

## FINDING A COUNSELOR: TIPS & TOOLS



Congratulations! You made the wise and courageous decision to attend to your emotional and mental well-being!

So, now what? The next step is to search for and choose the counselor that best fits your needs.

Like searching for the right primary care physician, specialist, mechanic, etc., the process of finding a mental health professional can be a bit tedious.

And this is where I will like assist! In addition to providing quality mental health counseling, I am extremely passionate about helping individuals, couples, and families find adequately trained counselors.

As such, I pray this *Finding a Counselor: Tips & Tools* resource proves beneficial in your search process.

**Types of Counselors** When it comes to names or credentials, there are various groups of professionals that are well-trained to provide mental health counseling. So, when choosing a counselor, please ensure the professional holds at least one of the Florida licenses below:

1. Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC)
2. Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT)
3. Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)

Per their educational training and professional experiences, the above license holders are all capable of providing mental health counseling to individuals (children and adults), couples, groups, and families.

Some professionals may not be licensed yet but are still able to provide counseling services if and only if they are being supervised by a licensed professional. Such individuals will have *Registered Intern* in their credentials (i.e., Registered Mental Health Counselor Intern, Registered Marriage and Family Therapist Intern, and Registered Social Worker Intern).

It is also important to ensure the license of the counseling professional is current, and not expired. This is accomplished by visiting the License Verification page on Florida Department of Health website: <https://mqa-internet.doh.state.fl.us/MQASearchServices/HealthCareProviders> Simply enter the license number. This License Verification page will provide information on the license's status (active or inactive), expiration date, disciplinary actions, etc. Registered Interns also have a license number.

**Safe Course of Action:** engage in counseling with someone who holds a verified license.

**Insurance vs No Insurance** Health insurance companies require a formal mental health diagnosis in order to pay for the counseling services you receive. When paying for counseling services with your insurance, your diagnosis and experience in counseling will be permanently documented in a legal document called a medical record(s). This is very similar to the medical record a doctor may have for his or her patients. Also, when going through insurance, there usually is a limit on the number of counseling sessions you may have in a given year (e.g., 16-25 sessions). Additionally, if you decide to use insurance, you must ensure the counselor you choose accepts the type of insurance you have. For the most part, using insurance can help reduce the out-of-pocket cost for counseling. If your insurance covers up to \$75 for a session that costs \$100 total, for example, your co-pay will be \$25. Some insurances also eliminate out-of-pocket expenses all together.

To learn what benefits your health insurance plan offers for mental health counseling, call them directly or visit their website.

If you are seeking more privacy with your therapeutic journey, desire unlimited access of counseling services per year, and do not want your diagnosis--if one is necessary--on your medical record, engaging in self-pay services (i.e., not using insurance) may be best.

For more information on diagnoses and insurance, please visit the Frequent Asked Question (FAQ) page on The Counseling Room website [FAQ | The Counseling Room \(thecounselingroomllc.com\)](https://www.thecounselingroomllc.com/faq)

Alrighty! We covered some basic/foundational information. If you're feeling overwhelmed—and it's okay if you are—take a breather, walk away from the computer screen, stretch, drink a glass of water, grab a healthy bite to eat, and continue below when you're ready 😊

**Counselor Locators** There are various platforms and tools to use to search for a counselor! The list below is not exhaustive, but it captures well-known and reputable locators.

1. **Psychology Today** <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us>
  - in the box marked *Find a Therapist*, type in your zip code in the search bar
  - after you press the search button (magnifying glass icon), you can use the filter option to narrow the search by gender, faith, insurance type etc.
2. **Open Path Collective** <https://oppc.mentalhealthexcellence.org/therapy-within-reach/>
  - type in your zip code or full address in the search bar
  - all services are self-pay
  - to accommodate individuals without insurance or without quality insurance, the cost of services on this platform is less than current market prices
3. **Therapy for Black Girls** <https://providers.therapyforblackgirls.com/>
  - type in your city, zip code, or full address in the search bar
  - you can search by insurance type
  - if your insurance type is not listed, still view the individual profiles of the counselors, and see if their services meet your needs and if their self-pay prices are affordable/feasible
4. **Therapy for Black Men** <https://therapyforblackmen.org/therapists/>
  - type in your state in the search bar
  - you can search by insurance type, gender, etc.
  - if your insurance type is not listed, still view the individual profiles of the counselors, and see if their services meet your needs and if their self-pay prices are affordable/feasible
5. **LatinX Therapy** <https://latinxtherapy.com/>
  - type in your zip code or state in the search bar
  - you can search by insurance type, cultural identities, etc.
  - if your insurance type is not listed, still view the individual profiles of the counselors, and see if their services meet your needs and if their self-pay prices are affordable/feasible

6. Clinicians of Color <https://www.cliniciansofcolor.org/>
  - type in your zip code or state in the search bar
  - you can search by insurance type, areas of concern, etc.
  - if your insurance type is not listed, still view the individual profiles of the counselors, and see if their services meet your needs and if their self-pay prices are affordable/feasible
7. Focus on the Family <https://findacounselor.focusonthefamily.com/>
  - type in your zip code in the search bar
  - all counselors listed on this website provide Christian counseling
  - if your insurance type is not listed, still view the individual profiles of the counselors, and see if their services meet your needs and if their self-pay prices are affordable/feasible

In addition to the above platforms/locators, Google searches are great as well!

