



APRIL 2023

HAPPY HEALTHY SPRING

CARE CONNECTION

FIVE MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT STARTING THERAPY

It's more important now than ever before to focus on improving our mental health. Unfortunately, there is still a lot of stigma around mental health care and therapy, specifically, that may make it harder to seek help when you need it.

Talkspace is actively working to help shed that stigma, so they're breaking down some of the misconceptions that exist about starting therapy:



MISCONCEPTION: SOMETHING HAS TO BE WRONG. There's often an assumption that people who go to therapy have been diagnosed with a serious mental illness. That's simply not true. Many people seek out therapy because they've suffered a traumatic experience, are unhappy at work, want help setting and achieving goals, or desire a more positive relationship with themselves and others. According to Rachel O'Neill, Ph.D. LPCC-S, an Ohio-based Talkspace therapist, "the biggest stigma that is still associated with therapy is the idea that something has to be wrong with a person in order to seek help." It simply doesn't — sometimes it's important to gain and master skills when you're relatively stable so that you can use them when things are more chaotic. "Many people begin therapy in order to feel more confident and comfortable in their lives."

MISCONCEPTION: THERAPY MEANS YOU ARE WEAK. In a society that glorifies individualization, you are conditioned to think that seeking help is a sign of weakness. Believing you have to do everything yourself (and do it well) may explain why research shows that perfectionism is at an all-time high. Perfectionism can significantly impact your mental health and has been shown to be associated with anxiety, depression, eating disorders, and suicidal ideation. Asking for help and investing in [your] mental health is just as responsible as going to the gym. You would never look down on someone who goes to the gym to stay physically fit, so why do it for someone who goes to therapy to stay mentally fit?

MISCONCEPTION: THERE IS A "RIGHT" TIME FOR THERAPY. People often wait for the "right" time to seek out therapy. However, oftentimes our excuses for not finding a therapist (such as time, money, or not knowing where to start) are just sneaky ways to avoid taking a hard look at our unhappiness. O'Neill finds that people begin therapy when they reach a point in their lives where they decide they need to make some sort of change. "For some, that includes deciding that it is the right time for them to begin therapy," O'Neill said. "For others, maybe it is the fact that their pain and suffering has become too much — and they decide they might want some help dealing with things like sadness and anxiety."

MISCONCEPTION: THERAPY IS ABOUT "FIXING" PROBLEMS. Many people see therapy as "fixing" problems. As Dr. O'Neill shared, "Your therapist will give you tools to help you feel better equipped to deal with stress within your life." This is why therapy is more powerful and useful than many think.

MISCONCEPTION: THERAPY IS SHAMEFUL. We all want our family and friends to understand us and support our decisions. However, many still have outdated ideas of what therapy is and why someone would seek it out. Remember that you don't have to justify seeking therapy to anyone. As O'Neill shared, "If you do feel like it's something you want to talk about, then I think being open and straightforward can be helpful." There's no need to be ashamed of your mental health, just as you wouldn't be ashamed of a broken arm. "You don't necessarily need to share why you're seeking therapy," she added. "Instead, you can simply share that you're seeking therapy to feel better equipped to deal with life stressors."

If you are considering therapy, Dr. O'Neill suggests asking yourself the following questions:

- What might you want to achieve?
- What might you be looking to get out of therapy?
- What might you want to change or see differently in your life?

At the end of the day, therapy is about feeling like the best version of you, and if you're ready to start working towards that goal, Talkspace is a great place to start. They offer confidential and convenient private messaging therapy online and on your schedule. With the Talkspace app, you can even have easy access to your private therapy room whenever and wherever you might need it. And best of all, Talkspace is free for FMCP members and their eligible dependents over age 13, with unlimited messaging to your therapist and one 30-minute video session each month!

To learn more about Talkspace or to get started, go to www.talkspace.com/fmcp.

