

## Choosing a Psychologist

There are many different ways to find a psychologist. You can ask your physician or another health professional. Call your local or state psychological association. Consult a local university or college department of psychology. Ask family and friends. Contact your area community mental health center. Inquire at your church or synagogue. Or, use our free online referral service on the MPA website. [Find a Psychologist Now!](#)

### What To Consider When Making the Choice...

Psychologists and clients work together. The right match is important. Most psychologists agree that an important factor in determining whether or not to work with a particular psychologist, once that psychologist's credentials and competence are established, is your level of personal comfort with that psychologist. A good rapport with your psychologist is critical. Choose a one with whom you feel comfortable and at ease.

### Questions To Ask...

- Are you a licensed psychologist? How many years have you been practicing psychology?
- I have been feeling (anxious, tense, depressed, etc.), and I'm having problems (with my job, my marriage, eating, sleeping, etc.). What experience do you have helping people with these types of problems?
- What are your areas of expertise--for example, working with children and families?
- What kinds of treatments do you use, and have they been proven effective for dealing with my kind of problem or issue?
- What are your fees? (Fees are usually based on a 45- minute to 50-minute session.) Do you have a sliding-scale fee policy?
- What types of insurance do you accept? Will you accept direct billing to or payment from my insurance company? Are you affiliated with any managed care organizations? Do you accept Medicare or Medicaid insurance?

### Credentials To Look For...

After graduation from college, clinical psychologists spend an average of seven years in graduate education training and research before receiving a doctoral degree. As part of their professional training, they must complete a supervised clinical internship in a hospital or organized health setting and at least one year of post-doctoral supervised experience before they can practice independently in any health care arena. It's this combination of doctoral-level training and a clinical internship that distinguishes clinical psychologists from many other mental health care providers.

Psychologists must be licensed by the state or jurisdiction in which they practice. Licensure laws are intended to protect the public by limiting licensure to those persons qualified to practice psychology as defined by state law. In most states, renewal of this license depends upon the demonstration of continued competence and requires continuing education. In addition, members of the American Psychological Association (APA) and The Maryland Psychological Association adhere to a strict code of professional ethics.

Information obtained from the [APA Help Center](#).