

# Making a Behavioral Health APPOINTMENT

<p><b>1. Find your health insurance card</b></p> <p>Look on the front or back of your health insurance card for the phone number of mental health, drug treatment and/or behavioral health services. If you cannot find any phone number like this, call the health plan’s customer/member services number.</p> <p>If you do not have health insurance, contact your local community behavioral health services for information. Your doctor, nurse, teacher, or school counselor can help you find this number.</p>	<p><b>2. Call the Health Plan’s mental or Behavioral health services Phone #</b></p> <p>In California, teens 12 years and older can call with a parent, health care provider, counselor, or by themselves. Be ready to explain the situation and your need for services. Tell the person who answers the phone that you’d like to see a behavioral health provider who has experience and enjoys working with teens. Most likely you will be given a list of behavioral health providers to call.</p>
<p><b>3. Questions to ask yourself Before Calling a Behavioral health Provider</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ What am I looking for in a behavioral health provider?</li> <li>◆ Do I want a provider that’s a certain gender, race/ethnicity, age, or has specific training/treatment approaches?</li> <li>◆ Can I get to the provider’s office? Is the office open after school or on weekends?</li> <li>◆ Do I want my parents/guardians to be involved?</li> </ul>	<p><b>4. Call Behavioral health Providers</b></p> <p>Psychiatrists are trained medical doctors who can prescribe medications and provide therapy. Psychologists, social workers, and marriage family therapists are trained to provide therapy. When you call, briefly explain why you want help and give the name of your health insurance. Slowly spell your name, repeat your phone number twice, and give the best time to call you back. Keep track of the time and day that you called and who returned your calls.</p>
<p><b>5. NOT having any luck?</b></p> <p>Sometimes it is hard to find a behavioral health providers that fits your needs because of their location, office hours, busy schedules, or lack of experience working with teens. If this happens or no one returns your calls, go back to Step 2. Explain that you need special assistance and ask to speak with a supervisor.</p>	<p><b>6. Once you reach a Behavioral health Provider, ask:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ How many teens do you see a week?</li> <li>◆ Do you enjoy working with teens?</li> <li>◆ Which conditions/problems have you treated in the past?</li> <li>◆ What is your license and how many years have you been in practice?</li> <li>◆ What is your treatment approach?</li> <li>◆ How much will your treatment cost?</li> <li>◆ Will you tell my parents or any one else what we talk about during appointments?</li> </ul>

If you don’t feel comfortable with a behavioral health provider after several sessions, tell the provider your concerns and consider switching to somebody else. Sometimes it takes a while to feel comfortable with a new person and a new situation.

**Speak UP for your needs! Be Persistent! Congratulate yourself for Getting help!**

*Do you have any comments or questions about this handout? Please contact Adolescent Health Working Group by emailing [feedback@ahwg.net](mailto:feedback@ahwg.net) or calling (415) 554-8429. Thank you.*

Source:

1) Knopf D, Hostetler R. Mental Health Referral Form. University of California San Francisco, Division of Adolescent Medicine. Adapted with permission.

