

How To Find Mental Health Help for Your Child

HELPING YOUR CHILD

At times, you may feel that your child needs more help than you can provide. You may feel that your child is:

- Depressed or more sad than usual
- Out-of-control
- Having trouble at home, school, or with their friends
- Using drugs, alcohol, or other dangerous things.

When you are concerned about your child, the best thing is get help. This is not a sign that you have failed as a parent or that your child is a “bad kid” or is “crazy”. Taking this step shows a good way to help a bad and/or hard situation.

The goal is to help your child:

- Understand their feelings
- Identify ways to return them to normal activity and development.
- Find resources that will help them.

There are many ways to help a child:

- Counseling
- Psychotherapy
- Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) or Interpersonal Therapy (IPT)
- Medications

MENTAL HEALTH HELP RESOURCES

The next decision is to determine what type of Mental Health help your child needs. There are different types of mental health providers and it can be confusing and complicated for many people.

- A **Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist** is a state licensed medical doctor (MD) who is trained in child and teenage mental health problems. They can provide a physical and mental exam and a full range of treatment options. They can also prescribe and monitor medications
- A **Psychologist** has a doctoral degree (PhD) in psychology and is licensed by the state. They can provide a mental health evaluation, psychological testing, and treatment for mental health problems (such as psychotherapy, CBT, IPT).

- A **Licensed Professional Counselor** is often a person who has a master’s degree in Psychology or Clinical Social Work (LPC, LPSW, MSW, or LCSW) and is licensed by the state. They can provide a mental health evaluation and counseling (possibly including psychotherapy). In many communities, counselors may be more easily available.

Your doctor may have resources for you. You may also get resources from:

- Your family and friends
- Your child’s school counselor
- Your clergy person or spiritual advisor
- Your work through an Employee Assistance Program
- Online: www.psychologytoday.com is a helpful website

When you meet a new mental health provider, spend a few visits getting to know them and letting them get to know your child. If you do not feel comfortable or you are not getting along with that provider, find someone else. Finding a mental health provider is a major first step to helping your child with their troubles. Please call your child’s doctor if you have concerns.

If you are concerned that your child may hurt themselves or hurt someone else, please call for help right away!

NAMI Austin has a website with more crises options:
<https://namicentraltx.org/crisis>

