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Seeking Mental Health Treatment in Kentucky

Kentucky Psychological Foundation Offers Tips to Help Kentuckians During Mental Health Awareness Month

Florence, KY, May 02, 2018 – An estimated 600,000 Kentuckians have a mental illness, which means almost everyone reading this has been impacted in some way. The term mental illness is used to describe mental, emotional, and/or behavioral problems that cause difficulties and distress in daily life. This includes a wide range of concerns from depression to drug addiction to schizophrenia. Furthermore, about 5% of Kentuckians (168,000 people) have a severe mental illness, which means they experience serious functional impairment that limits major life activities. Unfortunately, fewer than half of Kentuckians with mental illnesses seek treatment.

The good news is psychological treatments work, and psychological treatment in Kentucky is more available and effective than in other states. Our ratio of mental health providers to citizens is almost twice the national average. People who receive treatment in Kentucky report better outcomes than the national average - about 74% of Kentuckians who obtain mental health services report improvement in their well-being. Psychological treatments generally focus on psychotherapy (also known as “talk therapy”), and for conditions such as depression and PTSD, psychotherapy is often as effective or more effective than medication. For disorders like schizophrenia or bipolar disorder, a combination of medication and psychotherapy is often the most effective treatment.

Although good mental health care options exist in Kentucky, finding treatment can still be challenging. Below we offer some guidance when seeking out mental health treatment along with resources to help you connect.

When searching for a provider, talk with several psychologists in order to find the one who is a good fit for your needs. You should feel comfortable with the psychologist and

have the same goals for treatment. You and the psychologist should also agree on the methods that will be used to reach your goals.

In addition, consider asking potential psychologists the following questions:

What type of therapy will we be doing? Some common types of therapy with strong research support include psychodynamic, interpersonal, cognitive-behavioral, and mindfulness based approaches.

How do you understand my problem and how do you expect therapy to help? This includes not only your diagnosis, but also an explanation of how your psychologist thinks your problems developed. You should also have an understanding of how the therapeutic approach your psychologist is using is expected to address your concerns.

About how long do you expect that I might be in therapy? While people improve at different rates, it's helpful to know whether your psychologist expects this to be a short term (several weeks to about 6 months) or longer term (one year to several years) process. Some conditions are better addressed in longer term therapy while others can be addressed more quickly.

How are we going to know we're on the right track? What indications or measures will your psychologist use to know if you're getting better? This will often be a combination of goals you set for yourself (e.g., having more friends, feeling less depressed) and brief questionnaires your psychologist may use to track your progress.

If you are not happy with how therapy is going, it is essential that you tell your psychologist, and then together discuss new treatment options. Collaboration is critical to psychotherapy effectiveness.

A useful resource available to all Kentuckians is the Kentucky Psychological Association's Psychological Services Locator available at: <https://kpa.memberclicks.net/psychological-services-locator-landing>. The National Alliance for Mental Illness also provides a list of treatment resources on their website for both Louisville: <https://namilouisville.org/mental-health-resources-2/> and Lexington: <http://www.namilexington.org/resources-2/>. To find out more about the Kentucky Psychological Foundation visit www.kentuckypsychologicalfoundation.com and follow @KYPsychFnd.

Working together to raise awareness and connect providers and consumers, we can create a more psychologically healthy Kentucky.

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The Kentucky Psychological Foundation's (KPF) mission is to build a psychologically healthy Kentucky through public education, work place health, diversity awareness,

disaster resources, and psychology leadership development. More information and a link to support KPF can be found at www.kentuckypsychologicalfoundation.com.