

Choosing a Counselor

There are several types of professionals that provide counseling:

Clinical Social Workers: Most states have a license that must be obtained to use the title of Clinical Social Worker. All practitioners must have a Masters degree from an accredited School of Social Work.

Licensed Professional Counselors: These professionals must possess at least a Master's degree from an accredited university in a field related to counseling, and a State license.

Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT): The requirements are roughly the same as for the LPC.

Psychiatrists: Psychiatrists are physicians who have chosen to specialize in treating mental health. Generally they do not do "talk therapy," but are more concerned with using traditional medical treatments such as pharmaceuticals. It is rare for a pilot to need treatment from a psychiatrist. Psychiatrists must be licensed as physicians.

Psychologists: Psychology is divided into several different branches, but the psychologists with whom you might interact are generally going to be those who specialize in counseling psychology or testing psychology. They will usually have a doctorate, but there are many who practice with a Masters degree. Clinical psychologists must be licensed.

Helpful questions to ask when trying to find a counselor include:

- From what school did you get your counseling degree?
- What, exactly, is the title of your degree?
- How long have you been in practice? (Generally it is a good idea to find an experienced counselor).
- With what problems are you most experienced?
- Are there any issues with which you will not work?
- Are you familiar with pilots and the rules of the FAA with respect to pilot mental health? (not many counselors are familiar with FAA rules, so don't count one out just because of unfamiliarity with the FARs. We at **PATH** can advise you on how to educate the counselor on these issues).

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The most common problems for which you might want to seek counseling are depression, anxiety, relationship difficulties, and bereavement issues. Most common of all is depression.