Using your search engine tool, type the following keywords and see what you discover: *counselors near me*, *counseling centers near me*, *Christian counseling near me*, *male counselors near me*, etc.

For more information, please visit the Resources page on The Counseling Room website [Resources | The Counseling Room \(thecounselingroomllc.com\)](https://thecounselingroomllc.com)

**Private Practices** Below is a short list of reputable private practice counseling services that also offer Christian mental health counseling. Please visit their websites to learn more information.

1. Breakthrough Care and Resource Center <https://www.breakthroughcrc.com/>
2. Enrichment Support Services <https://www.essgrowth.com/>
3. CFB Solution Inc. <https://cfbsolutionsinc.com>
4. The Healing Institute LLC <https://www.sandragarcondegerville.com/#/>
5. Therapy Terrace <https://therapyterrace.com/>
6. Your Healing Heart CCC <https://www.yourhealingheartccc.com>

Please be advised that quality counseling can also exist with well-trained and well-experienced counselors that may not provide Christian mental health counseling. Some of these reputable counselors are listed below:

1. Dr. Antionette Edmonds, LMHC, PhD
  - Seeking Solutions of South Florida LLC <https://www.seekingsolutionsofsf.com/>
2. Mrs. Johanny Reyes, LCSW
  - Thriving Counseling Solutions LLC <https://www.thrivingcounselingsolutions.com/>

Pheeeww!! You made it! You narrowed down your options to a handful of counselors. Here are some final tips to help you make a wise decision:

1. **Pray** Begin the search process with prayer and pray all throughout. Ask the Lord to guide you to the right counselor.
2. **Review Websites** Check out your potential counselor's website. Do you like what you see? Is there something you see that you do not like? Do you have more questions? Whether good or not-so-good, be weary of the initial impressions you get from the website.
3. **FREE Consultation Calls** Most counselors offer free consultation calls, which are typically between 10 to 20 minutes. This is your opportunity to ask any questions you may have about the counseling process, the counselor's educational background, the type of counseling he or she provides, etc. all BEFORE making a commitment. If the prices are not listed on the website, ask the counselor directly. When possible, please do not book a session without speaking to the potential counselor first.
4. **Pray** After you viewed the websites and had the free consultation calls, continue to pray for wisdom in choosing the right counselor. Do not feel pressured to choose a counselor simply because you spoke to him or her on the phone. A simple response like this one will suffice: *"Thank you for answering all my questions. I am still in the search process, so should I decide to move forward with your services, I will book with you at a later time. Thank you again for taking the time to speak with me."*
5. **Book Your Session** After you have done all the above and God has given you the green light to proceed, book your session and embark on a therapeutic journey that will change your life.

**Time to Break-up** This is something that is not spoken about as often, yet it is necessary to mention here. Sometimes, along the therapeutic journey, you may decide that you and the counselor are no longer meshing. He or she was able to walk with you for a portion of the journey, but maybe you feel you need a different counselor to journey with you the remainder of the way. *If this happens, it is okay. Again, if this happens, it is okay. Why? Because not all break-ups are bad!* Please do not feel you have to remain in any counselor-client relationship. The same way it is wise to leave a relationship that is hindering you from being the person God designed, it is also wise to end a therapeutic relationship in which your needs are no longer being met. As with everything mentioned before, seek God's guidance should you find yourself in a such a situation.

**Final Thought:** be mindful that it may take some time to find the counselor that suits your needs. Sifting through websites, calling folks, getting price quotes, etc. may take more time than you anticipated. As such, be patient with yourself and be patient with the process. Should you encounter any obstacles, please do not hesitate to contact me at [info@thecounselingroomllc.com](mailto:info@thecounselingroomllc.com)

*Lord, thank You for the individual, couple, and/or family that have made the courageous decision to seek sound mental health counseling. Remind Your child that he or she is completely and unconditionally loved by You. Their desire and/or need for counseling is not a sign of inferiority. On the contrary, it is a sign of being human. It is a sign of being human in a broken world with sin both internal and external. I pray their therapeutic journey is one that ushers in healing, clarity, peace, and positive transformation from the inside out. Most importantly, I pray their journey ushers them into deeper intimacy with You. While You Lord are the ultimate Counselor, Healer, and Helper, Your Spirit has deposited the gift of mental health counseling among some of Your created ones. I pray the person using this resource encounters one of these Spirit-filled counselors who provides mental health counseling in alignment with Your Word. Have Your way in the counseling space, whether it is in-person or virtual, let Your presence fill the counseling room. In Jesus' mighty and precious name, amen.*

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