worry them, don't want to hurt their feelings, or don't want to disappoint them. Sometimes teenagers will seek help from their peers, however, their peers are not equipped to handle complex problems or mental health issues.



HOW DO I FIND A THERAPIST FOR MY CHILD?

STEP 1: ASK AROUND

Ask your pediatrician and trusted friends if they can recommend someone. If you're researching people covered by your insurance, check their areas of expertise and training, which should be listed.

STEP 2: FIGURE OUT WHAT'S COVERED BY INSURANCE

Read your insurance plan. Many cover therapy. By law, your co-pay for mental health benefits can't cost more than the range of what you pay for medical/surgical benefits. Some plans cover a certain number of sessions, so be sure to ask your provider how much they'll cover once you've met that limit.

STEP 3: MAKE SOME CALLS & ASK AWAY

A chat with a potential therapist—in person or via phone—cues you into how well the therapist may relate to your child. Asking questions helps guide your conversation.

“Do you think you can help my child?” You, as the parent, your child, and the therapist, need to feel like you can collaborate. A good therapist will refer you to another one if she/he doesn't think she/he can help you.

STEP 4: CHECK YOUR GUT

After your child meets with the therapist, ask her/him how she/he feels. Ask your child if she/he can imagine sitting and talking to the person. If your child doesn't click after three visits, talk to the therapist about it, and know it's okay to see someone else. It is important that your child and the therapist are a good “match.”

IT'S A MYTH

Don't let misconceptions get in the way of your child's improved mental health.

MYTH: GOING TO THERAPY MEANS THE PERSON IS WEAK OR UNSTABLE. It takes courage and strength to realize and admit that you need help.

MYTH: THERAPY GOES ON FOREVER. The goal of therapy is to help the client develop skills, insights, and perspective so that he/she can take what he/she has learned and apply it on his/her own. Once the skills are developed, therapy is no longer needed for the issue.

DECODE THE DEGREES

Therapists can have many letters after their names. Here's what they mean.

PSYCHIATRISTS are medical doctors (**M.D.**) who undergo four years of graduate training other than medical school.

PSYCHOLOGISTS can have a **Ph.D.** with five to seven years of training; a **Psy.D.** with four to six years; or an **Ed.D.** with three to five years, in addition to a masters degree, usually in counseling.

PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS (L.P.C.), **MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPISTS (L.M.F.T.)**, and **SOCIAL WORKERS (L.C.S.W.)** typically have a master's degree in psychology, counseling, or social work.