



Choosing the Right Treatment Provider

Finding the right treating provider is a critical component to getting effective mental health care that works for you. After deciding to seek mental health treatment, there are a few items to consider in your search for the right provider.

Let's start with provider types:

Here is a list of the most common providers who treat mental health conditions:

- **Primary Care Providers:** this is where people often start. They can prescribe medication if it's needed and make referrals to mental health specialists.
- **Psychiatrists:** are doctors who have received advanced medical school training to treat mental health conditions with medications and psychotherapy.
- **Psychologists or Therapists:** they typically have advanced degrees, like a PhD or PsyD. In most states, psychologists are not allowed to prescribe medication, but many work with psychiatrists and medical providers who can do so. Psychologists are trained in therapies that are effective for depression and

other mental health conditions like cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), dialectical behavior therapy (DBT) and other talk therapies.

- **Licensed Clinical Social Workers or Social Work Counselors** (Counselor): these providers typically have a Master's degree and provide an assessment, diagnosis, and therapy. They are not licensed to prescribe medication but can work with another provider who can do so.

Questions to Consider Asking in Finding the Right Provider

Be clear with treating providers about what you want and need to get better. That can help produce the best outcomes.

- I am concerned I may be experiencing depression, what is your experience treating depression?
- Why are you recommending specific treatment options and how will it help me to feel better?
- How long will it take me to feel better and what should I expect in the way I will feel from the proposed medication and/or therapy?
- What is your area of expertise in treating mental health conditions?
- What are your preferred methods of treatment for depression and other mental health conditions and, are they proven effective for my mental health condition?
- Can you prescribe medication if I need it? If not, do you work with other providers who can prescribe?
- Do you take my insurance? If not, what is your fee? Is there a sliding scale fee policy?

When it comes to your mental health and well-being, be proactive and take charge in managing your condition. Finding the right treating provider is often half the battle and can make all the difference in producing and sustaining positive outcomes.

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