

WHO CAN TREAT ADHD?

Choosing the appropriate professional for diagnosis and treatment of attention deficit disorder can be confusing. Each specialty has strengths and weaknesses. Here is a short list of who does what.

PSYCHIATRIST

An M.D. who treats the brain and may prescribe medication or other treatment.

Advantages

- Trained in diagnosis.
- Able to diagnose, prescribe medication, and treat.

Disadvantages

Fees usually start at about \$200 an hour. While psychiatrists can diagnose and treat, they may not be trained in counseling, especially in the day-to-day life skills needed by ADHD adults and children.

PSYCHOLOGIST

Understands how the mind works, but is not an M.D. and cannot prescribe medications. If the psychologist feels that medications are needed, he or she must refer the patient to either a medical doctor or a psychiatrist.

Advantages

- Trained in diagnosis.
- Trained in counseling.
- Costs less than a psychiatrist.

Disadvantages

- Cannot prescribe medications.
- Patient must be referred for an MRI or any other test that could assist in diagnosis.

FAMILY DOCTOR

Most know of ADHD but may lack the extensive knowledge of more specialized professionals.

Advantages

- Is already familiar with you and your medical history.
- Is usually easier to see for an appointment.
- Can prescribe medications if needed.
- Less expensive than a psychiatrist.

Disadvantages

- May have limited experience with ADD, especially in adults.
- Cannot offer counseling.
- Brief office visits often mean a hurried diagnosis.

NEUROLOGIST

A doctor who specializes in treatment of the brain and central nervous system.

Advantages

- Can determine if other conditions, such as seizure disorder, are present.

Disadvantages

- Expensive.
- EEG testing for ADHD isn't needed for diagnosis or treatment.
- Patient must be referred for any counseling or therapy.

MASTER LEVEL COUNSELOR

Has a master's degree in psychology or counseling and may be able to perform an initial assessment with the appropriate training.

Advantages

- Is able to provide counseling, problem solving, and behavior management.
- Less expensive than psychiatric care.

Disadvantages

- May have trouble with a differential diagnosis (identifying other possible problems).
- Will need to refer patient to a doctor or other professional.
- Cannot prescribe medication.

SOCIAL WORKER

A Master of Social Welfare (MSW) or a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) is often employed by an agency (for example, public health-care resources) to provide counseling. Social workers can help with some behavior issues that ADHD adults experience.

Advantages

- Inexpensive.

Disadvantages

- May have trouble with a differential diagnosis (identifying other potential problems).
- Will need to refer patient to a doctor or other professional.
- Cannot prescribe medication.

www.additudemag.com/adhd-treatment.html