

At various times during our lives we may need help dealing with problems that seem beyond our control. Many of us face problems such as job worries, marriage and family problems and illness or injury. Other concerns may include difficulty dealing with the loss of a loved one, anxiety, loneliness and depression. Often we can work through these difficulties ourselves, or with the help of family and friends. Sometimes we need the assistance of a trained therapist. Psychologists use therapy to help people of all ages find solutions to their problems.

Consider Therapy If...

- You are unable to work through problems yourself or with the help of family and friends.
- You feel helpless or hopeless and your problems do not get better despite your efforts.
- You feel sad, blue, anxious, nervous or tense for a long period of time.
- You or others notice a major change in your mood or behaviour.
- You notice a decrease in your ability to concentrate, make decisions, eat, sleep, or carry out your usual activities.
- You have difficulty relating to your spouse, partner, family or others.
- You are having difficulty adjusting to changes such as divorce or death.
- You are having difficulty dealing with stress, physical illness, injury or disability.
- You are dealing with problems such as drinking, gambling or drugs.
- You have questions or concerns about parenting issues, your child's behaviour or learning abilities.
- You are having career or work-related difficulties.

The Nova Scotia Board of Examiners in Psychology is responsible for the regulation of Psychologists in Nova Scotia. Any questions regarding the status or practice of a Psychologist should be directed to them:

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CHOOSING A PSYCHOLOGIST



*Guidelines for anyone
considering
Psychotherapy
and
Psychological
Assessment*

What Is Therapy?

Therapy is a partnership where the psychologist helps you better understand and solve your problems. It can provide the opportunity for you to talk openly and confidentially about your concerns and feelings.

What Is A Psychologist?

A Psychologist is a professional trained to assess, diagnose and treat problems. They are trained to understand behaviours, thoughts and feelings and to help individuals develop new patterns of behaving, thinking and feeling.

Psychologists may have special areas of interest, such as dealing with issues of abuse, health problems, or grief. Psychologists may specialize in working with children, adults, families or groups.

In Nova Scotia, the profession of Psychology is regulated by the Nova Scotia Board of Examiners in Psychology (NSBEP). To be reregistered, a Psychologist must have a graduate (Masters or Doctoral) degree, a period of supervised work experience, and pass professional examinations. A psychologist must also adhere to professional practice guideline and ethical principles. The registration status of a psychologist may be determined by contacting NSBEP at 902-423-2238

Where Do I Find Psychologists?

- Private Practice (usually available to all).
- Counselling Centres at Universities and Colleges (usually available only to students).
- Community Mental Health Centres (usually available to all).
- Hospitals and Health Care Centres (often limited to referred patients).
- Family & Child Guidance Centres (usually available to children and their families).
- Other - schools, police forces, military and industry.

In some cases you may require a referral from a physician or mental health care worker.

How Do I Find A Psychologist?

- Ask your family physician or health care worker.
- Talk to family and friends.
- Call your provincial psychological association.
- Contact your community mental health centre, hospital, and family and child guidance centres.
- Consult the local Yellow Pages under *Psychologist*.
- Ask the counselling centre of your local college or university.

What Should I Consider When Making a Choice?

It is important that you and your Psychologist work well together. You need to feel comfortable, respected and understood. Also, you should feel that you can trust the psychologist and be honest with him/her. The following questions may be useful when you first contact a Psychologist:

- Are you a registered Psychologist?
- What kind of experience do you have in helping people with my problem?
- Do you have experience working with... (e.g. children, couples, adults?)
- What will happen during our sessions?
- How long is a therapy session? How many sessions will there be?
- What is your policy about privacy and sharing information with my family physician, school or workplace?
- What is the fee for your services?



Who Pays For Therapy?

Hospitals and Community Mental Health Centers - Services are provided through government funding and are usually available at no cost to you.

Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) - Many companies have EAPs to help employees with emotional and other problems. You may be able to see a Psychologist or other mental health specialist through your EAP. Contact your supervisor or personnel department for more information.

Private Insurance - In addition to MSI, many people are covered by supplementary health care plans through their employer. These plans may pay a portion of the cost of seeing a private Psychologist. Talk to your insurance carrier or employer to see if you are eligible.

The Consumer - Clients may pay directly for psychological services. Psychologists may use a sliding-fee scale where your income may help to determine your fee.

What About Fees?

When seeing a Psychologist privately, you have more choice over who you can see and the waiting periods are generally shorter. If possible, you may wish to speak to several Psychologists before making a decision. If there are fees you may wish to ask the following questions:

- What are your fees? (fees are usually based on 45 to 50-minute sessions).
- Will I have to pay HST?
- Do you use a sliding-fee scale? How does it work?
- Will I be charged if I miss a session? How do you bill for services?
- What types of insurance do you accept? Will my insurance cover all your services?
- Do you bill my insurance company directly?