

information...

FINDING THE RIGHT CARE

Your health care is important! And, an important part of your overall health is your mental health!

Finding the right help is not always easy, especially when it comes to finding mental health treatment.

A lot of young people experience a mental health challenge. In fact, more than 1 in 5 children and adolescents struggle with their mental health at any given time. It is important to ask for help because what you are feeling is real, common, and treatable. Everyone has the right to appropriate and affordable care.

Here are some initial steps you can take to find the right care:

FIRST STEPS

- Visit the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry's (AACAP) website at: www.aacap.org. Here you will find information about struggles and challenges that youth may experience. AACAP features a youth site where you can easily learn about different mental health issues.
- If you think you need help, a good place to start is to reach out to your parents, a teacher, a coach or other trusted adults, or your doctor. Pediatricians and family physicians are often able to answer your questions/concerns and help you find more information.
- Talk to your school counselor. They know the professionals and other resources available in your community.
- If you feel that you are having a crisis, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has a crisis hotline: [1-800-273-8255 \(TALK\)](tel:1-800-273-8255). If you are in immediate crisis, dial 911.

TYPES OF CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SPECIALISTS

You can receive mental health care from different professionals such as: **a medical doctor, a clinical nurse specialist, a psychologist, or a social worker/counselor**. Each professional has different levels of training in helping children and adolescents with mental health challenges. All of these providers are trained to help you if you are struggling with negative thoughts, feelings, or behaviors.

MEDICAL DOCTOR (M.D./D.O.): went to medical school, prescribes medicine, and is trained to do counseling or therapy.

- **Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist** is a medical doctor who is an expert in treating children and adolescents with mental health struggles. They can talk with you about your concerns and they have the most training in prescribing mental health medications. They also work closely with other care providers.
- **General Adult Psychiatrist** is a medical doctor trained to treat adults with mental health struggles. Their training and experience in working with youth varies.

- **Developmental/Behavioral Pediatrician** is a medical doctor who is trained to treat children with emotional, behavioral, and learning struggles. They can prescribe medicine, provide counseling, and work closely with other care providers.
- **Pediatric Neurologist** is a medical doctor trained in treating the brain and nervous system.

CLINICAL NURSE SPECIALIST (A.P.R.N.): went to graduate nursing school and prescribes medicine, sometimes with a medical doctor's supervision. They can provide talk therapy.

PSYCHOLOGIST (Ph.D./Psy.D.): went to graduate school for clinical psychology and can do psychological/educational testing. Most do not prescribe medicines.

- **Clinical Child Psychologist** is trained in the mental health needs of youth. They can provide talk therapy and may work with other care providers.
- **Educational Psychologist** works in schools and is trained in the mental health needs of youth. They often provide testing of your education level.
- **Neuropsychologist** is trained in specialized, psychological testing of youth. They may also provide counseling about the testing results and provide recommendations

SOCIAL WORKERS OR COUNSELORS (M.S.W./L.I.C.S.W./L.M.H.C.): went to graduate school for social work or counseling. They do not prescribe medications.

* Remember these are just first steps and this list does not include other possible supports.