



Boston Children's Hospital Gender Multispecialty Service

GeMS (Gender Multispecialty Service) Guidelines for Finding a Therapist

GeMS is committed to helping you and/or your child and family find a compassionate, knowledgeable and gender affirming therapist to provide ongoing support and close collaboration with our team. While we maintain growing lists of therapists to whom we refer, families and individuals seeking care in **GeMS** do not need to see one of the clinicians on our lists, and often seek care on their own. Below are recommendations to assist you in this process.

General tips for your search:

- Families/individuals tend to have the best success if they meet and interview 2+ therapists to ensure the best fit. Remember that when interviewing therapists that it is OK to shop around!
- When seeking a therapist for your child it needs to be a good fit for the child and the parents, not just one or the other. Individual therapy is important for the child, but families need to be kept in the loop and communication helps families feel more connected.
- Gender exploration and identity is but one of the aspects of a person's life and we urge you to seek a therapist who is able to address all aspects, strengths and challenges of prospective patients.
- Traveling is sometimes necessary to find the best fit.

On-line therapy resources and tips:

- In all online searches you will be asked to type in specific information, use their 'drop-down' menu, and check boxes to input the most relevant information to make good therapist matches. This includes providing information regarding age, or age range, the words transgender, LGBTQI or gender, your insurance, your zip code or location and other relevant topics, like experience with educational issues, medical issues, gender of therapist, etc.
- Make sure to read the full profile to see if the therapist seems like they would be a good fit for your child and your family. Families tend to have the best success if they meet and interview several different therapists to ensure the best fit. You can often contact therapists by email through the website, which can be a quicker than phoning.
- Recommended websites:

www.psychologytoday.com

www.therapymatcher.org 800-242-9794 (formerly, the NASW Therapist Referral Service)

Insurance Companies:

- You can call your insurance company or use their websites. It may be necessary to provide the ID number for the member for whom a therapist is sought. Most insurance websites have search features that allow you to sort through multiple providers and you can **use the tips above** to input the most relevant information to make a match with clinicians who take your insurance. Again, look for clinicians who specialize in children/adolescents if this appropriate and those who work with the transgender or LGBTQI population.
- Mass Health/MBHP Use the website: www.masspartnership.com/provider. You may need to have the member ID handy. Click on “find a provider” and then “find a behavioral health provider.” When you are on the search page, you can click on the drop down menu for “provider type” and choose psychologist, licensed independent clinical social worker (LICSW), or licensed mental health counselor. You can then put in your zip code and distance you are willing to travel. Then choose transgender issues under the special interest category and your or your child’s age.

Resources in your community:

- **Pediatricians, PCPs (Primary Care Physicians) and Family Practice doctors and nurses and P.A.s** can be good resources for helping find a therapist. Many medical practices and individuals keep lists of local providers whom they know and/or other patients have had good experiences. When asking your medical clinician for a referral, please ask for the name(s) of clinicians who have experience with gender orientation and/or LGBTQI issues.
- Often, **schools** are able to assist in finding a therapist. Contact your child’s guidance counselor, and/or the school psychologist, social worker, adjustment counselor or school nurse for referrals. The faculty advisor for the school’s GSA (Gender and Sexuality Alliance) or other LGBTQI support systems will often have resources.
- **Many faith communities are now inclusive**, welcoming and supportive of their LGBTQI members and may be able to provide referrals for therapists, groups and connection with other families. If your community is inclusive, consider asking your Pastor, Rabbi, Imam, Priest and others for a referral.
- **If you are a college student**, most colleges and universities have therapists available for individual and group work through Student Health Services. Clinicians in these settings are typically very familiar with LGBTQI exploration and concerns, including gender identity. They also can be a good resource for on-campus and community support as well as medical information.