

WHO CAN I ASK FOR HELP WITH MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS?



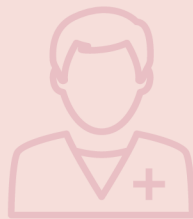
YOUR PRIMARY CARE DOCTOR

You can start with your **primary care doctor** (M.D., D.O., pediatrician) if you think you are having symptoms. Your primary care doctor can usually do some basic assessments and give you a referral as needed. Most primary care doctors are also comfortable prescribing basic mental health medication for things like anxiety, depression or ADHD.

You can also start your mental health journey with counseling. **Counselors** generally hold these licenses: LPC, LCPC, LSW, LCSW or MFT. Counselors help you make a plan with treatments like CBT or EMDR or Play Therapy. They also do talk therapy and help you change things in your life that will improve your mental health. Counselors can help with motivation, resolving past trauma, self-esteem, relationship issues, mood issues, and coping skills. They can also help you determine if medication might be effective for your mental health concerns. Your counselor might refer you to a psychologist for a psychological assessment or to your primary care doctor or psychiatrist for medication.



COUNSELORS



NURSE PRACTITIONERS OR PHYSICIAN'S ASSISTANTS

Nurse practitioners (N.P., A.P.R.N.) and **physician's assistants** (P.A.s) can also prescribe medication for mental health needs. We find it is helpful if they will also work with your counselor for a team approach.

PSYCHIATRISTS

A **psychiatrist** prescribes medication for mental health. It is best if they reach out to your counselor for information to make an effective plan. They generally don't have long visits and or do talk therapy, but a small minority do. Ask questions while you are there like, "When will I see improvement with this medication?" It can take several tries to find the right medication, so communicate with your psychiatrist clearly and often so they can help you. Ask for a change in medication if things aren't improving. Medication is a good option and helps a lot of people with proper brain function. Ongoing symptoms like low-motivation, sleeplessness, crying spells, inability to get out of bed, isolation, constant worry and fear, irritability, hypersleep and consistent problems in relationships can signal that things are not going well in your brain. Our brain is one of our organs and deserves medication if needed to function properly. **Taking medication for your brain does not mean you are broken or making bad choices.**



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PSYCHOLOGISTS

Psychologists can do talk therapy, but they generally only do testing and assessment and provide a report. Psychologists test for many things, such as: dyslexia, autism, ADHD, aptitude, dementia, brain injuries, emotional or mood problems, or personality problems. The psychological assessment will come with conclusions and recommendations. These recommendations can be helpful for you, your school/work and your counselor to treat your concerns. Seeing a psychologist for an assessment is only for diagnosis, not to treat the problem.

