

## **Finding a Therapist**

At times, a student will be seen briefly at the PCC and then decide to continue in ongoing psychotherapy locally. At other times, a student is assessed by a member of the PCC staff, and told that his/her best treatment option would be with a therapist who can provide on-going or specialist care, rather than the time-limited psychotherapy that is provided at the PCC. In both of these situations, PCC staff may provide names and contact information for local therapists, but it will be the student's responsibility to verify insurance coverage and the session fees for behavioral health.

### Insurance

Usually, the insurance company lists its web site address on their member cards. Once on the website, look for a "find a provider" or "provider directory" link to get started. Some insurance sites have a separate section for behavioral health providers. Often, one can search for therapists by name, town, or zip code, and by specialty, such as "anxiety," "eating disorder," or "substance use."

Some insurance company member cards provide a telephone number to call for provider directory assistance, but this has become much less typical in recent years.

Having one's insurance card with the insurance member ID number and date of birth is very helpful to verify coverage for behavioral health benefits. Some insurance companies require prior authorization for this coverage. Students should inquire whether prior authorization is required, prior to scheduling appointments with a therapist. Other insurers request that the client inform them of the name of the therapist selected for treatment.

The student school insurance for the 2018 - 2019 academic year is CDPHP, and the insurance broker is Haylor, Freyer, and Coon, Inc. Additional information about the insurance program is available at:

<http://www.haylor.com/college/suny-at-new-paltz/>

Consult them for current information, as changes may occur annually.

Student CDPHP insurance for behavioral health treatment covers "in-network providers" at a \$20/visit copay. Consult <https://findadoc.cdphp.com/> and select the "**National EPO/PPO/HDEPO/HDPPO**" plan type to find local providers.

### Calling the Therapist

Often, when one places a call to a therapist, the answering machine picks up because the therapist may be in session with another client. Listen to the message and the tone of voice to get a sense of your comfort with the therapist. Leave a clear voice message with your name and phone number, and state the best time to reach you. Be sure to ask whether the therapist takes your insurance or provides a sliding scale fee. Speak clearly and slowly so your name and phone number can be heard.

## Meeting the Therapist

Take time to consider your initial response to the therapist and be honest with yourself about what you need and feel comfortable with in therapy. For instance, what is the therapist's style and approach? What personality styles feel comfortable to you? Do you respond best to a directive style? Do you prefer a therapist who talks a great deal, or one who spends more time listening to what you have to say? Does a warm, supportive approach work best for you? Do you prefer a therapist who will agree with you or one who will confront you? If you have been in therapy previously, what therapy approaches have been beneficial for you, such as cognitive behavioral therapy, psychoanalysis, humanistic or narrative models?

Be sure to ask about the therapist's emergency policy, for instance, how do clients reach the therapist when they are experiencing a crisis? What are the therapist's policies for cancellation, no show or terminating therapy?

Is the office location convenient? Is the therapist prompt and courteous? These factors may help make the sessions comfortable for you, and increase the likelihood that you will continue in therapy.

It may be helpful to frame the initial visit as a "consultation," and to inform the therapist that you are looking for a good match. This may make it easier for you to move on if you feel unable to build a rapport with the first therapist you meet.

Be sure the therapist is licensed. If there is no license displayed, you can search the New York State Education Department Office of the Professions to confirm licensure: <http://www.op.nysed.gov/opsearches.htm>

Local therapists' contact information:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_