Choosing a Therapist

If you and your healthcare provider have determined that psychotherapy would be a valuable part of your treatment plan, this tool is intended to help you select a psychotherapist that’s right for you.

Steps to consider in finding a psychotherapist:

- Ask your physician or other healthcare provider for a referral.
- Contact your insurance provider for a list of therapists covered by your insurance plan.
- Call you local or state psychological association for a list of trained therapists.
- Inquire at a local university or college’s department of psychology or department of psychiatry.
- Ask a family member or friend for a recommendation.
- Contact the mental health center in your community.

What to consider when evaluating a potential psychotherapist:

**Credentials:**
Highly qualified therapists can come from a variety of educational backgrounds, including psychiatrists, psychologists, licensed master social workers (LMSWs), and licensed counselors. Inquire about your potential therapists education, training and experience.

**Level of personal comfort**
Finding a therapist with whom you can be comfortable is very important. Don’t hesitate to interview possible candidates by phone or in person before making your selection.

**Questions to ask:**

- How many years have you been practicing psychotherapy?
- I have been feeling (anxious, depressed, etc.) and I’m having problems with (my job, my marriage, eating, sleeping, etc.). What experience do you have helping people with these types of problems?
- What are your areas of expertise – for example, working with children, couples, families?
- What kinds of treatments do you use?
- Have these approaches been effective for the kinds of problems/issues I’ve described to you?
- How long are your average sessions? (30 minutes? 45 minutes? One hour?)

**For More Information**
University of Michigan Depression Center
800-475-6424
www.depressioncenter.org

© 2003-2010 Regents of the University of Michigan