

Guide for Finding a Counselor at Home

Finding A Counselor

Visit Psychology Today at <http://www.psychologytoday.com>

Select the location you are looking for and hit search. You can see that on the left there are a number of options to filter the search. Make sure to select your insurance company, any gender preferences, the issue you are looking for support on, etc. If you are looking for a fully remote counselor, it is recommended that you select the state you are seeking services in rather than limiting yourself to a specific town or county. For example, type in "New York" or "Pennsylvania". Almost all counselors are offering tele options, as noted on the bottom right of their profile blurb. You must open the actual profile to determine if they are offering in-person and virtual services.

Make Sure They Accept Your Insurance

Once you review some profiles and find a few clinicians that you like, double check them with your insurance website below. We recommend this because not all plans through all insurance companies offer the same list of approved providers. This means that you could select Blue Cross Blue Shield as your insurance, but your *specific* plan might not cover every provider listed.

To check your plan, go to the homepage of your insurance website. The steps from here will vary slightly from one insurance company to another. Most companies will provide an option to "find a doctor" that will be visible from the home page, start here. Next, follow the prompts it provides you and select the appropriate option you are looking for. Options might include: select your individual insurance plan, select behavioral/mental health care, select your location, etc. You may have to input your member ID or create an account on the insurance website to access your list of accepted provider options based on your plan. Pay very close attention to any plan name that is listed on your card. Plan names are often simple words tied together that wouldn't make sense in a sentence such as "Choice Plus", "Open Access", or "Platinum Blue". If you do not see a plan name on your card, look for acronyms such as "PPO" or "HMO". Additionally, you may be asked if your insurance is employer-based, through Medicaid or purchased through the NYS marketplace. Some Medicaid plans have their own provider lists, so if you know you have Medicaid it is recommended that instead of searching "United Healthcare" you search "United Healthcare Medicaid" for the proper home page to begin this process. Should you run into any barriers you can always call the number on the back of your card and customer service can assist you.

We recommend starting with **Psychology Today**, because insurance companies will list all local providers that accept their insurance online. This means that insurance website will list all mental health providers who work in local nursing homes, high schools, hospitals, clinics, etc., but they are not necessarily available to provide services to you. The insurance company list will not differentiate between who actually works as a private therapist and who does not, which means you would have to individually look up each provider or address to discover if they are providing counseling to the public. However, **Psychology Today** will only list private practice clinicians. If you start there, and then cross reference it with your insurance website you can be more confident in your selection. We recommend searching on your insurance website for the specific zip code the provider you are trying to look up has listed. Sometimes you may need to delete their middle initial or search only the last name as well.

Out of Network Benefits

Many insurance plans have what we refer to as "Out of Network Benefits." This means that you could see a provider who is not approved as an in network option and your insurance company will reimburse you for some of the cost. For a guide on how to use these benefits, please review this article published by Zencare. <https://tinyurl.com/Out-of-Network-Benefits> It is important to speak with someone at your insurance company if you plan to use out of network benefits prior to doing so to make sure that you do not need a referral for service, and inquire about how to submit a claim. Please note that Medicaid plans do not offer out of network benefits.

Finding Other Mental Health Providers and Services

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Psychology Today also has a search feature for Psychiatric Care, which would be for the purpose of medication management. If you are looking for ADHD testing, you may search under the issue "Psychological Testing" or you may search for a Psychiatric provider directly. Traditional ADHD Psychological Testing (which is required for accommodations on campus through the disabilities office) is generally fairly expensive and commonly not covered by insurance. If you are simply looking for a diagnosis or possible medication support for ADHD, you might not need to seek psychological testing and can simply see a Psychiatric provider.

Additional Resources for Finding Mental Health Services

Over the last several years, many new resources have been developed which offer teletherapy and telepsychiatry via specific platforms that will assign you providers when you create an account as an alternative to finding providers on your own. Several of these resources are included below.

<https://mindful.care/>

<https://www.telepsychhealth.com/>

<https://cerebral.com/>

<https://www.talkiatry.com/>

<https://skypiatrist.com/>

<https://www.joinlavender.com/>

Numerous other websites similar in nature to Psychology Today have also come onto our radar this year. If you are having trouble finding providers via Psychology Today, one of these resources could be helpful.

<https://zencare.co/>

<https://lifestance.com/>

<https://www.goodtherapy.org/>

Support from UCC and Others

We recommend that you look for these services yourself in order to find a good match and to have your insurance information readily available when you cross-reference counselors with insurance. You might also check-in with supportive family or friends who are willing to assist you. However, if you are still having difficulty navigating these systems, the UCC has staff who can assist with the process, even via phone or Zoom. If you need this kind of assistance, please call the UCC at 607-777-2772 and request for someone to assist with "Treatment Coordination."