

Finding A Trauma-Informed Therapist



Table of Contents



01

What is
Trauma?

03

Professional
Licenses for
Therapists

04

Paying for
Therapy

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What is Trauma?

Trauma is the emotional and mental reaction to deeply distressing or upsetting events, such as natural disasters, accidents, crime, or the loss of someone close. Trauma can overwhelm your ability to cope, leaving you feeling scared, helpless, or disconnected. Symptoms might include flashbacks, anxiety, depression, or trouble handling everyday life. If these symptoms last more than a month and impact your daily activities, it could turn into Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

What is a Trauma-Informed Therapist?

Trauma-informed therapists understand the impact of trauma on mental health and can help identify trauma-related symptoms and offer personalized tools to cope. These therapists can be particularly beneficial for victims who have experienced trauma. By approaching therapy with compassion and sensitivity, they create a safe and supportive space for their clients. Trauma-informed therapists help victims and survivors process their experiences at their own pace, avoiding actions that might cause further harm. Their expertise builds trust, supports holistic recovery, and empowers individuals to take control of their healing.

Benefits of Trauma-Informed Therapy

- Coping Strategies
- Self-compassion
- Understanding Triggers
- Empowerment
- Emotional Regulation
- Holistic Healing

Different Types of Therapy

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

Focuses on identifying and changing negative thought patterns and behaviors.

Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT)

Utilizes CBT to specifically address and treat trauma.

Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR)

Helps process and integrate traumatic memories through guided eye movements.

Somatic Therapy

Addresses the physical effects of trauma stored in the body through awareness and movement.

Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)

Combines cognitive-behavioral techniques with mindfulness strategies to manage emotions and improve personal relationships.



Professional Licenses for Therapists

Professional therapists have advanced degrees and are experts in their field. Some have specialized training and experience in providing trauma-informed care. Understanding the different professional licenses can help you find a therapist who is the best fit for you.

Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)

Addresses mental health and social issues, often integrating community resources in treatment.

Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC)

Offers talk therapy for various mental health issues, often working with individuals and groups.

Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC)

Similar to LMHCs.

Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT)

Works with couples and families to improve relationships and resolve conflicts.

Psychologist (PhD or PsyD)

A practitioner with a doctoral degree in psychology who conducts assessments, can diagnose disorders, provides therapy, and may specialize in specific psychological conditions.

Psychiatrists (MD or DO)

A medical doctor who can prescribe medication to address specific mental health diagnoses. Some may also provide talk therapy.

Licensed Clinical Addiction Specialist (LCAS)

A certified professional who specializes in working with individuals struggling with substance use disorders.

Certified Clinical Trauma Professional (CCTP)

A certified practitioner trained in understanding the impact of trauma and utilizing evidence-based trauma treatment practices.

Paying for Therapy

Therapy is typically covered by medical insurance or paid out-of-pocket by the individual. Some therapists offer sliding scale fees based on financial need. Payment methods vary depending on the therapist.

Paying through Medical Insurance

Your medical insurance may cover the cost of therapy, but it's important to understand your plan's coverage details first. Some plans may require pre-authorization, so verifying your coverage before you begin will ensure you are prepared. Here are some steps you can take to see if therapy is covered by your medical insurance:

- Contact your insurance provider directly to confirm coverage details and avoid unexpected costs.
- Ask if mental health benefits are included in your plan. If they are, see which types of therapy are covered.
- Learn about in-network and out-of-network providers. In-network options typically cost less, whereas out-of-network services might involve higher out-of-pocket expenses and additional paperwork. If you're considering an out-of-network provider, understand the process for submitting claims and the necessary documentation for reimbursement.
- Check if there are limits on the number of sessions covered by insurance and any deductibles or copays you may be expected to pay.
- Confirm any specific benefits or limitations for family members or dependents, if applicable.

Terms to know

Pre-authorization

A requirement from your insurance company to obtain approval from them before starting therapy to ensure it will be covered.

Co-pay

A fixed amount you pay out-of-pocket for each therapy session, with the remaining cost covered by your insurance.

Deductible

The required total amount you must pay out-of-pocket for therapy services before your insurance starts covering costs.

In-Network Providers

Providers who have contracts with your insurance company, resulting in lower costs and streamlined billing.

Out-of-Network Providers

Providers who do not have agreements with your insurance company, leading to higher costs that you may have to pay out-of-pocket for. In some cases, these services can be reimbursed.

Reimbursement

The process of submitting a claim to your insurance company for therapy costs paid out-of-pocket, where you are refunded according to your plan & coverage.

Sliding Scale

A flexible fee structure offered by therapists based on your financial situation, which may adjust the cost of therapy based on your ability to pay.

Options for Individuals Without Insurance

- Explore if your therapist offers sliding scale options for therapy fees based on financial need.
- **Community Clinics:** Look for local community mental health clinics or nonprofits in your area that offer low-cost or free therapy services.
- **Employee Assistance Program (EAP):** A workplace benefit that provides employees with access to free or low-cost confidential counseling and support services. Check with your employer to see if this benefit is available and learn how to contact the program for services.

Finding a Provider

Here are some steps you can take to find a therapist that best fits your needs.

Search Online Directories: There are numerous free websites where you can search for licensed therapists in your area and filter by specific criteria such as accepted insurance coverage, therapy specialties, language preferences, and more.

Psychology Today

Psychology Today offers a national listing of licensed therapists. Filter your search by location, therapy type, insurance, specific needs, and preferences.



The CCBHC locator page is an interactive map and resource list of Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics. Organized by state, these clinics provide comprehensive mental health care. Use the interactive map to locate a CCBHC in your state.



The OpenPath Psychotherapy Collective allows you to search by your zip code to find therapists who offer lower-cost therapy. Many offer virtual counseling sessions over the phone or through a computer.

Check with Your Insurance Provider: Many insurance companies offer online directories listing in-network providers. Insured individuals can contact their insurance company directly to obtain a list of local in-network therapists.

- Online therapy: Some online platforms provide fee-based services that enable users to connect directly with licensed therapists for sessions by video, phone, or chat. These sites are designed to increase accessibility and convenience for users by conducting services online.

- [BetterHelp](#)
- [Talk Space](#)

Explore Local Resources: Depending on your location, you may find resources in your community, such as a university counseling center or employee assistance programs. Local advocacy organizations and nonprofits may offer helpful services or additional resources. Neighborhood community centers often connect individuals with various resources and places of worship provide faith-based treatment options.



Questions to Ask When Choosing a Trauma-Informed Therapist

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to therapy. After identifying a therapist who may be a good fit, you can call and ask if they offer a consultation to discuss your goals and how you can work together. Here are some helpful questions you can ask during the consultation:

- What is your experience with working with people who have experienced trauma [or your specific concern for therapy or goals for treatment]?
- What therapeutic approaches do you use and how do they align with trauma-informed care?
- How would you describe your approach as a therapist?
- What can I expect during therapy?
- What is your fee?
- Do you offer a sliding scale?
- Do you accept insurance? If so, which insurance companies are you in-network with?



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