

How to Access Private Mental Health Services in Calgary

Psychiatry

- If you have an Alberta Health Care card, access to private psychiatry is FREE
- Your physician can refer you to a psychiatrist within an Alberta Health Services program, typically through Access Mental Health, or they can obtain a list of community psychiatrists through Access Mental Health
- Psychiatrists generally focus on diagnostic assessment and medication management, though some psychiatrists will provide talk therapy
- Psychiatry is a regulated profession, meaning that there are basic education and training requirements and oversight by a governing body, with guidelines and regulations

Psychology

- Psychologists charge a fee for service, which may be covered by your work benefits, or extended health insurance
- The College of Alberta Psychologists generally recommends a fee of \$180/hour; psychologists who charge more than this amount are required to inform their clients of their fees in advance and provide a rationale for their fees
- Psychologists generally focus on assessment (diagnostic, cognitive, behavioural, emotional, developmental, psychoeducational, etc.) and talk therapy (group, individual, couples, family, youth/child, adult) of various kinds
- Psychology is a regulated profession, meaning that there are basic education and training requirements and oversight by a governing body, with guidelines and regulations; look for psychologists with an RPsych designation
- Psychologists in Alberta may register with a Masters (MSc., MA, MC, or Med) or a PhD, from a variety of programs (e.g., educational psychology, counseling psychology, clinical psychology) – inquire about a psychologist's training and experience to help you make a decision about fit
- There are several ways to find a private psychologist:
 - Psychologist's Association of Alberta Referral Search tool on their website <https://www.psychologistsassociation.ab.ca/>
 - www.psychologytoday.com
 - Asking for recommendations from other professionals/family/friends

Social Work

- Social workers charge a fee for service, which may be covered by your work benefits, or extended health insurance
- Social workers generally focus on assessment (diagnostic, cognitive, behavioural, emotional, developmental, psychoeducational, etc.) and talk therapy (group, individual, couples, family, youth/child, adult) of various kinds
- Social work is a regulated profession, meaning that there are basic education and training requirements and oversight by a governing body, with guidelines and regulations; look for social workers with an RSW designation
- Social workers in Alberta may register with a Masters (MSW) or a PhD and must do additional clinical training in order to register as a clinical social worker – inquire about a social worker's training and experience to help you make a decision about fit (social workers with bachelors degrees are not qualified to provide therapy, they are however qualified to provide a variety of other services)
- There are several ways to find a private social worker:
 - The Alberta College of Social Work has a list of social workers: <https://www.acsw.ab.ca/site/home>
 - www.psychologytoday.com
 - Searching in your web browser
 - Asking for recommendations from other professionals/family/friends

*Please note that titles such as "life coach", "counsellor", or "therapist" are not protected terms and are not regulated professions. Inquire about an individual's training and experience to help you make a decision about fit.