www.helplinecenter.org

Considering Counseling?

What is Counseling?

In counseling (also referred to as therapy, psychotherapy, and talk therapy), a mental health professional works with an individual, family, group, or couple. Counselors provide a safe, caring, and confidential environment to explore feelings, behaviors, or beliefs, work through challenges, and work towards desired goals.

When to Seek Professional Help?

Everyone needs more support from time to time. Below are some signs that indicate that you may benefit from a mental health professional's help:

- You're feeling overwhelmed with sadness or anger that impairs your ability to function
- You've faced trauma or abuse and are having trouble coping
- You're having harmful thoughts
- You're experiencing symptoms of a mental health condition

Where is Counseling Provided?

- **Community Agencies/Centers** – non-profit agencies or community mental health centers that provide a range of mental health services
- **Native American Counseling Locations** – providing mental health and substance use services, often at no cost to enrolled tribal members.
- **Veteran Counseling Locations** – serving members of the military and their families with behavioral health care. Some options are affiliated with the VA and some are not, or keep counseling records separate.
- **Private Practice** – typically for-profit; mental health professionals with their own offices and set their own schedules
- **Residential or Inpatient Settings** – provides intensive care, typically suggested after an assessment/evaluation is completed.
- **Telehealth Mental Health Services** – online or phone-based counseling provided by a mental health professional

How to Find the Right Fit?

Some things to consider while searching for a counselor or therapist:

- What gender are you comfortable with?
- What type of help are you seeking and what are your goals?
- What are their scheduling options? Do they provide services via telehealth?
- Cost of services:
    - Do you have health insurance? If so, what mental health services does it cover?
    - Does your employer offer services through an Employee Assistance Program (EAP)?

    - Will you need services at a reduced cost? Some counselors offer “sliding fee scale” that allows you to pay for services based on your income.
- Do they offer a phone consultation prior to your first appointment? This provides an opportunity to ask about their specialty and area of expertise.
- Remember: Finding the right counselor or therapist is like finding a good pair of shoes. Sometimes you have to try on a few before you find the right fit.

For more information on counseling options, call 211 or search our online database:
www.helplinecenter.org/2-1-1

- Enter your zip code
- Select categories:
    - Mental Health
    - Special Populations

Sources:
National Alliance on Mental Illness: https://www.nami.org
Psychology Today: https://www.psychologytoday.com/us

Disclaimer: This HelpSheet is developed by the Helpline Center. HelpSheets provide a brief overview of the designated topic. For more information, call 211 or text your zip code to 898211.

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