



# How to Find a Therapist

Finding a therapist that is a good fit for your adolescent is some of the most important work you can do.

## What should I consider when looking for a therapist?

A mental health therapist or counselor is an important part of your adolescent or young adult's care team. Finding the right therapist can take a long time. There are many factors to keep in mind, such as:

- Do they take our insurance?
- Are they taking new patients?
- Where is their office?
- Are they familiar with adolescents dealing with similar challenges?

It can take a lot of phone calls to find the right therapist.

## What are my insurance options?

The first step is to contact your insurance. Ask them about mental health therapists, counselors or agencies in your network. This will help avoid calling therapists who are not able to see your adolescent for insurance reasons.

- If you have medical coupons or state insurance, you will be given a phone number for the Regional Support Network (RSN) that serves the county you live in. They will direct you to therapists or agencies in your area.
- If you have private insurance, they will tell you what therapists are covered in your network. You may be able to get this information on your insurance company's website.

NOTE: If you have to pay a lot of money out-of-pocket before your insurance pays any medical costs (high deductible), you may be able to go to a community agency that offers a sliding scale. Also, your insurance may have benefits that allow you to see therapists outside of your network.

## How do I choose a therapist?

The next step is to start contacting mental health therapists, counselors or agencies on your list to schedule a first appointment (intake evaluation). These are some questions to ask when you call:

- Are you taking new patients?
- What is your experience with adolescents or young adults dealing with similar challenges? For example, you might ask about their experience with adolescents struggling with depression, anxiety, or an eating disorder.
- Do you have flexible appointment times? For example, after school, weekends or evenings.

NOTE: If you leave a voicemail message for a therapist, call again if you have not heard back in 24 hours. Often therapists do not have a receptionist. If they do not have any appointments available but offer to put you on a waitlist, take

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### To Learn More

- Adolescent Medicine  
206-987-2028
- Ask your child's  
healthcare provider
- [www.seattlechildrens.org](http://www.seattlechildrens.org)

### Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask  
your child's nurse.
- From outside the  
hospital, call the  
toll-free Family  
Interpreting Line  
1-866-583-1527. Tell  
the interpreter the  
name or extension you  
need.

that option while you continue to call others. If you find another therapist, you can always decline the appointment.

### How do I know if I find a good fit?

Once you find a therapist or counselor, it can take some time to know if they are a good fit for your adolescent or young adult. Go to 3 or 4 visits before deciding if this is someone you both feel they can make progress with.

While this process can take some time, it is some of the most important work you can do to support your adolescent or young adult. Please call the Adolescent Nurse line with questions 206-987-2028, option 4.

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Seattle Children's offers interpreter services for Deaf, hard of hearing or non-English speaking patients, family members and legal representatives free of charge. Seattle Children's will make this information available in alternate formats upon request. Call the Family Resource Center at 206-987-2201.

This handout has been reviewed by clinical staff at Seattle Children's. However, your child's needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon this information, please talk with your child's healthcare provider.

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