

# Questions to Ask a Mental Health Provider

***Choosing a mental health provider is a personal decision. Below are some suggested questions you may wish to consider as part of the process of selecting the provider who is best for your child and your family.***

## ***Background***

- What is your degree and license/certification?
- What kind of training do you have?
- How long have you been in practice?
- Do you have expertise in treating the kind of problem that my child is experiencing?
- Are there other areas in which you specialize?
- What is your treatment philosophy?
- What are your core values as a practitioner?

## ***Treatment***

- What is your approach toward treatment?
- What kind of techniques do you incorporate into sessions?
- Do you give children “homework” to complete between sessions?
- Do you usually work with the child alone or do you conduct family sessions as well?
- How much parent involvement is needed?
- How often do you check in with parents about the course of treatment?
- What is your policy regarding confidentiality?
- What if my child tells you something that sounds risky or dangerous?
- How long does a typical session last?
- How many sessions might be expected overall?
- In the event of a clinical emergency, would you be available? If not, whom would we call?

## ***Psychotropic Medication and Psychological Testing***

- What is your opinion on the use of medication in treatment?
- If you did suggest medication for my child, who would prescribe/monitor this?
- Do you administer psychological testing? If not, would you be able to refer me to the appropriate professionals?

### ***Communication with Other Professionals***

- Will you be in contact with the staff at my child's school? If so, will you be attending school meetings?
- What about other professionals my child sees? For example, will you be in contact with his pediatrician? With his probation officer?
- What is your policy regarding shared information?

### ***Payment***

- Do you accept insurance? If so, which plans?
- If not, how does your payment system work? For example, do you charge a set rate or do you offer sliding scale fees based on income?
- Do rates differ for individual versus family treatment?
- Is there a charge for phone consultations while in treatment?
- What is the payment policy if I have to cancel an appointment?

### ***After this initial conversation, ask yourself the following questions:***

- Did you feel a sense of rapport with this person?
- Did you feel safe and at ease?
- Did you think this person would be a good match for your child?
- Did you understand how treatment is conducted?
- Did you understand how payment works?
- Are there other questions you want to ask before making a decision?