

Why Psychological Services?

Psychological services **can** help me...

- .. understand why I'm feeling like I am.
- .. clarify my needs in relationships.
- .. explore conflicts with my family.
- .. change my behavior and/or set goals.
- .. understand why I sometimes feel like I want to hurt myself or others.
- .. look at my life more deeply and/or differently.
- .. heal past hurts.

Psychological services **cannot** help me...

- .. change someone else's violent or abusive behavior.
- .. get someone else to stop drinking or using drugs.
- .. help someone else take better care of themselves.
- .. change someone else's emotional problems.
- .. make someone love me differently.

My Rights

I have the right to...

- .. be believed about what I say.
- .. not share my therapy sessions or their contents with family or anyone else.
- .. ask for a female therapist.
- .. a safe environment, free from disrespect, pressure, and sexist attitudes.
- .. decide when and if I answer any question or disclose any information.
- .. refuse a particular type of service or end service, without obligation or harassment.
- .. actively participate in service and/or treatment planning, review and change.
- .. receive a second or third opinion or change service providers.
- .. a service provider who has knowledge and experience with the issues I want help for.
- .. no sexual contact, pressure or hinting of any kind from my provider.

My Preferences

I prefer to have or not to have...

- .. sessions in a provider's home.
- .. sessions in a clinic setting.
- .. sessions at a particular time of day.
- .. a provider who promptly responds to phone calls, emails and requests for paperwork.
- .. a well-kept office and professional paperwork.
- .. client privacy reflected in all practices.
- .. a fragrance-free clinical environment.
- .. calling out my full name in front of others.
- .. pets, children or interruptions during sessions.

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Psychological Services Empowerment Pocket Guide

Elizabeth Shadigian, MD
Gynecology and WomanCare

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Provider Questions

Ask each potential provider . . .

- . . . what is your experience, education, and credentials?
- . . . what are the fees, payment options, and do you take my insurance?
- . . . how many sessions do you propose?
- . . . what are your cancellation policies?
- . . . what is my service/treatment plan, what is my progress, and do I need referrals?
- . . . what must you keep confidential and what are the limits of confidentiality?
- . . . if supervisors, consultants, students, or others be told about me and why?

Concerns I have about psychological services

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Concerns I have about psychological services

Safety Screening

Within the first three sessions, has my provider privately asked if I . . .

- . . . am safe where I live?
- . . . have been hit, punched, choked or otherwise physically assaulted?
- . . . have been touched inappropriately sexually or forced to have sex?
- . . . have been hurt as a child either by family members or by strangers physically, emotionally or sexually?
- . . . am being stalked by someone now or in the past?
- . . . have a safety or exit plan or would like help creating one if I am currently not safe?
- . . . understand why couples/family services would not be appropriate if I am not safe?
- . . . need the services of a shelter or violence advocacy program?

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Woman-empowering Services

A feminist provider . . .

- . . . acknowledges widespread discrimination against women and girls and other disempowered groups.
- . . . acknowledges power imbalances and their impact on everything, including her services.
- . . . advocates for her clients in systems that discriminate based on gender.
- . . . advocates for her clients' safety and wellbeing above all other considerations.
- . . . puts the blame where it belongs - on perpetrators of violence and injustice.
- . . . examines and changes her biases and/or discriminatory attitudes and practices.
- . . . remains loyal to the disempowered and resists widespread disrespect of women.
- . . . advocates for constructive social change for her clients and her community.
- . . . brings up potential boundary issues.

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Diagnoses and Treatments

Ask my provider . . .

- . . . what framework she uses, such as: medical model, cognitive-behavioral, personality type, life story, trauma and safety model, etc.
- . . . what her working diagnoses are or if she does not use diagnostic labels.
- . . . to explain and/or justify her official diagnoses of me, if any.
- . . . about her treatment recommendations.
- . . . how effective the services and/or treatments are likely to be.
- . . . the length of the services and/or treatments.
- . . . if these services and/or treatments are not effective, what the next steps would be.
- . . . about the risks, side effects and alternatives.
- . . . for recommendations for a second or third opinion locally or elsewhere.
- . . . who should be contacted in an emergency and how.

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