



## Selecting a mental health provider

June 6, 2011

*Evansville Courier and Press*

Often I am approached by an individual who says "I don't know where to go for mental health care."

The truth is the scope of services available for an individual with mental illness in our community is quite large. Here are some tips for choosing a treatment provider from "How to Choose a Quality Behavioral Health Care Provider" published by The Joint Commission [www.jointcommission.org](http://www.jointcommission.org).

### **When choosing a behavioral health care provider, ask:**

1. What treatment, care or services do you offer?
2. How can your treatment, care or services help me?
3. Am I eligible for treatment, care or services?
4. Will my treatment, care or services be covered by insurance or public funding?

### **How do you feel about the organization?**

1. Do staff ask for and respect my preference and choice?
2. Does the organization take time to explain rights and responsibilities?

### **What do staff members tell you about the treatment, care or services?**

1. How long will it take to begin treatment, care or services?
2. How will the treatment, care or services be individualized to meet my needs?
3. How will I be involved in the planning of my treatment, care or services?

4. What are the opportunities for my family and others to participate?

The first step in seeking treatment is to find a provider where you would like to set up an initial assessment. An assessment is an appointment with the intake person at the organization who will ask you questions about your mental health history, current symptoms and will be able to answer questions such as those listed above.

Available treatment centers locally include community mental health centers, hospitals with mental health care units, residential addiction facilities and private practice psychiatrists, therapists, counselors and case management services.

Remember that you may not find the right fit at your first choice of a treatment provider. What is even more important is that you stay on the path to recovery and find a provider that is the best fit for your needs.

---

Rebecca R. Glines is communications manager at Southwestern Healthcare Inc. Contact the organization at (812) 436-4221.