

How to Shop For a Therapist

Shopping for a therapist can be a daunting task! There are so many different aspects to consider and it can be hard to know where and how to start the process. It's important to know you have options. This list is not comprehensive; there are many different ways to get connected to a provider. This list is meant to point you in the right direction.

Important Considerations:

- What type of treatment do you want? (e.g. Individual therapy, group therapy, medications, long term, short term, etc.)
- Do you want to use your insurance or do you want to pay out-of-pocket? What can you afford?
- What qualities do you look for in a therapist? (Warm, caring, straightforward, honest, gentle, etc.)
- Do you have any preferences in a therapist? (Gender, religious orientation, etc.)
- How often and how long do you want to be seen?
- Is there anything that would prevent you from being successful in treatment? (Previous bad counseling experiences, unreliable transportation, etc.)

Questions to Ask:

- How soon can you see me? How often can you see me?
- How much do you charge per session? Do you accept my insurance? What is your cancellation or reschedule policy?
- How long have you been in practice? What is your success rate?
- What kind of interventions do you use? What kind of therapy do you do?

Resources to get started:

With Insurance:	Without Insurance:
Provider search through insurance website Psychology Today Therapist Finder CAPS Community Provider Database SAMHSA Behavioral Health Treatment Locator Good old fashioned Google & Yelp Local 211 and/or NAMI chapter Local college or university training centers (CCC) Support groups	Psychology Today Therapist Finder CAPS Community Provider Database SAMHSA Behavioral Health Treatment Locator Good old fashioned Google & Yelp Local 211 and/or NAMI chapter Local college or university training centers (CCC) Support groups

Pro Tips:

- If multiple providers share a common address, it's probably a practice location with several options available to you. Google the address and find the practice website and do more research on services offered, fees for services, etc. Many times, private practices offer multiple services in one location, e.g. therapy, groups, workshops, medication evaluations, psychological testing, etc. This is a good "one stop shop" option.
- Most private practices accept out-of-pocket payments for services. Ask about fees for service, sliding scale fees, prepaid package discounts, and student or family rates. It's important to be mindful of your budget and know what you can afford.
- Many colleges and universities offer free or discounted treatment options through their training facilities. Therapists can be masters-level students (social work, psychology, mental health counseling, etc.) and are under supervision by licensed providers. UCF offers this service at Community Counseling Clinic.
- Google is your best friend through this process. Many provider finders offer searchable options to help narrow down your options (search by gender, location, specialty area, payment options, treatment options, etc.)
- If you aren't sure what kind of treatment you want, NAMI.org → Treatment has an excellent overview of different types of treatments and services.

Connecting with a Provider

When you contact a provider to establish services:

- Identify yourself as a UCF student who was referred by UCF Counseling and Psychological Services
- Verify the provider takes your insurance and/or discuss fees for service
- Some providers may offer brief initial interview at little or no charge to discuss your service needs, their counseling approach, and billing arrangements. This would be a time for you to ask questions and get a sense of what it would be like to work with this provider

- Remember it may take a few meetings before you establish a good working relationship with a counselor
- You can use the providers identified above or identify your own providers or consult with other professionals

Follow-Up and Support

Your counselor will want to check in with you regarding your connection to a community provider. Please take a moment to take this call even if you already established another counselor. Please be aware that if you are enrolled as a UCF student, you are still eligible for our walk in and crisis services even if you are connected to a community provider. Please contact us if at 407-823-2811 if you need additional resources.