

Behavioral Health Therapy Treatment

Therapy treatment is an important first step in parent and child understanding and treatment of mental health concerns. Often, it can be difficult to encourage individuals who might benefit from treatment to engage in therapy for various reasons.

The most effective therapy intervention for children and adolescents experiencing depression or anxiety is **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)**.

- Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) typically involves short-term treatments (i.e., often between six and 20 sessions) that focus on teaching youth and/or their parents specific skills.
- This interaction is similar may be similar to that of a “coach” and will focus on goals developed by youth, parents, and therapists.
- CBT differs from other therapy approaches by focusing on the ways that a child or adolescent’s thoughts, emotions, and behaviors are interconnected, and how they each affect one another.
- Cognitive behavioral treatment can be completed individually, with families, in groups, and online.

Behavioral therapies for young people have also been shown to work for children with disruptive behavior and or ADHD. Similar to CBT, a parent should expect:

- The therapist and child or adolescent develop goals for therapy together, often in close collaboration with parents, and track progress toward goals.
- Treatment is goal-oriented to resolve present-day problems.
- The therapist seeks to help the client discover that he/she is powerful and capable of choosing positive behaviors.
- Clients actively participate in treatment in and out of session.

Therapy and Medication

Often, cognitive behavioral therapy is the first line of treatment recommended for individuals experiencing concerns with Depression or Anxiety. However, pairing cognitive behavioral therapy with psychotropic medication can be effective in treating a child or adolescent’s anxiety symptoms of depression.

What you should look for in a child & adolescent therapy provider

- Licensed psychologist (LP, PhD or PsyD), Social Worker (LCSW), or Therapist (LCP or LCPC)
- Specific internship or yearlong work experience with children and adolescents, preferably in a hospital or mental health treatment facility.
- Identified experience in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy with children and adolescents
- Identified experience with diagnosis specific treatment
- Providers should be able identify *specific, measurable, and time limited goals* with clients and their parents
- Providers should be monitoring treatment improvement over the course of treatment