

# Being a Wise Consumer of Mental Health Resources

“Bishops can refer members who need counseling to a Family Services professional, where available. Alternatively, members may seek help from reputable professional counselors in the community” ([General Handbook: Serving in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 22.3.4, Gospel Library](#)). “Members should carefully select reputable professional counselors who have applicable licensing. Counselors should respect the agency, values, and beliefs of those seeking help. Incorporating these values is ethically appropriate in professional counseling” ([General Handbook, 31.3.6](#)).

Below are some suggestions to help you be a wise consumer. Also, see Justin K. McPheters and Rebecca M. Taylor, “[Is Therapy Right for Me?](#)” (digital-only article), *Ensign*, Feb. 2020.

## Consider available resources.

You may have access to mental health providers through medical insurance, an employee assistance program (EAP), a school, a university training program for mental health providers, or government agencies. Reach out to someone you trust if you need help navigating the process. Family Services may help identify other options.

## Select a provider who is authorized to provide services.

Requirements to provide mental health services vary. You may be able to look up providers on the governing body websites to verify if the provider is authorized (for example, “licensed” in the United States, “registered” in Canada) to practice in your area and if there have been any complaints filed against them. Professional associations may also be a resource for identifying providers, especially in areas where no government regulations exist.

## A note of caution.

Avoid services “that promise quick solutions to problems that normally require time, prayer, and personal effort to resolve” (see [General Handbook, 38.7.12](#)). You may consult with Church leaders for guidance in identifying sources of help that are in harmony with gospel principles and to discuss any spiritual solutions suggested by a mental health provider (see [General Handbook, 38.7.8](#)).

## Be proactive: Finding a provider.

As you look for a resource, you can ask direct questions about fees, areas of expertise, evidence-based models of practice, awareness and respect for your values and beliefs, what they will expect of you during treatment. Counseling is most effective when you feel comfortable with and confident in your provider. For more questions, see Kevin Theriot, “[Finding a Mental Health Professional Who’s Right for You](#)” (digital-only article), *Ensign*, Jan. 2019. You might also find helpful information by searching for a therapist’s presence on social media and elsewhere online.

## Ask providers about:

- Areas of expertise
- Models of practice
- Respect for values & beliefs
- Expectations of you
- Fees

*“Help your counselor plan clear treatment goals and ask about the approach he or she will use to help you achieve those goals. It is helpful to regularly review progress and/or measure improvements.”*

### **Be proactive: Finding a provider for children.**

When seeking resources for your child, ask how the provider will involve you in the process, particularly if sensitive issues arise. Look for therapists who support your role as a parent and who seek to strengthen your relationship with your child. Avoid those who may align with your child against you or who may attempt to assume parent-like authority for making decisions for your child.

### **Be proactive: During treatment.**

Help your counselor plan clear treatment goals and ask about the approach he or she will use to help you achieve those goals. It is also helpful to regularly review progress and/or measure improvements. Be proactive in communicating with your provider about your experience of the counseling process. If your provider does not meet your expectations or does not respect your values and beliefs, talk with him or her about your concerns. If your concerns are not resolved, you can end services or seek another provider. Family Services would like to hear about your experience, whether you find a provider helpful or not.

### **Create a support team.**

A Church leader can be an important advocate and effective member of your support team. You may also involve trusted family members or friends. You may sign a document that allows your provider to speak with members of your support team.

