



Before you go to see a counselor, it may help to know what to expect and how to prepare for your session. That way, you will more likely get the help you want and feel more at ease. Below are a few thoughts and suggestions that may be helpful as you prepare for your appointment.

***If I see a counselor or a therapist does that mean "I'm crazy"?***

Some people may feel uneasy or embarrassed about seeing a counselor for personal problems. However, almost everyone is faced at some time with challenges that are difficult for them to resolve on their own. Seeking help for personal problems is just as important as receiving help for medical problems.

Having personal problems doesn't mean "I'm crazy" or that you are having a "nervous breakdown" or "I'm a failure." Quite the opposite! Seeking help with a problem is usually a prudent and wise step and is actually a sign of personal strength.

All services are provided in strict confidence. The personal information that you share with your counselor is confidential and not shared outside of your appointment unless you sign a release of information, or if the law requires disclosure in the cases of physical abuse/neglect, or threats of self harm, suicide, or homicide.

***How will counseling help me feel better or make a difference in my life?***

Counselors are available to assist you with a wide variety of situations. The counselor will help you:

- Provide support—a neutral third-party to encourage and listen.
- Clarify a problem—assess and evaluate complex situations.
- Develop an action plan—identify steps to resolve the situation.
- Handle a crisis—help you sort through your options.
- Resolve a problem—many concerns can be resolved quickly, in just a few sessions. Your counselor can work with you to reach your short term treatment goals.
- Engage in a treatment process—the counselor will help you resolve more complex issues requiring extended treatment.

***What should I bring along to my first appointment?***

- Written list of any questions you might want to ask. Write down your questions and concerns and bring the list with you. Sometimes it's hard to remember everything, especially in a new situation. You may also want to use a notebook to take notes if you think that would be helpful for you.
- Notes about your problem. Bring any notes, documents, or records that will help you remember and describe the situation.
- History of the problem. Include how long you've had the problem, including similar problems you've had in the past and how you resolved them.
- Medication. Bring all current medications with the pharmacy label if possible. It will help your counselor provide a more complete evaluation.
- Significant others. Where appropriate, bring family members or other significant people who are involved with the problem to the first session.
- Don't forget your insurance card and state issued identification.



**What will happen during my appointment?**

- Environment. A counselor's office is typically a private office in an accessible location. The office will be comfortable, quiet, and designed for private conversations.
- Assessment. You will be asked to fill out some forms. The counselor will ask you some questions to better understand your concerns and talk with you about possible next steps.
- Referrals. The counselor may refer you to specialists or other clinicians to ensure that you receive the best possible care.

**Do you accept insurance?**

Yes, we do. Lifetime Behavioral Health is a provider on a variety insurance panels including:

Aetna  
Aetna EAP  
Behavioral Health Systems (BHS)  
Blue Cross Blue Shield PPO  
Employee Resource Systems (ERS)  
HMO Illinois (DuPage Medical Group/Fox Valley Medicine)  
Humana  
Humana EAP  
LifeSynch (formerly CorpHealth)  
Magellan  
Multiplan  
Private Healthcare Systems (PHCS)  
United Healthcare if partnering with Multiplan  
Value Options  
Workplace Options/Network Advantage

**What if my insurance carrier isn't listed above? Can I still use my insurance?**

While it's nearly impossible for us to be listed on every panel, we are able to work with the great majority of insurance companies as an "out of network provider". In some cases that might mean a slightly higher co-pay, or you may have a deductible to meet but in either case we will work with you to make the process as easy as possible. If you would prefer, we can even handle the pre-authorization and the submission of claims on your behalf.

**Who should I call if I have questions about insurance or my account?**

We realize that taking care of insurance claims can be stressful in and of itself and we know that you have more important things to do. As a result we have a partnered with Netsource Billing to address any question or concern you may have related to insurance or billing questions. While your therapist may be able to answer your questions we recommend that you contact Netsource Billing directly to ensure the best possible outcome to your concern. We recognize they are the experts when it comes to handling such issues and questions. Please do not hesitate to contact them directly at 866-441-1591.

**What will you tell my insurance company about my treatment?**

Please be aware that if you choose to use your health insurance to help pay for our services, we will be required by the managed care organization (MCO) to give you a psychiatric diagnosis. We will also be required to tell the MCO about the treatment that we are recommending, about your progress during treatment, and about how you are doing in many areas of your life (functions at work, in your family, and in activities of daily living). We are not paid separately for collecting,



organizing, or submitting this information, and we cannot bill you for these services. All of this information will become part of the MCO's records, and it will be included in your permanent medical record at the Medical Information Bureau, a national data bank. The information will be examined when you apply for life or health insurance, and it may be considered when you apply for employment, credit or loans, a security clearance, or other things in the future. You will have to indicate that you were treated for a psychological condition and release this information, or you may not get the insurance, job, loan, or clearance.

***Isn't my insurance company required to keep my information confidential?***

All insurance carriers claim to keep the information they receive confidential, and there are federal laws about its release. The laws and ethics that apply to our practice are much stricter than the rules that apply at present to MCOs. If you're concerned about who might see your records now or in the future, we should discuss this issue more fully before we start treatment. You should evaluate your situation carefully in regard to confidentiality. For some people and some problems, the privacy of their communications to their therapist is absolutely essential to their work on their difficulties. For others, their problems are not ones that raise much concern over confidentiality.

***Do I have to use my insurance or can I just pay out of pocket?***

The choice is completely up to you. If you would like to use your insurance to help reduce the cost of therapy we completely understand and we will be happy to submit claims on your behalf. If you choose not to use your insurance please notify your therapist during your first appointment so alternate arrangements can be made. We don't want this to get in the way of seeking help.