



IDENTIFYING A GOOD PSYCHIATRIST

You can check with friends, family members or agencies that provide referrals to see what they know about a particular psychiatrist. Here are some qualities that are important:

1. Invites family members to participate in treatment (if the patient agrees). May speak to them in the beginning or at the end of an appointment.
2. Recognizes the illness is a brain disease caused by biological and psychosocial factors.
3. Is not threatened by views of the family or patient on treatment. Takes seriously and respects the information communicated by the family. Discusses symptoms openly, as well as medication and side effects and the limits of their knowledge, while remaining in command of the treatment.
4. Is flexible enough to suggest new treatments and to enlist families as part of the treatment team when appropriate. For example, asking them to report changes in mood or behavior in response to treatment.
5. Willing to adjust frequency of visits to match the patient / family's ability to pay; Considers patient / family's circumstances and any options for reducing the fee.

Other Suggestions:

1. Start with your family doctor or general practitioner. Let them do a complete physical exam to rule out the possibility that physical problems may be a factor.
2. If you have health insurance and want your treatment to be covered, you should call the number on the back of your insurance card to get a referral. Once you get the name and phone number, you can check to see if anyone is familiar with the doctor.
3. After your first appointment, think about how you felt. Did you feel comfortable talking with them? Do you feel like they listened to you? Did you feel you could trust them?
4. Remember that you have the right to see a doctor you feel comfortable with. The relationship you have with your doctor is very important, explore your options if you don't feel comfortable with the first doctor you see.