



FINDING A MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDER FOR YOUR CHILD OR TEEN WITH IBD

Mental Health Providers Can Assist You and Your Child or Teen in Dealing with IBD

➤➤ Young people with IBD may experience many changes to their life, including incorporating regular visits to the GI clinic, recurrent symptoms, and distress about their condition.

How Can Mental Health Providers Help?

- ✔ Assist with coping and adjusting to a long-term medical condition
- ✔ Change behaviors to help minimize the impact of the illness and maximize treatment protocol
- ✔ Promote health behaviors, such as lifestyle changes, good sleep habits, and regular school attendance
- ✔ Follow through on medical recommendations, including medicine, procedures and therapies
- ✔ Assist with parenting and sibling adjustment



Why is Mental Health Important?

- ✔ When a child has a chronic medical condition, the emotional adjustment is as important as the medical care
- ✔ Intervention services for children, teens, young adults and their families can assist in learning positive coping skills and ways to manage a chronic medical condition

Who Can Provide Mental Health Care?

ASSESSMENT & THERAPY

Professional Title	Degree Examples
Psychologist	PhD or PsyD
Clinical Social Worker	MSW, LICSW, LCSW, ACSW
Counselor or Therapist	MS, MA, LPC, LMFT

PRESCRIBE & MONITOR MEDS

Professional Title	Degree Examples
Psychiatrist	MD or DO
Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner	MS, PhD, NCLEX, PMHNP-BC
Psychiatric Pharmacist	PharmD

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Steps to Consider When Finding a Mental Health Provider to Work With

▶▶ Talk with Your Child or Teen

- ✓ **Mental health is normal - we all have thoughts and feelings.** Talk with your child about their mental health needs and ensure they are on-board with seeking care and support
- ✓ Discuss ways to access mental health services and what would feel most comfortable to them. Would they prefer to meet in-person or online (telehealth)? Would they like to talk with a mental health professional, a peer specialist or a group of people seeking therapy?
- ✓ Your child will play an important role in the ultimate decision about who they would like to work with, and where they would like to meet

▶▶ Talk with Your Physician

- ✓ Your child's doctor (pediatrician or GI) can help assess mental health needs and determine if they are related to or impacting IBD (e.g., procedural anxiety, body image) or are unrelated to IBD (e.g., social anxiety, ADHD), which can help you clarify treatment focus/goals and find an ideal provider to support your child
- ✓ Your child's doctor may also be able to provide a referral for mental health services, which may or may not be required by your insurance company

▶▶ Contact Your Insurance Company

- ✓ Ask whether your insurance plan will cover mental health services and how much coverage is available for your child
- ✓ Ask for a list of local mental health providers who are covered by your insurance plan
- ✓ If you do not have insurance, you can choose to pay out-of-pocket or contact your local community health center to find available mental health services

▶▶ Find a Provider in Your Area

- ✓ Locate potential providers online via locator.apa.org & psychologytoday.com/us/therapists, or by consulting the lists from your doctor or insurance company
- ✓ It is common to ask for a free consult with potential providers. It may take a few tries to find the right person who can form a strong bond with your child - it is OK to keep trying
- ✓ If your provider of choice has long wait times - schedule the appointment anyway



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Questions to Ask Your Mental Health Provider and What to Expect in Therapy

Questions to Ask Before Visit #1

- ✔ What experience do you have working with children/adolescents?
- ✔ What experience do you have working with children with IBD or other chronic medical conditions?
- ✔ What are your credentials? How long have you been doing this work?
- ✔ What kinds of evidence-based treatments do you use? Have they been proven effective in helping with my child's condition and concerns?
- ✔ What is your appointment availability? Do you have after-work or early morning appointments?
- ✔ What are your fees? Is there a sliding scale fee policy?
- ✔ What types of insurance do you accept? Will you accept direct billing to or payment from my insurance company? Do you accept Medicare/Medicaid?

Questions to Ask During Visit #1

- ✔ What does successful therapy look like to you?
- ✔ What will the goals of treatment be?
- ✔ Will you coordinate my child's care with other providers? If yes, how so?
- ✔ How often will you meet with my child and/or me? How long will each session be?
- ✔ Is email, phone and/or text acceptable for us to communicate between appointments?

➤➤ It is OK to request a free consult and ask questions before and during this first appointment. Providers know you are "shopping" for the best fit and are willing to help you find it.

What Happens in Therapy?

- ✔ During your first session, your mental health provider will ask a lot of questions in order to get to know your child and better understand your/their concerns
- ✔ Your mental health provider will ask you and your child about their feelings, thoughts, friendships, school, and other important parts of their life
- ✔ After a few sessions, you can expect your mental health provider to share their understanding of the challenges/what's happening for your child, how therapy can help, and what will happen in the therapy room going forward
- ✔ You and your child may also be asked to help set goals for treatment





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Financial Considerations When Finding and Working With a Mental Health Provider

➤➤ Financing mental health services for your child is an important part of the process. Talk with both your insurance provider and your potential mental health provider to determine what will be best for your child (from a relationship standpoint) as well as for you, financially.

What If I Don't Have Insurance?

- ✓ If your insurance does not cover mental health services, or you do not have health coverage, you may choose to pay for these services out-of-pocket
- ✓ Many mental health providers offer their services on a sliding scale fee policy, where the amount you pay depends on your income



What If I Have Private Insurance?

- ✓ Contact your insurance company to see if mental health services are covered and, if so, how you may obtain these benefits
- ✓ Depending on your insurance policy there may be out-of-pocket costs you will need to cover (i.e., co-pay, deductible, co-insurance) - ask for an explanation of these costs
- ✓ There are often restrictions as to which providers are covered under different insurance plans. Double check that your provider of choice is covered by your insurance

Government-Sponsored Insurance?

- ✓ Medicare and Medicaid may cover mental services from some providers
- ✓ Contact your insurance provider to determine which providers in your area are covered by your insurance plan

Access this resource digitally at improvecarenow.org/tools or:



Sources used in this **Mental Health Provider Guide** include: American Psychological Association (apa.org); National Alliance of Mental Illness (nami.org); Psychology Today (psychologytoday.com); KidsHealth.com