

Choosing the Right Counselor

At some time in your life, you may have problems that can be hard to handle on your own. The stress caused by a change or a loss may overwhelm you and it may be helpful to meet with a counselor to learn how to deal with this stress.

You may want to see a counselor for the following reasons:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Relationship concerns
- Stress
- Moods or behavior that affect your daily activities
- Substance use, including smoking or misuse of drugs or alcohol
- Grief or loss
- Family/caregiver support

Professionals Who Provide Counseling:

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| Pastoral Care | Ministers, rabbis, clergy, nuns and other religious persons with training in counseling. |
| Psychiatrists | Medical doctors who can provide counseling and can order medicine and other treatments. |
| Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner | Nurses with advanced education and training who can order medicines and other treatments. |
| Psychologists | Health care professionals with doctoral degrees who provide counseling and psychological testing. |
| Social Workers | Health care professionals with advanced education who provide counseling services. |
| Counselors | Health care professionals with advanced training who provide counseling. |

This handout is for informational purposes only. Talk with your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

How to Find a Counselor

You may want to call one of the following resources to help you find a counselor:

- Your health insurance company for a list of counselors or companies that are covered under your insurance plan
- Your doctor, nurse, social worker, clergy, family and friends
- A Community Mental Health Center
- The Employee Assistance Program at your work

Questions You May Want to Ask When Choosing a Counselor

- How many years of experience do you have with the type of treatment or therapy you provide?
- How much do you charge for counseling? What is the cancellation policy? Do you charge for missed appointments?
- If my insurance does not cover the full cost of this type of care, how much would I pay for each visit?
- How do you handle after hours (evenings, weekends) emergency calls?

You may find it helpful to interview many counselors over the phone or in person before making your choice. It is important to feel comfortable with your counselor. It may take more than one visit to decide if the counselor can meet your needs.

Counseling services may be covered by your insurance plan. Every plan is different. We encourage you to check with your insurance company about what your plan covers before your first visit.