



Counseling and Mental Health
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Considerations in Setting up Private/Off-Campus Psychotherapy and Psychiatric Care

The idea of contacting a therapist or psychiatric provider in private practice can be intimidating, especially if you're already feeling overwhelmed by other things in your life. The following are some guidelines that will aid you in this process.

1. What kind of services do I need?
 - Private Psychotherapy – This is talk therapy, occurring about once a week, lasting about 45-50 minutes per session. This can be with a Psychologist, Counselor, Therapist, or Social Worker.
 - Private Psychiatric Services – This is a Doctor, a Physician's Assistant, or a Certified Registered Nurse Practitioner who you may consult to see if medication may be helpful for your symptoms. If you are receiving psychiatric services, you should generally be in therapy as well.

2. What about insurance?
 - Do you have insurance? **Then take these steps:**
 1. There will be a toll free number on the back of your insurance card to call for 'Mental Health Benefits'. They will ask you for your ID# from the front of the card.
 2. Ask them what your 'Outpatient Mental Health Benefits' are. They should be able to tell you if you will owe a deductible or co-payment for visits, and how many visits you will be allowed per year.
 3. Then ask for a listing of names of therapists and/or psychiatric services in the zip code of 76109 or your local zip code. Make sure to get more than 1 or 3 names, as you may need to call several different people. They may also give you a website on which you can look up this information.

 - If you don't have insurance, then please contact CMHC. We have staff dedicated to helping students find a suitable community provider, and we are well connected to the Fort Worth Community.

3. How do I find the right therapist or psychiatrist for me?
 - You will need to begin by calling the list of people your insurance company provided you. Please keep in mind that space is limited with counselors and psychiatric providers and call several to see who has openings. You'll often have to leave a confidential voice mail. Be sure to call from a quiet place, and repeat your name and phone number clearly and slowly.

 - When you speak with the provider, here are some questions to ask:
 1. Are you currently accepting any new clients?
 2. How soon would an appointment be available?



3. Do you still take _____ insurance for payment?
4. What are your policies about payment? Do I need to pay the co-payment at the first visit?
5. Where is your office located?
6. Is there anything else I should be aware of?

- Alternatively, CMHC has a list of Fort Worth Area Off-Campus Mental Health professionals under the “**Resource**” section on www.counseling.tcu.edu. These providers may or may not accept your insurance, and may ask you to pay them directly so that you can file for reimbursement from your insurance company.

- Another option is the popular website, www.psychologytoday.com. Under the “Find a Therapist” link, you can search for providers by zip code, and see pics and bios of therapists who provide counseling in the community.

- After you have your first appointment, recognize that it may take a couple times to feel comfortable with your new therapist and/or psychiatrist. If it doesn't feel that you are 'clicking' with that person, don't be afraid to tell them. They may be able to adapt to your needs or be able to suggest someone else that would personally fit you better.

4. Additional things to think about:

- If you think you need counseling, don't wait to begin the process!! The sooner you call someone, the sooner you may be able to get an appointment.
- If money is tight, consider asking someone for some help. Would your parents be willing to help out? Consider asking your therapist if attending therapy every other week would be appropriate. Additionally, some therapists and/or clinics might be willing to work with you on a “sliding scale fee” if you ask them. CMHC can also provide low-cost/sliding scale referrals if needed.

- If you are taking any medications (over the counter AND prescriptions), make sure you tell the psychiatric provider about ALL of them. Some medications, vitamins, supplements and herbal remedies can affect the efficacy of psychiatric medicines.

- If you see a therapist and a psychiatric provider, it is important to tell them about each other and sign consent forms so that they communicate about your treatment and what is best for you.

5. If this process seems overwhelming or you need further assistance, please contact CMHC and we may be able to help you through it. We can be reached at 817-257-7863.

Mental Health Emergencies

During regular hours (Monday - Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm)

- CMHC has a crisis counselor available during these times. We are in the basement of **Samuelson Hall**
- **OR CALL 817-257-7863**



After hours

- A crisis counselor can be reached by calling the Campus Police at 817-257-7777. Please be advised that calling Campus Police does not constitute a confidential call. Anonymous crisis services can be reached by calling the National Suicide Prevention Hotline, 1-800-723-8255.
- For Emergency or Life-threatening Situations, you can also **Call 911** or go to a **hospital emergency room**