

# Choosing a Therapist

## For University of Virginia Students

### Choosing a Therapist

- What are your preferences in a provider? (i.e., gender, location, accessibility, specialties, etc.)
- What type of treatment do you want? (i.e., group, individual, medication, duration, frequency, etc.)
- What qualities do you look for in a therapist? (i.e., directive, warm, straightforward, gentle, etc.)

### Types of Providers

#### For Counseling:

- PhD and PsyD (Psychologist—doctoral degree)
- LPC (Licensed Professional Counselor—master's degree)
- LCSW (Licensed Clinical Social Worker—master's degree)
- License-Eligible, Post Doc, Resident (these are under supervision of a licensed clinician)

### Types of Providers

#### For Medication:

- Psychiatrist (MD or DO)
- Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner
- Family Doctors and Primary Care Physicians (some will prescribe basic medicines or ADHD medicine)

**For Psychological Testing, including ADHD:** PsyD or PhD with expertise in assessment

### Where to Search for Providers:

#### For Counseling:

- [www.studenthealth.virginia.edu/community-referrals](http://www.studenthealth.virginia.edu/community-referrals)
- [www.psychologytoday.com](http://www.psychologytoday.com)

### Next Steps

**Pick 3 - 4 providers to contact by email or phone regarding availability.** A sample email or voicemail could be: "I'm a UVA student who is looking for therapy starting (date or approximate time frame). Are you in-network with (insurance company)? Do you have availability to see me in the next couple of weeks and gauge if we are a good fit? I can be reached at (phone number) so we can discuss this further. Thank you."

#### Questions to ask when contacting potential providers:

- Are you accepting new clients?
- How soon can you see me? How often can you see me?
- Are you in-network with my insurance? (**Always verify this!**) If not, what are your rates?
- How long have you been in practice? What is your treatment approach and specialties?
- This is what I'm experiencing. Can you tell me about your experience with this?

### Schedule Your First Appointment

**Remember, the first appointment is an intake.** Keep in mind you will be filling out paperwork, answering lots of questions, and going over practice policies. During this appointment you will explain why you are there, what you want help with, and what you hope to get out of therapy. Usually it makes sense to give yourself a few sessions to get comfortable with your new therapist before deciding if it is a good fit.