

## SECTION 3

### Mental Health Services and Crisis Interventions

Research over the last few decades has shown that many adults with depression, bipolar disorder and/or anxiety report that their symptoms started as a child. The earlier intervention is provided to children and teens experiencing significant depression or anxiety, the better the prognosis is for later in life. Early intervention for social, emotional and mental health needs is now considered a “best practice” among child counselors.

According to Mass General Hospital’s [schoolpsychiatry.org](http://schoolpsychiatry.org) website, *“If your child has a mental health condition that causes difficulties at school with peers, teachers, or academics, you are not alone — about 20 percent of children and adolescents at any given time are significantly affected by symptoms of a mental health condition. As the parent or guardian of such a child, you may be feeling frustrated, worried, confused, and, more than anything else, unsure about what can be done to help.”*

Many children, teens and families find that counseling can help with issues of depression, anxiety, trauma and adjustment to the changes that occur in their lives. If any member of your family is experiencing psychological distress, you may find that counseling can help decrease stress and increase coping skills with difficult situations.

#### Finding a Therapist

All therapists should have a graduate degree and a professional license. Clinical social workers and clinical psychologists can provide assessment and counseling. Psychiatrists and psychiatric nurse practitioners can assess and prescribe if medication is indicated.

An important part of counseling is the rapport established between you and the therapist. At times, you may find there is not a good fit between you/your child and the therapist and if that occurs, you may need to meet with more than one therapist.

- **Check with your insurance company to see what benefits for behavioral health (i.e counseling) are allowed on your plan.** All health plans are mandated to provide coverage for counseling, but the amount will vary depending on the company and your specific plan. Many insurance plans require a co-pay.
- **Determine what type of counseling is needed.** The counselor will conduct an intake to determine the best type of counseling needed. Individual counseling for children, teens or adults, family therapy and couples therapy are all options.
- **What is the presenting issue or the biggest concern?** Most clinicians specialize in either issues (i.e. anxiety) and/or population (i.e. teens, couples, etc). Insurance companies usually list therapists and their specialties on the insurance company’s website. It is helpful to find a therapist who specializes in the issues you, your family or your child is experiencing.
- **How do you find names of therapists?**  
You may want to ask your doctor or your pediatrician for referrals of clinicians to whom they have referred other patients. There are also professional organizations that will provide a list of clinicians. For example, you can call the National Association of Social Workers in Boston for a list of clinical social workers in private practice. There are also local agencies that provide outpatient counseling, some of which we have listed on these pages. You should also call your insurance company to obtain names of clinicians that are in your insurance network.

- **What type of therapist do you need?**

Clinical social workers, clinical psychologists and psychiatrists all work with children, teens, parents and families. Clinical social workers and psychologists usually provide the actual treatment, while a psychiatrist will provide a medication evaluation. If medication is indicated, they will provide the medication management.

- **What if my child needs to be hospitalized?**

When a child or a teen experiences significant depression or anxiety that impacts their ability to function in school and at home, and outpatient counseling is not enough to help the child stabilize, hospitalization may be recommended. The goal is to assess what is needed to help your child return to his/her normal setting as quickly as possible. Most of the Boston-based hospitals will offer psychiatric services for teens. Your pediatrician can make a referral for you; you may also call your insurance company to see what programs they will cover.

### **Other Resources:**

*Child Behavioral Acute Treatment programs (CBAT)* are short-term programs to help stabilize a child or teen undergoing acute emotional distress.

*Partial Hospitalization* is sometimes indicated when a child does not require a full hospital level of care, but some daily support is indicated.

**Department of Mental Health:** DMH is the State Mental Health Authority. They provide access to services and supports to meet the mental health needs of individuals of all ages who are experiencing significant mental health issues that may require hospitalization. The Department sets policy, promotes self-determination, protects human rights, and supports mental health training and research.

