

HOW DO I CHOOSE A PSYCHOLOGIST?

Choosing a psychologist can be a daunting task. But a little bit of research can have a very positive result. You do not need a formal referral to access the services of a psychologist. The Ontario Psychological Association (OPA) maintains a listing of all provincial psychologists that allows you to choose by area and specialty. The web site is www.psych.on.ca . As with many other professionals, word of mouth is often the best way to find the right fit. Talking to friends or family who have been through the process of the diagnosis of learning disabilities can often lead you to finding the right psychologist. Your local Learning Disabilities Association may also have a list of psychologist knowledgeable in the diagnosis of LD.

Here are some questions you may want to ask upon contacting a psychologist:

- What is the age group that you work with most often
- Is diagnosing learning disabilities a big part of your practice
- Over how many days is the assessment conducted
- Does your assessment include a written report with recommendations which is geared to be shared with the school/employer
- What is your fee for a psycho-educational assessment + report
- Can my extended benefits help cover the cost
- Do you go to the school to observe a child (what is the cost)
- Would you participate in a school meeting to discuss the assessment or in a phone consultation with school personnel (what is the cost)

It is very important to psychological work that the client and psychologists have a good rapport and develop a good working relationship. As is the case with any other kind of professional, one practitioner might be a good fit for one person but not a good fit for someone else. This is often evident during your initial interview.

If you have a child in the publicly funded school system, assessments are available and fully funded. However you may encounter a wait time and wish to obtain a private unfunded assessment which you may share with the school board. Private assessments done by reputable professionals are usually accepted by school boards.