

Mental Health Specialists and Depression

When Should I See a Mental Health Specialist?

Many people with depression can be successfully treated by their general healthcare provider. However, some people need specialized treatment because the first treatment does not work, because they need a combination of treatments, or because the depression is severe or it lasts a long time. Many times, a second opinion or consultation is all that is needed. If the mental health specialist provides treatment, it is most often on an outpatient basis (not in the hospital).

What Are the Types of Mental Health Specialists?

Several types of mental health specialists treat depression.

Psychiatrist. A physician (M.D. or D.O.) who specializes in the diagnosis and treatment of mental or psychiatric disorders. A psychiatrist may help your physician adjust your antidepressant medications or give other advice about the medicines you are taking. A psychiatrist may also provide counseling.

Psychologist. A person with a degree in psychology and training in counseling, psychotherapy, and psychological testing. A psychologist will meet with you on a regular basis to discuss any situations or problems you are experiencing that may be contributing to your depression.

Social Worker. A person with a master's degree and specialized training in counseling.

Psychiatric Nurse Specialist. A nurse (R.N.P with a master's degree in psychiatric nursing who specializes in treating mental or psychiatric disorders.

If you think you need to see a mental health specialist, tell your doctor.