

How Therapists Can Help

Nearly half of those who seek help are suffering from interpersonal problems. You may be struggling in a marriage, with parenting issues, or are having other family conflicts. Other individuals who seek treatment suffer serious mental health issues that range from anxiety and depression to bi-polar disorder and schizophrenia.

When you feel stuck in your life or are having trouble adjusting to new transitions—getting married, having children, or dealing with aging issues—a qualified therapist can help.

While medication can help some people gain relief from symptoms, therapy—with or without medication—is the most effective long-term treatment. When people receive the treatment they need, they have fewer medical problems, miss fewer work days, and are more resilient in the face of life's challenges. Therapy helps individuals, couples, and families live more productive, satisfying, and rewarding lives.

What you tell a therapist is private. By law, all therapists are required to maintain confidentiality in most circumstances.

Most health insurance policies cover the service of MFTs so long as the services are “medically necessary.” This typically includes coverage for face-to-face sessions for a diagnosable mental health problem. Such coverage may be limited. Please contact your health insurance company for detailed information about the coverage available to you and your family.



California Association of
Marriage and Family Therapists

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HEALTHY LIVING:

Caring for Your Emotional and
Mental Health



Brought to you by the
California Association of
Marriage and Family Therapists



OFFERING EXTRA SUPPORT About Marriage and Family Therapists

Marriage and Family Therapists (MFTs) are relationship experts. They work with individuals, couples, families, children, adolescents, and the elderly, providing support and perspective as patients struggle with life's challenges.

Licensed by the State of California, MFTs are psychotherapists who are uniquely trained and credentialed to assess, diagnose, and treat a wide range of issues so individuals achieve more adequate, satisfying and productive relationships and social adjustment.

The California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists (CAMFT) is an independent statewide non-profit organization made up of over 29,000 mental health professionals. CAMFT is dedicated to advancing marriage and family therapy as a healing art, science, and mental health profession. In fact, CAMFT sponsors TherapistFinder.com™ so Californians can gain access to qualified local experts who can help.



Seeking a Marriage and Family Therapist or other mental health professional to assist with life's difficulties is a sign of courage and a step in the right direction. Always ask about a therapist's special areas of expertise (e.g. grief counseling, children's issues, relationship counseling) before you engage in therapy to ensure it's the right fit for you.

TherapistFinder™ is a California-wide interactive, online directory that is user-friendly and searchable by name, location, and area of expertise. It's your introduction to one or more qualified psychotherapists who hold a California license.



WHO CAN HELP

The training, experience and scope of practice differ among the four types of mental health professionals.

Psychiatrists—Medical doctors (M.D.s) who are trained primarily to prescribe medicine. Some also practice psychotherapy.

Psychologists—Have a doctoral level degrees with a focus on psychological testing and psychotherapy.

Licensed clinical social workers (LCSWs)—Hold a Masters Degree (or a doctoral level degree)/Ph.D. with a primary emphasis on social services, including psychotherapy.

Marriage and family therapists (MFTs)—Hold a Masters degree (and many also hold a doctoral level degree.) with an emphasis on psychotherapy and counseling. **MFTs are the only mental health professionals who by law complete mandatory coursework in counseling and psychotherapy.** As the relationship experts, MFTs are trained to treat individuals, couples, families, and groups.

WHEN TO SEEK HELP

Marriage and family therapists (MFTs) work with children, teenagers, adults, and elderly people as well as couples and individuals. They treat:

- Emotional stress or anxiety
- Behavioral problems
- Depression
- Alcohol and drug abuse
- Marital issues (including divorce, pre-marital counseling, stepfamilies)
- Parenting issues
- Eating disorders
- Grief
- Anger
- Sexual abuse
- Suicidal behaviors
- Domestic violence
- Serious emotional problems
- Severe mental disorders

MFTs work with people in crisis as well as those who want to improve their emotional well-being or build skills to grow in a relationships or marriage. They also refer and collaborate with physicians, psychiatrists, and other professionals in the clients best interests.

HOW TO GET STARTED

- ❑ **Check your insurance.** Coverage among insurance companies varies widely, so call to find out what your plan will pay. Before you begin therapy, ask if your therapist accepts your insurance and what you will pay out-of-pocket each session.
- ❑ **Be informed.** Some therapists use long-term therapy to resolve long-term issues. Others use short-term therapy to address specific goals. Approaches include psychodynamic, cognitive-behavioral, family therapy, and solution-focused therapy among others. Read up to learn more.
- ❑ **Contact potential therapists.** Look for therapists with specialized training and experience on the issue you are seeking help with. Use short telephone interviews to shop for a good fit with potential therapists.
- ❑ **Ask lots of questions.** Look for someone warm and supportive. Ask about fees, availability, and how the therapist would work with you. Say what you need.
- ❑ **Don't be afraid.** You are not alone. Seeking help when feelings and relationships threaten your well-being is the first step to a better life. Take that step today.