P: (617) 626-8000

[www.mass.gov/dmh](http://www.mass.gov/dmh)

**Children's Behavioral Health Initiative:** CBHI is an initiative of the Commonwealth's Executive Office of Health and Human Services. Their mission is to integrate Massachusetts state services into a comprehensive, community-based system of care for children with significant behavioral, emotional and mental health needs. They will provide an in-home therapy team, as well as therapeutic mentors for children and teens. You must have MassHealth, Beacon/NHP insurance to participate.

[www.mass.gov/masshealth/cbhi](http://www.mass.gov/masshealth/cbhi)

### **Web Sites for Mental Health Issues**

The National Institute of Mental Health website provides "health information quick links" about many mental health issues, including symptoms and treatment approaches.

[www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov)

The National Mental Health Association website provides information, symptoms and suggestions for mental health issues in children, teens and adults.

<http://nmha.org>

Resources and information about many child mental health issues.

<http://www.childadvocates.net/childmentalhealth>

A comprehensive website for parents and teachers that explains each major mental health diagnosis for children and teens and offers suggestions for accommodations.

[www.schoolpsychiatry.org](http://www.schoolpsychiatry.org)

Provides information on "common questions about mental health" with information about child, adolescent and adult mental health issues.

[www.providencecenter.org/services-overview.html](http://www.providencecenter.org/services-overview.html)

Center for Mental Health Services.  
[www.mentalhealth.org](http://www.mentalhealth.org)

Child and Adolescent Bipolar Foundation.  
[www.cabf.org](http://www.cabf.org)

Provides help to individuals with obsessive-compulsive disorders (OCD).  
[www.ocfoundation.org](http://www.ocfoundation.org)

### **Outpatient Counseling Services:**

*It is beyond the scope of this project to recommend any counselors. However, we have listed some agencies below that can assist families and children after a mental health issue arises.*

**Bay State Community Services:** Offers several different programs including outpatient counseling services for children, adults, and families as well as in-home services.

P: (617)-471-8400  
[www.baystatecs.org](http://www.baystatecs.org)

**South Shore Mental Health:** Provides outpatient counseling services for children, teens, and families experiencing emotional problems, behavioral issues, developmental disabilities and substance abuse. They have several programs including but not limited to emergency/crisis services, home based services, outpatient counseling, and life skills groups.

P: (617) 847-1914 – to make an appointment  
P: (617) 774-6036 – if in a crisis  
[www.ssmh.org](http://www.ssmh.org)

**Child and Adolescent Fear and Anxiety Treatment Program – Boston University:** Provides assessment and intervention for children and teens who are experiencing significant anxiety that is impacting their lives. Payment is covered by your insurance or self-pay.

P: (617) 353-9610 <http://www.bu.edu/card/get-help/child-programs/child-and-adolescent-fear-and-anxiety-treatment-program/>

### **Emergencies**

**Bridge Over Troubled Waters:** Provides a runaway hotline, offering 24-hour access to a counselor and a safe bed off the streets for youth 14-17 years old who have run away from home and find themselves in crisis. BOTW also offers supportive services for 18-24 year olds who are homeless or at-risk.

Hotline: (1-800-RUNAWAY)  
P: (617) 423-9575  
[www.bridgeotw.org](http://www.bridgeotw.org)

**Samaritans:** This organization offers two help lines to assist children, teens and adults who are experiencing thoughts of suicide.

1-877-870-HOPE (4673) –24 hour help line that provides non-judgmental support to people of any age who are alone, depressed, in crisis or contemplating suicide.

**Teen Helpline** 1-800-252-TEEN (8336) Provides confidential peer support and understanding to teens that are struggling with feelings of depression, loneliness, and stress. It is staffed by teens from 3pm to

9pm on weekdays and 9am-9pm on weekends.

***Safe Place:*** A peer-support group of people who have experienced the loss of a loved one to suicide. Trained Samaritan worker who has lost a loved one to suicide runs this group.