



Feeling overwhelmed? Choose the mental-health expert that fits your needs.

mental-health CHEAT SHEET

Gone are the days when “seeking professional help” meant kicking back on a couch and confessing your deepest, darkest secrets to a shrink. These days, there are a variety of experts to whom you can turn for the particular help you need. Here’s the lowdown.

who they are	Psychiatrists	Psychologists	Licensed clinical social workers; marriage/family therapists	Life coaches
what they do	M.D.'s who diagnose and treat mental illness (which is biologically based and often involves chemical imbalance)	Ph.D.'s, Psy.D.'s or Ed.D.'s who treat anxiety, phobias, post-traumatic stress disorder and other emotional-health issues, especially those related to personal history	L.C.S.W.'s and M.F.T.'s who offer individual, family and group counseling and examine problems in the context of social structure	Help identify personal and career goals and develop a plan to achieve them
when to call	If you experience depression, suicidal thoughts, substance abuse or violent behavior; if your primary-care doctor suspects mental illness such as obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)	If you feel overwhelmed by or unable to cope with problems	If you need help with problems related to work, family or friends	If you are looking for help establishing a game plan for endeavors such as starting a business, improving communication skills or creating balance among work, family and self
how to find someone qualified	The American Psychiatric Association's website, healthyminds.org , lists board-certified M.D.'s.	Call the American Psychological Association at (800) 964-2000 or visit locator.apahelpcenter.org .	Find an L.C.S.W. at socialworkers.org ; find an M.F.T. at www.aamft.org/TherapistLocator .	Visit coachfederation.org to find a coach who has completed training with the Lexington, Ky.-based International Coach Federation.
what to expect	Regular therapy sessions where feelings, thoughts and progress are discussed. Possible prescriptions for medication	Regular sessions, with explanation of symptoms and their causes; deep-relaxation, cognitive and behavior therapies aimed at helping you get to the root of your problems	A better understanding of your problem and how to cope with it	Results are in direct proportion to your own effort. If you put a lot of time into the project, you'll see improvement.
average cost per session	\$155 for 45–50 minutes (most insurance plans pay for at least a portion of treatment)	\$100 for 45–50 minutes (many insurance plans cover some or all costs)	\$90 for 45–50 minutes (some insurance plans pay for a portion of the fees)	\$400–\$600 per month for two one-hour sessions plus regular weekly phone calls and e-mail (not covered by insurance) —DAWN WEINBERGER