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What is psychotherapy?

Psychotherapy is the treatment of mental and emotional disorders through the use of psychological techniques designed to encourage communication of conflicts and insight into problems, with the goal being relief of symptoms, changes in behavior leading to improved social and vocational functioning, and personality growth. Psychotherapy seeks to determine the underlying psychological contributions of a person's symptoms. The form of this counseling may be supportive, cognitive/behavioral, interpersonal, psychodynamic or a combination approach.

The most recent scientific research indicates that a combination of medication and psychotherapy is the most effective treatment for clinical depression and anxiety disorders. Person's suffering with bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, or other chronic mental illness have also been shown to benefit from psychotherapy to aid in coping with their illness and protecting against relapses. Several different types of mental health providers may provide psychotherapy services including psychiatrists, psychologists, marriage and family therapists, clinical social workers, licensed clinical practical counselors, and pastoral counselors.

Will health insurance cover the cost of psychotherapy?

Health insurance may cover mental health treatment, depending on your particular plan. However, mental health benefits are often different from other medical benefits. You may need a referral from your primary care physician or you may be free to seek a referral on your own. In order to determine your health insurance benefits, call the customer service number on the back of your insurance card. The number to call will be listed as customer service, or behavioral health, or mental health services. When seeking pre-approval for services from the insurance company, you may be asked a few questions, such as whether or not you are suicidal, if you have been in counseling before, and why you are seeking treatment. The case manager will then give you a list of several therapists in the community.