

ACCESSING HELP FROM PSYCHOLOGISTS IN ALBERTA



Your **mental health** matters!

Psychologists are **regulated mental health professionals** who specialize in mental health assessment, diagnosis, treatment, and consultation.

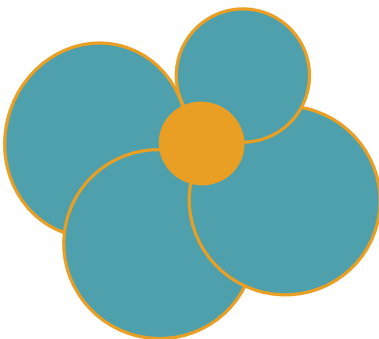
This guide explains **the why, the how, and the cost** in preparing you to access psychological services in Alberta.

This guide suggests **factors to consider** when taking the next steps in caring for your mental health.

WHY SEE A PSYCHOLOGIST?

What are the benefits of seeing a psychologist?

- Psychologists in Canada are professionals regulated by provincial and territorial regulatory bodies. These regulatory bodies protect the public by licensing and regulating their profession.
- The regulatory body in Alberta is the College of Alberta Psychologists (CAP). CAP works to ensure that psychologists are properly trained and are competent to provide psychological services to the public.
- Psychologists who are CAP members must adhere to ethical standards such as protecting client confidentiality and providing competent care.



What training do psychologists in Alberta have?

- Psychologists who are CAP members must meet a high standard of training. After a 4-year university undergraduate program, psychologists spend another 2 to 6 years in a specialized master's and/or doctoral program.
- CAP determines that specific academic and clinical requirements are met – including graduate courses in psychology.
- To be fully registered with CAP, psychologists complete a year of supervised clinical experience, pass a jurisprudence and ethics exam, and pass a national licensing exam.

How effective is psychotherapy?

Research has shown that 75% of people who receive psychotherapy show some positive changes (Howard et. al., 1986).

- Psychotherapy often helps people address their mental health concerns and make positive changes in their life.
- Through the psychotherapy process, people can gain a better understanding of their feelings, thoughts, and behaviours, and develop coping strategies.



HOW DO I ACCESS THE SERVICES OF A PSYCHOLOGIST?

Where do I find a psychologist?

You'll find psychologists in the private and public sectors, including:

- Private practice clinics or offices
- Public services such as Alberta Health Services (AHS), some Primary Care Networks, Family and Community Support Services
- Some Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) or Employee Family Assistance Programs (EFAP)
- Non-profit agencies

How do services differ?

- Specialty areas: Many psychologists specialize in treating certain issues.
- Wait times: Some psychologists or agencies may get you in immediately. Ask if there is a wait list and how long it is.
- Duration of services: Some psychologists or agencies offer as many sessions as necessary while others offer a specific number of sessions. Ask how many sessions are offered.
- Modality: Individual, couples, family, or group therapy may be available. Services may also be delivered in-person or via telepsychology.

How do I choose a psychologist?

- Language
- Personality (whether they are a good fit for you)
- Approach (examples include cognitive behavioural therapy and solution-focused therapy)
- Office location and accessibility
- Specialty training
- Credentials/title
- Costs

What types of services are there?

- Counselling/Therapy - Your psychologist will use a certain approach to help address your concerns. The number of sessions required to fully address issues varies based on many factors.
- Formal Assessment - Your psychologist may conduct a formal assessment to determine whether you have a particular issue (e.g., personality, psychoeducational assessments). Formal assessments usually take several hours to complete. They typically include interview(s), testing, a feedback session, and a written report.



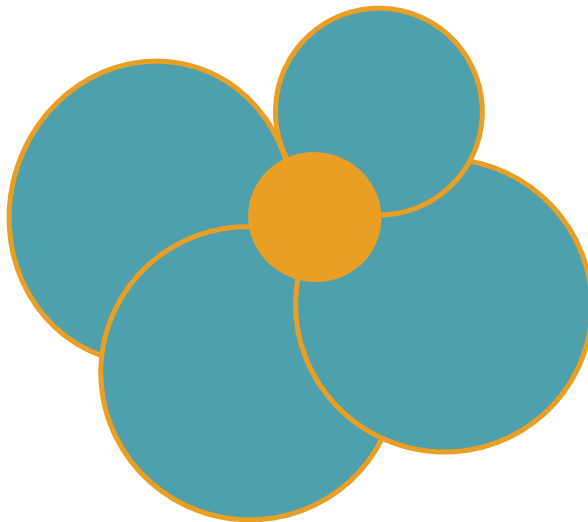
WHAT IS THE COST OF SEEING A PSYCHOLOGIST?

What is the cost?

- Psychologists in private practice set their own fees, and may follow the Psychologists' Association of Alberta (PAA) [recommended fee schedule](#).
- For children/teens, assessment costs may be covered through their school or AHS.
- AHS and non-profits may offer services for free or on a sliding scale.
- EAP and EFAP programs are usually free of charge for employees.

How is the cost covered?

- Personal resources
- Non-profit agencies may rely on community donations and sources
- Insurance coverage. Although services provided by psychologists in private practice are not covered by Alberta Health Care, individuals may receive partial or full coverage through private insurance.
- Other sources of coverage include Workers' Compensation Board (WCB), disability benefits, and Non-Insured Health Benefits for First Nations and Inuit.



Resources:

<https://www.apa.org/topics/psychotherapy/understanding>

<https://cpa.ca/public/decidingtoseeapsychologist/>

<https://www.cap.ab.ca/concerns-about-br-a-psychologist>

Howard, K. I., Kopta, S. M., Krause, M. S., & Orlinsky, D. E. (1986). The dose-effect relationship in psychotherapy. *American psychologist*, 41(2), 159.

