

Mental Illness in the Family Part 2: Finding the Right Care

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

Where do you go for help?

Where you go for help will depend on who has the problem (an adult or child) and the nature of the problem and/or symptoms. Often, the best place to start is to call Mental Health America at 414-276-3122 for referrals or other mental health services.

You may also want to contact one of the following resources to locate services in your community.

- Family physician
- Clergy person
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Your local health department's mental health division
- Family services agencies
- Educational consultants or school counselors
- Psychiatric hospitals
- Hotlines, crisis centers and emergency rooms

Which mental health professional is right for you?

There are many types of mental health professionals. Finding the right one for you may require some research. Often it's a good idea to first describe the symptoms and/or problems to your family, personal physician or religious leader. He or she may be able to suggest what type of mental health professional you should call.

Types of mental health professionals

Psychiatrist – medical doctor with special training in the diagnosis and treatment of mental and emotional illnesses. Like other doctors, psychiatrists are qualified to prescribe medication.

Qualifications: state license and be board eligible or certified by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology.

Child/Adolescent Psychiatrist – 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.

What You Need to Know...



Qualifications: state license and be board eligible or certified by the America Board of Psychiatry and Neurology.

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: state license

Clinical Social Worker – counselor with a master’s 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

Professional Counselor – counselor with a master’s degree in psychology, counseling or related field. Trained to diagnose and provide individual and group counseling.

Qualifications: state license

Mental Health Counselor – counselor with a master’s degree and several years of supervised clinical work experience. Trained to diagnose and provide individual and group counseling.

Qualifications: certification by the National Academy of Certified Clinical Mental Health Counselors

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

Clinical Nurse Specialist – registered nurse who is trained in the practice of psychiatric and mental health nursing. Trained to diagnose and provide individual and group counseling.

Qualifications: certification, state license

Marital and Family Therapist – counselor with a master’s 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 the America Association of Pastoral Counselors.

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What You Need to Know...



You made the call, now what do you do?

Ask the professional about his or her style and philosophy in working with clients, and whether or not he or she has 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 counselor or doctor, the next step is to make an appointment.

On your first visit, the mental health professional will want to get to know you and hear why you called him or her. The mental health professional will also want to know what you think the problem is, about your life, what you do, where you live and with whom you live. It is also common to be asked about family and friends. This information helps assess your situation and develop a plan for treatment.

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

Types of Care

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

- **Behavioral Therapy** includes stress management, biofeedback and relaxation training to change thinking patterns and behavior.
- **Psychoanalysis** is long-term therapy meant to “uncover” unconscious motivations and early patterns to resolve issues and to become aware of how those motivations influence present actions and feelings.
- **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.
- **Movement/art/music Therapy** includes the use of movement, art or music to express emotions. This approach is effective for persons who cannot otherwise express feelings.
- **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.

Medications

Medications can be beneficial to some people with mental or emotional disorders. Individuals 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 regularly.

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Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT)

ECT is used to treat some cases of major depression, delusions and hallucinations or life-threatening sleep and eating disorders that cannot be effectively treated with medication and/or psychotherapy. Discuss with your physician the risks and side effects of ECT.

Self-Help Support Groups

These 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.

Rehabilitation Programs

These programs can help a person recover the confidence and skills needed to live a productive and independent life in the community. Types of services include case management, drop-in centers, housing and employment programs, and crisis services.

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 are set at the time of registration and will remain the same whether seen by a social worker, psychiatrist, nurse or psychologist. Fees range from \$5 to \$50 per visit.

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 \$60 to \$125 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.

For more information, call Mental Health America of Wisconsin at 414-276-3122 or visit our web site at www.mhawisconsin.org.

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734 N. 4th St., Suite 200, Milwaukee, WI 53203 • P: 414.276.3122 • F: 414.276.3124
133 S. Butler St., Room 330, Madison, WI 53703 • P: 608.250.4368 • F: 608.442.7907