# Accessing Mental Health Providers: An Overview

## ***Terminology***

**Therapist** – This is a broad term that may include various kinds of Psychologists, Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSW), Licensed Professional Counselors (LPC), and Marriage and Family Therapists (LMFT). Different degrees offer routes to the protected title of therapist including but not limited to: Master of Psychology, Master in Marriage and Family Therapy, Master of Social Work, Master in Counseling or a Doctorate in any of those fields. These providers are all qualified to provide mental health therapy, mental health diagnostic, and assessments as needed.

**Psychologist** – Usually requiring a minimum of a Masters degree in Psychology to achieve this title. In most cases, refers only to those licensed by a state board to provide Psychological therapy and assessment. These individuals can help with testing for learning disabilities and Autism.

**Psychiatrist** – Psychiatry is the medical specialty devoted to diagnosing, preventing, and treating mental disorders. These include various adaptations related to mood, behavior, cognition, and perceptions. This is the only mental health professional that can prescribe medication.

## ***Access Points***

1) Provider route - If you have insurance and behavioral health benefits, call the number on the back of your insurance card and request a list of mental health therapists in your area. Be specific – let the insurance company know age of your child/adolescent.
2) Psychology Today - Visit PsychologyToday.com/US > Find a therapist > enter zip or city > on the left side panel, select type of insurance, issues, and age (e.g. BCBS insurance, Anxiety and Depression, and teen). Read through the biographies of various therapists. If you are seeking therapy for a pre-teen or teen, you can invite them to look at the biographies with you.
3) Ask your students school counselor for a resource list.

## ***What types of therapy would be good for my child/teen?***

When looking for a therapist, the most important thing to consider is whether or not your child feels *connected* to their therapist—ask them something like, "*Do you think this person understands what you're going through and responds in an empathetic way*?" Find someone who helps your child feel seen and heard without judgement. While you want someone who can help them build skills, the relationship is the most important factor. People heal, change, and learn through positive relationships. It may take a couple of tries to find the right provider for you or your child, this is normal.

| ***Population*** | ***Type of Therapy*** |
|---|---|
| *Children ages 10 and below* | Play therapy, Nurtured Heart Approach, Attachment-based, Circle of Security, Relational, Multi-systemic, Parent Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT), Trust Based Relational Intervention (TBRI), Sandtray, Art therapy |
| *Anxiety / Depression* | Mindfulness, Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT), Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Relational, Psychodynamic, Art therapy, Somatic Experiencing, Internal Family Systems (IFS) |
| *Family conflict* | Attachment, Family therapy, Multi-systemic, PCIT |
| *Trauma, abuse, or neglect* | Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), Somatic Experiencing, Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT), Equine Assisted Psychotherapy, Attachment-based, IFS |
| *Personality Disorders* | DBT, IFS |
| *Treating loss* | Grief & loss therapy, Relational, Attachment-based, play therapy for kids |
| *Substance Use* | CBT, EMDR, trauma informed, family approaches, harm reduction models |