

Tips for Finding a Therapist when you have Benefits

How do I find out about my workplace benefits for Mental Health Therapy?

A few places to consider: Company Website, Orientation Booklet, Supervisor, Human Resources Department.

What do my Benefits cover in terms of Mental Health Therapy?

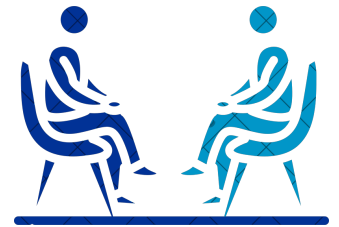
Coverage varies based on the workplace, insurance provider and benefits package. In general, most benefit packages cover short-term psychotherapy with a regulated mental health professional; in addition, depending on the benefit plan, they may offer additional supports (financial, stress management, legal, etc).

Coverage for mental health therapy varies; it may be: a certain dollar amount to use towards therapy, a percentage of the cost of a session (ie: 80%), while others state a certain number of sessions. Plans will often specify which Regulated Mental Health Professionals you can work with, for example: Social Worker, Psychotherapist, Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Nurse.

Where to find a Mental Health Therapist?

Some benefit plans have pre-approved therapists through an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or a preferred provider network. Other plans require you to find your own private therapist. This can be clarified by contacting your benefit provider via phone, website, or benefit provider app.

For pre-approved therapists through an EAP program, you will be provided a contact number to call for intake and they assign a therapist.



Benefit plans that have a preferred provider network will provide a database that has prescreened Regulated Mental Health Professionals to choose from. If you know of a private therapist you wish to work with who is not identified as a preferred provider for your benefit plan, you could ask this private therapist to consider applying to become a preferred provider.

For benefit plans where you are asked to find a private therapist, the websites below may assist with your search:

* Databases provide options for filters to narrow your search (ie, location, focus, and other preferences).

- In Canada, www.psychologytoday.com is a database for private practice therapists that provides profile outlines and contact information. Look for therapists who provide services to people who reside in Ontario, as plans tend to be limited to the province you reside in.
- In Canada, www.affordabletherapynetwork.com is a database of private practice therapists and mental health practitioners who offer reduced rates, low-cost, or fees based on your income. The listing may include: registered professionals, interns practising under supervision, students from various institutions, counsellors, and coaches. Interns and qualifying practitioners (Q) who are under the supervision of a Regulated Mental Health Professional may not be covered by your benefit plan; therefore, it is important to double check.

- Do an online search for local therapists in the community of preference. Some therapists work in group practices, and their profiles are often available on the group practice website.
- www.askforhelptoday.ca The Ontario Psychological Association (OPA) is a service to support matching you with a Psychologist in Ontario that meets your needs and preferences.
- Connex Ontario ([1-866-531-2600](tel:1-866-531-2600) or www.connexontario.ca) is a free, confidential, government-funded service where you can speak to a Navigator who has access to a database of government-funded mental health, addiction and problem gambling services in your local area and province (e.g. crisis lines, self-help groups, distress centers, family services, treatment services etc.).

Questions to consider when choosing a mental health therapist:

- Are they registered with a Professional College in good standing? Psychologists, Social Workers, Psychotherapists, Occupational Therapists and Nurses are five professions that can offer psychotherapy. In Ontario, Mental Health Professionals must register with their professional college and follow a Code of Ethics that can hold them accountable if misconduct occurs.
- Is the therapist's training, qualifications and level of experience suited to address your goals?
- Do you have personal preferences for a therapist's gender, age, language, ethnicity and cultural background, sexual orientation, faith background, etc.?
- Do you prefer in-person, virtual, or phone appointments?
- Do you need daytime, evening, or weekend appointments?
- Is the therapist easily accessible for you? For example: travel time to/from, available parking, on City Transit route, accessible building?
- Does the therapist provide a 15-minute free consultation? These calls can support you in clarifying if the therapist would be a good match.
- What would a typical appointment look like and how long?
- Do they have a wait list, or could you start right away?
- How much do they charge per appointment? Do you require an option for direct billing, or are you in a position to pay upfront and be reimbursed later?
- What is their cancellation policy, in particular for illness or inclement weather?

What happens if you encounter barriers in your search?

We hope your search goes smoothly; however, if you run into roadblocks finding a therapist, you can contact our Administrative Support Staff for the Mental Health Team at 226-779-5550.

