

Advice on looking for psychotherapy

Psychosocial Support | Central Advisory Office

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What will you find here?



- ✎ I'll be fine, somehow – or will I?
- ✎ Who is who in psychotherapeutic counseling in Germany
- ✎ Approved procedures in outpatient psychological counseling
- ✎ The search for a counselor
- ✎ Psychotherapeutic „walk-in“ counseling
- ✎ Support by the health insurance agencies
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I'll be fine, somehow – or will I?

- ✚ It takes a certain level of psychological stress and motivation to consider psychotherapy
- ✚ It also takes somewhat stable living conditions in order to manage an outpatient therapy
- ✚ Many people think their stress or discomfort isn't serious enough to consider professional help – „I'll be fine, somehow – or will I?“
- ✚ It may take an urgent crisis and/or physical symptoms in order to be pointed to the possibility of counseling or therapy, often through doctors, family or other contacts
- ✚ Outpatient psychotherapy is essentially appropriate for people who can still manage their daily life
- ✚ If a crisis is so serious that a normal daily life isn't possible anymore, an inpatient treatment may be indicated
- ✚ If you're not sure if an outpatient therapy may be right for you, you can contact PSB, the psycho-social counseling on campus, talk to your doctor or make an appointment for an initial interview with a psychotherapist
- ✚ How to do that, which forms of therapy and kinds of therapists are available, and if you have to expect any costs, you will find out here!

Who is who in psychotherapeutic counseling in Germany

- ✚ Psychotherapy is offered by medical and psychological professionals who are licensed by the German doctors' association (German: Kassenärztliche Vereinigung)
- ✚ The therapists' occupational titles have historic backgrounds, change occasionally and aren't always easily understood. These therapists are available for therapy in outpatient psychological care of (young) adults:
 - Psychological counselors who have studied psychology at the university level and earned an additional therapeutic degree (G: Psychologische Psychotherapeut*innen)
 - Medical specialists for psychotherapy are medical doctors who have earned an additional therapeutic degree (G: Fachärzt*innen für Psychotherapie/psychosomatische Medizin)
 - Psychiatrists, medical psychotherapists and neurologists are specialist medical doctors (G: Fachärzt*innen für Psychiatrie, Psychotherapie und Neurologie)
 - Medical specialists of other medical areas who have extended their studies by a psychotherapeutic training (G: Psychotherapeutisch tätige Ärzt*innen)
 - Psychotherapists for children and youth are psychological, social education workers or medical therapists who treat children and teenagers, commonly until they turn 18

Approved procedures in outpatient psychological counseling

The German guidelines for psychotherapy allow four different procedures:

↘ Analytical psychotherapy

- Aims at the unconsciousness of conflicting or traumatic life situations as triggers for symptoms. The focus point is to make suppressed emotions, memories or relational patterns conscious

↘ Systemic therapy

- Focuses on the social context of psychological disorders, especially the change in social interaction. It can also be applied in a multi person setting, i.e. meaningful relations and interactions, e.g. in the family system, may be discussed and changed by including life partners or other important persons in the immediate or extended family

↘ Psychologically founded depth analysis

- This therapy stems from the idea that unconscious processes have an effect on the psychological health of people. It aims at resolving these unconscious conflicts in order to treat psychological disorders. The focus isn't so much on influencing the behavior, but rather in uncovering and resolving of the underlying causes in order to reach a reduction of the afflictions

↘ Behavioral therapy

- Based on the theory of learning, behavioral therapy aims at influencing and reducing psychological symptoms and afflictions by a change in behavior through a variety of methods and exercises. It is agreed that psychological symptoms are the result of a combination of conscious and unconscious learning processes. At first the therapist and patient acquire which conditions in the life history of the patient have contributed to the development and maintenance of the symptoms. On this basis the patients are motivated and instructed to actively change their actions, thinking and emotions.

Search for a counselor

- ✎ In order to find out which kind of procedure a certain therapist is offering, you need to ask the insurance agency, your doctor or the therapist directly
- ✎ If you have a command of German, you can find information about approved procedures on the website of the German association of psychotherapists: www.wege-zur-psychotherapie.org/
- ✎ You can find therapists through the websites of the association of psychotherapists in Hessen (<https://lppkjp.de>) and the association of German doctors (KV) Hessen: <https://arztsuche Hessen.de>
- ✎ To find out which therapy is right for you, you may have a one time appointment with a doctor, therapist, walk-in clinic or certified counseling center

Psychotherapeutic „walk-in“ counseling

- ✚ When you've found a suitable counselor (you can have one-time appointments with several in order to find out if the „chemistry“ is right), you will get an agreement about the therapy by the therapist, who needs to send the health insurer a detailed application for reimbursement. The insurer, however, does not get details, only the general diagnosis.
- ✚ Public health insurance will generally pay for two intervals of 12 appointments each. For more appointments than that, the decision about the assumption of costs is made anonymously by an independent evaluator. If you have private health insurance, you have to ask your insurance company if the costs are covered.
- ✚ It can take several weeks until the official start of the therapy.
- ✚ While making contact with therapists, it is advisable to document the contacts in a spreadsheet. It may make it easier to negotiate with the health insurer if necessary.
- ✚ If urgent and you don't have a therapist yet, you may receive up to 3 appointments for walk-in counseling, for which therapists reserve time slots in their schedules. You need to ask the staff at the 116 177-hotline or a therapist for „psychotherapeutische Sprechstundentermine“.
- ✚ You may also ask your doctor for a transfer slip with a note of urgency (G: Überweisung mit Dringlichkeitsziffer) to speed up the process.

Support by the health insurance agencies

- You can get an appointment through the appointment service of the Hessen doctors' association
<https://www.kvhessen.de/aerzte-psychotherapeuten-finden/>
- <https://www.eterminservice.de/terminservice>
- Phone: 116117 (from a phone with a German SIM)
- In order to receive a short-term therapy or one-time appointments, you need a note of urgency from your doctor

Costs and where to find additional information

- ✚ The cost for psychotherapy are covered by public and private health insurances in Germany
- ✚ Your chosen therapist must be licensed by the doctors' association for the intended therapy method
- ✚ The conditions in private health insurance are subject to your chosen insurance plan, if in doubt - inquire with your insurer before you start a therapy
- ✚ You can find more information about the outpatient opportunities on the website of the German doctors' association: [Kassenärztliche Bundesvereinigung](https://www.kassenaerztliche-bundesvereinigung.de)
- ✚ There you can also find an overview of patient information and the different procedures and available treatments.
- ✚ Including also an overview of the necessary steps in order to get your psychotherapy approved by your insurer