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## Mental Health

**If your child is depressed or has other problems, find a mental health professional who can help him.**

If your child is depressed or having other problems, get help. Sometimes your child may not want to tell you what's wrong. Or you may not be sure how to handle a problem. If that's the case, you may need outside help.



### **What is a mental health professional?**

A mental health professional is a person who can help your child with a mental problem, or getting through a stressful period. These problems could be:

- [Being depressed](http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/special/depression/index.jsp)
- Going through parents' divorce
- Problems with school or friends

### **Different kinds of mental health professionals**

There are different kinds of mental health professionals:

#### Psychiatrists

**Psychiatrists (sy-KAI-a-trists)** are medical doctors. They study problems people have with their feelings, how they think and how they act. After medical school, psychiatrists get at least 5 more years of training.

Psychiatrists can:

- Diagnose your child. This means they can give your child a check-up to see what problems he has.
- Give your child **psychotherapy (sy-ko-THE-ruh-pee)**. Psychotherapy is helping your child by talking about his problems.
- Prescribe medicine for your child.

#### Psychologists

**Psychologists (sy-KOL-o-jists)** aren't medical doctors, but they can also help your child. Psychologists can have these degrees: M.S. (master of science), Ph.D. (doctor of philosophy) or Psy.D. (doctor of psychology). After college, they do an internship in psychology before they can get a license.

Psychologists can:

- Diagnose your child.
- Give your child psychotherapy.

### Social workers

Social workers do a 2-year program and an internship to get an M.S.W. (a master of social work) degree.

Social workers can:

- Diagnose your child.
- Give your child psychotherapy.

### **Find a therapist who has worked with deaf people**

A therapist who hasn't worked with deaf people before may not know the best way to help your child. So find one who has. Finding one who can communicate in your child's language is even better!

You may run into some problems finding a good therapist for your child. For example, your insurance may limit whom your child can see. But try these places to find one:

- Ask family, friends or teachers.
- Look in the **TTY** (<http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/glossary/?id=213>) phone book's yellow pages under Health, Mental Health, Counseling or Psychotherapy.
- Ask local groups that help deaf and hard of hearing people for ideas. They may know of some people.
- Ask your state's **school for the deaf** (<http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu/InfoToGo/school-s-usa.html>).

### **What to look for**

Once you find a few therapists that your child could see, ask to meet with them or talk to them on the phone to pick the right one. Ask yourself these questions:

- Do you feel comfortable with the therapist? If you don't, you probably don't want your child working with that person.



- Do you trust the therapist? Again, if you don't, you probably don't want your child working with that person.

### **Interpreters**

If your child needs an interpreter, ask the therapist to get one. You or someone else in your family should not interpret for your child. Your child may find it hard to open up if a family member is interpreting for him.

Talk with your child's therapist about how to find an interpreter. Your child's therapist should pay for the interpreter. And he can't charge you extra for the cost. [Read more about your child's right to an interpreter \(http://www.mcdhh.state.mo.us/ADA/Mental\\_Health.htm\)](http://www.mcdhh.state.mo.us/ADA/Mental_Health.htm).

### **Learn more about finding a mental health professional**

- [Mental Health Services for Deaf People: A Resource Directory 2000 Edition \(http://gri.gallaudet.edu/Publications/\)](http://gri.gallaudet.edu/Publications/)
- [National Directory of Alcohol and Other Drugs Prevention and Treatment Programs Accessible to the Deaf \(http://www.rit.edu/~257www/national\\_directory/\)](http://www.rit.edu/~257www/national_directory/)
- [Standards of Care for the Delivery of Mental Health Services to Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons \(http://www.deafhoh-health.org/resources/MHStandards/\)](http://www.deafhoh-health.org/resources/MHStandards/)
- [Find more mental health resources \(http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu/InfoToGo/mentalhealth.html\)](http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu/InfoToGo/mentalhealth.html)

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*You can find this page online at:*  
<http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/help/mental.jsp>