



Tips For Choosing A Mental Health Professional

Anxiety disorders are real, serious, and treatable conditions that can be effectively treated if diagnosed. These conditions can be diagnosed and treated by a wide range of health professionals, including: psychiatrists; psychologists; clinical social workers; psychiatric nurses; counselors; and primary care physicians. Finding the right health professional is important and can be a complicated task. Here are some quick tips for choosing a health professional:

Talk to Your Primary Care Physician

- Primary care physicians are becoming increasingly aware of the problems associated with anxiety disorders and are making these types of diagnoses more frequently.
- Your primary care physician may be able to prescribe medication or refer you to an appropriate mental health professional.

Do Your Research

- When deciding on a health professional, be sure to research their academic and professional credentials.
- If possible, get the opinion of others who are familiar with this professional.
- Visit the Anxiety Disorders Association of America Web site at www.adaa.org to find a professional in your area. Each listing includes the academic and/or professional degree of the practitioner.
- Speak to more than one professional, either on the phone or at his/her office, before you decide to make use of their services. It is important to feel comfortable with your health professional.

Ask Questions

- A health professional should be willing to answer any questions you may have about their methods, training, and fees. If they are not, see someone else.
- Some questions you may want to ask during a consultation session include:
 - What training and experience do you have in treating anxiety disorders?
 - What is your basic approach to treatment?
 - Can you prescribe the medication or refer me to someone who can, if that proves necessary?
 - How long is the course of treatment?
 - How frequent are the treatment sessions and how long do they last?
 - Do you include family members in therapy?
 - Will you or a staff member go to the home of a phobic person, if necessary?
 - What is your fee schedule, and do you have a sliding scale for varying financial circumstances?
 - What kinds of health insurance do you accept?