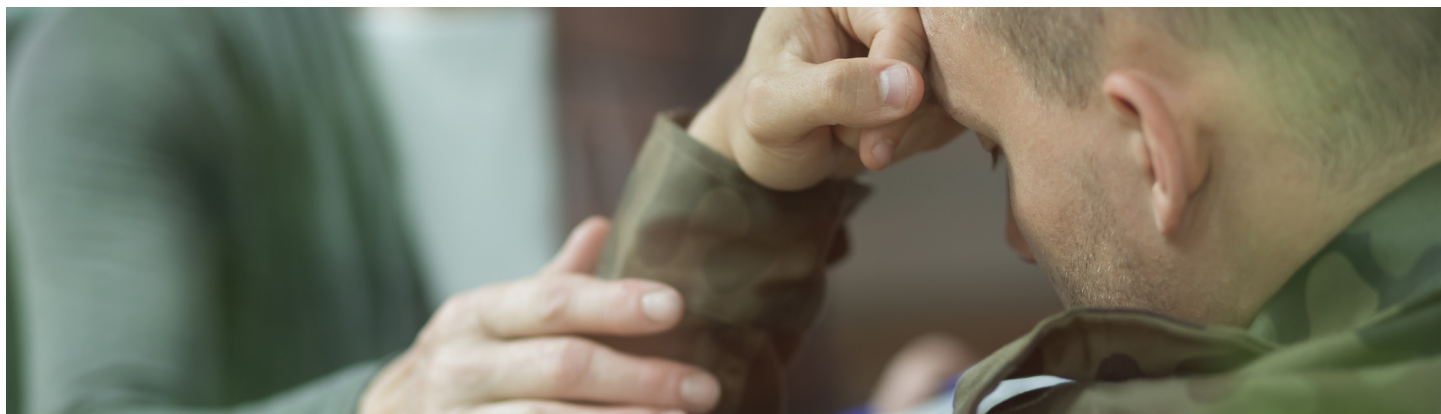


Knowing When and How to Choose a Therapist for Your Teen



Teens are known for being moody and unpredictable. So how do you know when your teen needs the support of a mental health professional?

Trust your instincts. As a parent, you know your son or daughter best. Look for signs such as dropping grades, a change of friends, self-destructive behavior, dramatic sleep issues, talks of self-harm and extreme anger. These may be indicators of a need to talk to a professional.

*** AT LEAST 1 IN 5 TEENS HAS A MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE.**

How do you choose a therapist to help your teen deal with his or her problems?

The most important factors to consider are **experience**, **credentials** and **personality**. Seek a licensed therapist with experience and expertise in working with teens.

Ask for referrals from trusted friends, your child's school counselor, or pediatrician. Read the therapists' websites for details about their practices. If your teen is struggling with a specific issue, look for a therapist with the appropriate specialty.

To ensure a good match, **choose a therapist whose personality will be a good fit** for your son or daughter. The quality of the relationship with the therapist is the biggest predictor for success in therapy, according to research.

Here are some key questions to ask a potential therapist:

- *How much of your practice includes working with teens?*
- *What experience do you have with this particular problem affecting my teen?*
- *How do you communicate with parents through the process?*
- *How long have you been in practice?*
- *Is your work collaborative?*
- *Can you describe how you will work with my teen?*
- *What are the goals for therapy?*

Finding a therapist to help improve your teen's emotional health takes time. Be patient, ask lots of questions, and listen to your instinct to find a therapist who is a good fit for your teen.