



CIPSRT | ICRTSP

## SIX STEPS TO FINDING A CLINICIAN

If you want help for a mental health problem, you might not know where to start.

There are many options and finding a mental health professional involves several important considerations. The Canadian Institute for Public Safety Research and Treatment (CIPSRT) has identified six steps to finding a clinician; however, this is your journey and you have choices.

This document is for people who need to find a clinician, not those who already have one. Speak to your clinician about their coverage and ability to support you with your workplace injury.

## Step 1: Know your coverage

know your options before you start the search for a mental health professional. Know what you need and know what services are available. Take a proactive and preventative approach to your mental health. Early intervention is key.

1. Is Workers Compensation Board (WCB) or Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) involved in your mental health treatment? If they are, your treatment costs may be covered. However, you will have to follow some procedures to make sure you and your care provider qualify for such coverage. Keep in contact with your WCB/WSIB representative to understand limitations and requirements.
2. An Employee and Family Assistance Plan (EFAP). Often provides short term problem focused interventions.
3. An extended benefits plan with a 3<sup>rd</sup> party insurer;
4. An employer may offer both EFAP and extended benefits

Your benefits plan may only cover mental health professional fees if specific procedures are followed and requirements are met. For example, benefit providers may only cover costs for mental health professionals with particular qualifications or credentials. **Ask your Human Resources department or benefits provider for details so you understand your coverage options when they are needed.**

## Step 2: Know the professionals

There are at least three types of mental health professionals you may encounter.

1. **Psychologists:** can provide an assessment, develop a treatment plan that focuses on addressing problems and deliver psychotherapy and/or a psychological; treatment that focuses on addressing thoughts, feelings, and behaviours.
2. **Psychiatrists:** are medical doctors who specialize in mental health. Psychiatrists do assessments, write prescriptions, recommend treatments, and can recommend or request additional medical exams and laboratory tests.
3. **Social Workers** perform psychotherapy, emphasize assisting clients in building skills

and abilities, and use personal or community resources to manage their problems and needs.

**Check the requirements of your benefits plan and confirm the type of registration needed for professional mental health services to be covered by your plan. If you have a family physician, they may be involved in the coordination of your care.**

## Step 3: Know the lingo

Searching for a mental health professional may involve many unfamiliar terms. CIPSRT has created a glossary of terms with helpful explanations which can be accessed [here](#)!

**The most important term to remember may be Operational Stress Injury (OSI).**

OSIs are mental disorders or conditions resulting from operational stressors experienced on the job. Generally, operational stressors refer to potentially psychologically traumatic events. However, PSP also experience other occupational stressors (e.g., shift work, overtime, upholding a “higher image” in public).

## Step 4: Know your treatment options

There are several ways to approach the treatment of OSI. Your mental health professional may be an expert in one or many of the different approaches. We have listed four common approaches below, but other forms of treatment might work for you.

**Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT):** CBT is a practical, problem-focused, and goal-oriented form of treatment that can help you learn to identify, challenge, and alter problematic ways of thinking.

**Exposure Therapy:** is designed to help people work through their fears. People often avoid things that cause fear or distress. Exposure therapy involves confronting, in a safe environment, objects, activities, or situations that are feared or avoided, to help reduce fear and distress.

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<sup>1</sup> CIPSRT Glossary of Terms:  
<https://www.cipsrt-icrtsp.ca/en/resources/glossary-of-terms>

**Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT):** CPT helps people who have been exposed to psychologically traumatic events to learn how to challenge and modify the related thoughts (like blaming themselves) so that healing and growth can occur.

**Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR):** EMDR is focused on the emotions and symptoms after an event. The treatment involves engaging in rhythmic side-to-side eye movements (similar to watching a pendulum swing) while thinking about the event. EMDR can help reduce or dampen the intensity of emotionally-charged memories.

## Step 5: Choosing a mental health professional

Finding a mental health professional can be stressful and you may feel pressured to find help quickly; **however, finding the right fit is very important. Here are some key questions to have answered before booking an appointment.**

1. Is the mental health professional registered?
2. Is the mental health professional available to offer appointments within \_\_\_\_ timeframe? (Feel free to give the timeframe you would prefer {evenings, weekends} and how quickly you need to be seen).
3. What does the mental health professional recommend you do before your first appointment?
4. Has the mental health professional worked with public safety personnel before? Can they tell you about their experience helping people like you?

**Ultimately, the right fit between you and your therapist is based on many factors that will be unique to you and your therapist. Sometimes it takes one or two tries to find the right person. The questions above are intended as a helpful place to start.**

## Step 6: Get ready for your first appointment

Initial meetings with a mental health professional can be stressful. There are often questions and paperwork to complete. It is easy to forget to ask questions. Here are three key steps to help.

1. Write down your questions or concerns and bring them to your first appointment. Bring something to write down other notes and questions that come up during the session.
2. Arrive a few minutes early as you may have intake forms to complete.
3. Be ready to discuss what is happening to you. Mental health professionals want to understand your needs so that they can help. Mental health professionals typically let you go at your own pace and can help guide your first session.



**Remember that this is  
your journey;  
you get to choose the path.**



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Know your coverage

A guide for Public Safety Personnel  
seeking Mental Health Treatment



Know the professionals



Know the lingo



Know your treatment options



Choosing a mental health professional



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