



# Accessing your mental health benefits

Your Blue Shield of California health plan provides coverage for non-emergency inpatient and outpatient mental health and substance use care through Blue Shield's mental health service administrator (MHSA).

Call the MHSA at **(877) 263-9952** for immediate assistance or help finding a network provider. You can also search for a provider in the *Find a Doctor* tool at **blueshieldca.com**.

**If you have an emergency, call 911 immediately.**

# Choosing the right clinician for you

**Master's-level clinicians** have a master's degree in social work, nursing, professional counseling, marriage and family therapy, or education. They are independently licensed in the state where they practice. In some cases, they may recommend you to a psychiatrist or nurse practitioner if medication may be needed.

**Psychologists** generally have doctoral degrees in educational, child, clinical, or counseling psychology. They are independently licensed in the state where they practice. Psychologists provide a variety of services, including assessments, psychological testing, and therapy. Often, a master's-level clinician or psychiatrist will refer you to a psychologist for testing, if needed.

**Psychiatrists** are medical doctors (MDs) specializing in psychiatry. They provide psychiatric evaluations, therapy, and other psychotherapeutic interventions, and they can prescribe medications. They are licensed by the state where they practice, and most are board-certified. Some psychiatrists specialize in child psychiatry, adolescent psychiatry, addiction, or geriatrics. If you are interested in a psychiatrist who evaluates and treats children, ask whether he or she is trained in child psychiatry.

One of the most important factors in addressing your mental health is finding a clinician you trust. Here are some things to consider when you are deciding on a clinician.

## Qualities that are important to you

What type of background or areas of expertise would you like your clinician to have? Would you prefer a male or female clinician? Would you be more comfortable with a clinician who shares your cultural background? Should your clinician be close to your home or close to work? Would telebehavioral health be a good fit with your busy schedule?

## The clinician's background

What are the clinician's credentials? What is the clinician's philosophy or approach?

## We're here to help

If you have any questions, call the Member Services number located on the back of your Blue Shield member ID card.

# Find an MHSA network clinician

You can find a clinician online or call us for assistance.

## Find a clinician online

1. Go to [blueshieldca.com/fad](https://blueshieldca.com/fad).
2. Select *Mental Health* and enter your location and plan to be directed to the MHSA network.
3. Search by city, ZIP code, or clinician name. You can click *Filter & Sort* to further narrow your search.
4. On the results page, you can see detailed profiles for each clinician.

## Give us a call

Call **(877) 263-9952** to speak with an MHSA representative who will help you find a clinician that meets your needs. It is important that you call to get preauthorization before treatment to make sure your services are covered.

# Prior authorization

Some behavioral healthcare services require prior authorization or approval from the MHSA, including:

- Inpatient services
- Residential Treatment Center (RTC)
- Partial Hospitalization Program (PHP)
- Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP)
- Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)
- Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT)
- Psychological testing
- Neuropsychological testing
- Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS)

Prior authorization is not required for outpatient services, in-person or virtually.

If you have questions about prior authorization, call the MHSA at **(877) 263-9952**.

# Accessing care

Whenever you need non-emergency mental health or substance use care, you can call the MHSA at **(877) 263-9952**.

**Press 1** if you need immediate assistance.

**Press 3** for help finding a provider.

During the call, you will be asked for your subscriber ID number, which is on your Blue Shield member ID card, and a few questions to help identify your needs.

**If you have an emergency, call 911 immediately.**