

# Engaging A Therapist

When making initial contact with a therapeutic practitioner, be as specific and to the point about the issues affecting your situation as you can be. Ask about their experience in working with families formed through care or adoption and how their professional training and background informs their understanding of families like yours.

The family's involvement and support for the child in therapy is critical to a positive outcome; trust and respect is an essential element of the practitioner's relationship with child and family. Therapists competent in adoption and home-based care value carer and parent participation and understand that no intervention should threaten these relationships.

Practitioners will work with families in many ways. Make sure you have an understanding of their intentions and usual practice. Whilst you may not be familiar with the therapeutic labels, a therapist should be able to explain their approach in simple terms. If you are uncomfortable with or unsure of any information provided, seek clarification.

Ask what you might expect to see as your child engages in therapy and your involvement to assist your child through transitions. If you will be seeing a therapist under the Better Access to Mental Health Initiative, ask what if any conditions or restrictions apply that might impact on the structure and conduct of sessions.

Make sure clinic appointment times fit with your family requirements. Ask about wait-lists and any periods that your practitioner might be unavailable during your expected time of engagement. A short wait for the right therapist is sometimes worthwhile, depending on your needs and circumstances.

To access the Medicare rebate under the Better Access to Mental Health Care initiative, your therapist will require Medicare provider registration. If they do not offer bulk billing, ask how much the gap payment amount is over the Medicare rebate. If you are in financial hardship you can sometimes negotiate a fee reduction, however this is not common practice.

Sometimes professionals may work outside their formal office, in schools for example. This arrangement may work better for your family. Private health insurance with ancillary cover may enable you to claim a rebate for psychological services. Ask your health insurance provider for details.

## **Related Permanent Care and Adoptive Families fact sheets:**

[The Better Access to Mental Health Care](#)

[Permanent Care and Adoptive Families Specialist Database](#)

[Seeing your GP](#)

## **Other links and further information:**

For more general information on mental health as it relates to children and families in kinship care, permanent care and adoption, <http://www.pcafamilies.org.au/resources/external-information/mental-health>

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