

# Children's Mental Health Matters!

a Maryland public awareness campaign

Facts For Families

## Seeking Professional Help

Sometimes parents struggle with getting help because of their worries about what this might mean for their child or their family. Parents may worry about what other family members, neighbors or other peers in their community think about their child. It is important when getting help to find treatments and providers who are sensitive to the family and child's beliefs and values. The family and child should feel like they are respected by the professional, allowing the family to feel free to ask questions, raise concerns, and to assist in the decisions about next steps for treatment.

If a child receives a mental health diagnosis from a pediatrician or a mental health professional, it provides the professionals with a way of understanding the child's situation and problems or concerns he/she currently faces. Diagnoses—such as depression, ADHD, or anorexia—typically are not permanent and can change over time. These diagnoses do not fully explain or describe the child's strengths and positive nature. Mental health diagnoses also help insurance providers, Medicaid and other third party payers to classify and indentify the child's issues for payment. More information about the more common diagnoses and behaviors in children and adolescents are listed on the left side of the *Family Resource Kit*.

**The good news is that treatment works.** Therapy, sometimes in conjunction with medication, has been shown to be very effective in reducing the levels of distress in children who are experiencing mental health problems.

There are numerous mental health professionals that can provide therapy; and in some cases, therapy and medication.

Most **psychiatrists** have a medical degree and at least four additional years of study and training. They provide medical/psychiatric evaluations and a full range of treatment interventions for emotional and behavioral problems and psychiatric disorders. As physicians, psychiatrists can prescribe and monitor medications.

**Child and Adolescent Psychiatrists** are psychiatrists who have two years of advanced training (beyond general psychiatry) with children, adolescents and families.

**Psychologists** have a PhD and are licensed by the State of Maryland. They can provide psychological evaluation and treatment for emotional and behavioral problems. They also can provide psychological testing and assessments. They may not prescribe medications in Maryland.

**School Psychologists** are trained in both psychology and education, and possess at least a master's degree. They are licensed by the State of Maryland. School psychologists help children and youth academically, socially, behaviorally, and emotionally. They may be part of an IEP team and perform academic and psychological evaluations.

**Social Workers** typically have a master's degree in social work. In Maryland, social workers are licensed by the state after passing an examination. Social workers can provide different forms of therapy.

Children's  
Mental  
Health  
Matters.org  
A MARYLAND PUBLIC  
AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

coordinated by

mhamd  
MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF MARYLAND

MCF  
maryland coalition of families

[www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org](http://www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org)

### **Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists**

Licensed Mental Health Counselors and Licensed Professional Counselors have a graduate degree and clinical training. They can provide various types of therapy in an individual, family or group setting.

**Advanced Practice Registered Nurses and Psychiatric Mental Health Nurses** have postgraduate-level degrees and advanced clinical education, knowledge skills and scope of practice. They work with individuals and families, assessing mental health needs and developing a nursing diagnosis. In Maryland, nurse practitioners may also prescribe some mental health medications.

### ***Paying for Care***

In Maryland, most health insurance plans cover some mental health treatment. Call your insurance provider before beginning treatment to find out which clinicians accept your insurance and what services are covered.

If you do not have health insurance, please refer to the list of local mental health agencies provided on the back of the Fact Sheet titled: *First Steps in Seeking Help*.

You may also visit the **Maryland Parity Project** at <https://www.mhamd.org/getting-help/health-insurance-protections/the-parity-law/> or call 443-901-1550.

### **Other Resources For Care in Maryland**

Greater Washington Society of Clinical Social Work  
[www.gwscsw.org](http://www.gwscsw.org)

The Maryland Chapter - American Academy of Pediatrics  
[www.mdaap.org](http://www.mdaap.org)

Maryland Psychiatric Society  
[www.mdpsych.org](http://www.mdpsych.org)

Maryland Psychological Association - Maryland Chapter  
[www.marylandpsychology.org](http://www.marylandpsychology.org)

Middle Atlantic Division - American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy  
[www.madmft.org](http://www.madmft.org)

National Association of Social Workers - Maryland Chapter  
[www.nasw-md.org](http://www.nasw-md.org)

Network of Care - a comprehensive website offering mental health information by county.  
[www.networkofcare.org](http://www.networkofcare.org)

MHAMD ~ 443-901-1550 ~ [www.mhamd.org](http://www.mhamd.org)

MCF ~ 410-730-8267 ~ [www.mdcoalition.org](http://www.mdcoalition.org)

The Children's Mental Health Matters! Campaign is a collaboration of the Mental Health Association of Maryland (MHAMd) and the Maryland Coalition of Families (MCF) with support from the Maryland Department of Health - Behavioral Health Administration. The Campaign goal, with School and Community Champions across the state, is to raise public awareness of the importance of children's mental health. For more information, please visit [www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org](http://www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org)