

# HOW MIGHT PSYCHOLOGY HELP ME?

People report that therapy has helped them:

- Feel more confident about the future.
- Make sense of their lives and find new meaning.
- Have more satisfying relationships with family, friends and co-workers.
- Manage their moods and feelings more effectively.
- Feel more like “themselves” again.
- Enjoy life in a new way with greater options for the future.
- Resolve unfinished business (past traumas and events) successfully.
- Be more resilient in their lives.

## WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A PSYCHOLOGIST, PSYCHIATRIST AND A COUNSELOR

**A Psychiatrist** has degree (MD) from medical school and is capable of prescribing medication for psychiatric conditions.

**A Psychologist** earns his or her degree from graduate school. At present in BC, Doctorate level (Ph.D) therapists can use the title “Psychologist” if they have completed the necessary education, training, work experience, and meet registration requirements. Psychologists generally receive more training in therapy and assessment than Psychiatrists and as such, specialize in these areas. It is not uncommon for someone to meet with a Psychiatrist for medication needs and with a Psychologist for therapy.

Anyone can call themselves **a Therapist** – check out the credentials before you book an appointment as it is best to see someone that has received registration from a credentialed organization that is professionally accountable.

### FURTHER ASSISTANCE

Since 1938, BCPA has represented psychologists in British Columbia. It is a voluntary body that is committed to advancing psychology, the interest of psychologists, and the psychosocial well-being of all British Columbians.

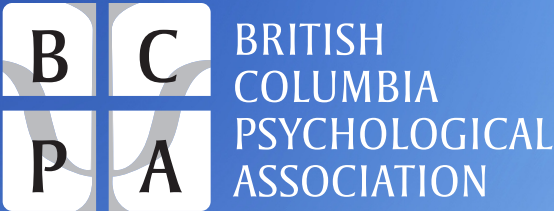
Psychologists assess and treat mental disorders and other emotional, behavioural, and relational difficulties. With ten years of post-secondary education, a supervised pre-doctoral practicum, and a 12-month full-time internship, no mental health profession has more education and training in psychology than psychologists.

## BRITISH COLUMBIA PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

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EVERYTHING YOU  
EVER WANTED  
TO KNOW ABOUT  
**PSYCHOLOGY** BUT  
WERE AFRAID TO ASK

## DO I/WE NEED A PSYCHOLOGIST?

This may be the wrong question to ask. A better way to think about it may be: “Could I/we benefit from therapy?” Seeking therapy can be a healthy sign that you are willing to seek help for problems.

### WHY WOULD I WANT TO SEE A PSYCHOLOGIST?

- I frequently tell myself that I should have nothing to complain about but I still don’t get much satisfaction or joy out of life.
- I have come to an impasse over a major life decision.
- I am having difficulty with important relationships.
- My job is too stressful or I am having work related problems.
- I am coping with a chronic health problem or I am care giving a friend or family member.
- I am in the midst of a transition - marriage, parenthood, empty nest, divorce, retirement, immigration, job loss or change, death of someone close. I am having trouble adjusting to changes.
- I find myself acting in ways that are hurtful to myself and those close to me.
- I frequently feel overwhelmed by life’s problems.
- Anxiety, anger or depression are taking over my life.

# WHAT QUESTIONS SHOULD I ASK?

- Are you a Registered psychologist? How many years have you been practicing psychology?
- I have been feeling \_\_\_\_\_, and I’m having problems \_\_\_\_\_. What experience do you have helping people with these types of problems?
- What are your areas of expertise - for example, working with children and families or couples etc?
- What kinds of treatments do you use, and have they been proven effective for dealing with my kind of problem or issue?
- What are your fees? Do you have a sliding-scale fee policy?
- What types of insurance do you accept?
- How will I know if therapy is working?

# HOW LONG SHOULD THERAPY TAKE?

Length of therapy can vary – some people find that they resolve their difficulties in a few sessions.

Most people start out once per week and as therapy progresses decisions are made about how often they would like to come.



Did You Know?  
*Almost one half (49%) of those who feel they have suffered from depression or anxiety have never gone to see a doctor about this problem.*

# WHAT ARE SOME SIGNS THAT THIS IS NOT THE RIGHT PSYCHOLOGIST FOR ME?

- You are making **no significant progress** over time – your therapist won’t discuss your goals.
- Your therapist seems to **talk more about themselves** than to listen to you.
- You consistently **feel uncomfortable, in any way** with your therapist. Some discomfort is normal in any good therapy, but if you feel uncomfortable most or all the time, that’s a sign that something is wrong.
- Your therapist seems to apply the **same treatment** or theory to all problems, and never changes course even when it’s not working.
- Your therapist seems distant, judgmental, and condescending towards you. You feel like your therapist **doesn’t like or respect you**.
- Your therapist gives you **lots of advice** and tells you how to run your life, instead of helping you explore the options.

# THERAPY IS A TWO-WAY STREET. YOUR PSYCHOLOGIST APPRECIATES FEEDBACK AS IT WILL HELP THEM TO HELP YOU IN THE BEST WAY THAT THEY CAN.

Feel free to let your psychologist know if you are experiencing any of the following:

- Not feeling heard, understood or respected.
- Feeling like you did not talk about what you wanted to talk about.
- Feeling like your psychologist’s approach may not be the right fit for you.
- A general feeling that something was missing from the session.

# WHAT ARE THE QUALITIES OF A GOOD PSYCHOLOGIST?

(This is not an exhaustive list)

- Warm and non-judgmental; respectful at all times.
- Have a sense of humor and relate to me as a real person.
- Understanding of any reservations I may have about therapy.
- Discuss the type of therapy we are doing and how I will know when it is successful.
- Help me set attainable goals and work with me to achieve them.
- Have the proper education, training and experience related to my particular issues.
- Demonstrate high ethical standards and have clear professional boundaries.
- Offer referrals if he/she cannot provide appropriate treatment for my difficulties.
- Have a working knowledge of medication for mood disorders and be willing to discuss with my physician if appropriate.
- Open to feedback about how therapy is going or any other concerns I may have.



# WHERE DO I FIND A QUALIFIED PSYCHOLOGIST?

The BCPA referral service can be accessed at the following website:

[https://www.psychologists.bc.ca/find\\_psychologist](https://www.psychologists.bc.ca/find_psychologist)

# WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES AND THERAPY?

Best Self-Help Anxiety Site:  
<http://www.anxieties.com/index.php>

Overview of Different Types of Psychotherapy:  
<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/psychotherapy/MH00009>

Canadian Psychological Association  
<http://www.cpa.ca/>

The American Psychological Association’s consumer website containing brochures, tips and articles on the psychological issues that affect our physical and emotional well-being:  
<http://www.apahelpcenter.org/>

BC Partners for Mental Health and Addiction Information Interactive Mental Health Toolkits:  
<http://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/publications/index.shtml>