Please note: This benefit only applies to members who have their medical benefits through one of the FMCP PPO Plans. If you are eligible, you must register through www.talkspace.com/fmcp to receive this benefit at no cost through the FMCP.

Source: Elizabeth Su at [Talkspace](https://www.talkspace.com)

WELLNESS TIP!

Chew More!

Eating slowly and chewing more contribute to a lower risk of obesity, likely aiding in appetite control. Chewing thoroughly is an effective strategy to reduce eating rate. Savor your food and eat more slowly to help aid in reducing your weight and staying healthy! To help yourself eat more slowly, take a sip of water between bites of food.



Sources: [National Library of Medicine](https://www.nlm.nih.gov)

DID YOU KNOW?

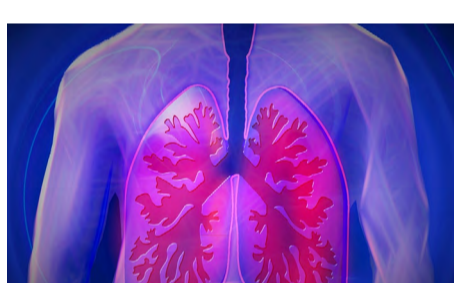
SUMMARY MATERIAL MODIFICATIONS (SMM)

When there is an update to the Plan, we send out a **Summary Material Modification (SMM)** document to you that outlines the changes that have been made. It's important to keep these documents with your Summary Plan Description (SPD) booklet for reference.

The SMMs are also available at www.nifmcp.com under the *Plan Notices* tab of the *Plan Documents*, *Plan Notices*, and *Member Forms* section.

THE LOW-DOWN ON LUNG CANCER

Lung cancer is the second most common cancer and the leading cause of cancer death in the US. Learning more about risk factors, prevention, and signs and symptoms is important. That's why the American Cancer Society created a lung cancer fact sheet.



Risk Factors

Smoking is, by far, the leading cause of lung cancer. But not all people with lung cancer smoke. Some may have smoked in the past, and some people with lung cancer have never smoked at all.

Some risk factors for lung cancer can be changed. These include smoking tobacco, breathing in secondhand smoke from tobacco users, or being exposed to certain cancer-causing chemicals like radon and asbestos.

Other risk factors cannot be changed. These include a person's age and their personal or family history, having been treated with radiation therapy to the chest in the past, or being exposed to outdoor air pollution.

Prevention

Not all lung cancers can be prevented. And some people who get lung cancer do not have any known risk factors. But there are ways a person can help lower their risk:

- Avoid all tobacco products.
- Stay away from secondhand smoke.
- Keep cars and homes smoke-free.
- Avoid or limit exposure to cancer-causing chemicals that may be in the home or workplace.
- Follow a healthy eating pattern that includes plenty of fruits and vegetables.

Screening

The American Cancer Society recommends screening for certain people at a higher risk for lung cancer. If a person currently smokes or has quit in the last 15 years, is 50 to 80 years old and is in fairly good health, they might benefit from screening for lung cancer with a yearly low-dose CT scan (LDCT). Talk to a health care provider to learn more about the possible benefits, limits, and risks of lung cancer screening.

Signs & Symptoms

Most lung cancers do not cause symptoms until they have spread outside the lungs. Some common signs and symptoms of lung cancer include:

- A cough that does not go away or gets worse
- Chest pain that is often worse with deep breathing, coughing, or laughing
- Coughing up blood or rust-colored spit or phlegm
- Hoarseness
- Loss of appetite
- Losing weight without trying
- Wheezing or shortness of breath
- Feeling tired or weak
- Infections such as bronchitis and pneumonia that don't go away or keep coming back



You can get more information about lung cancer by scanning the QR code above, which links to an informative HealthClips video. HealthClips also has many additional videos and resources about lung cancer and other types of illness.

Source: [American Cancer Society](https://www.cancer.org)

MEETING YOUR MEDICAL TEAM: THE ABCs OF APPs

The medical world is rife with abbreviations and advanced terminology; it's not just doctors and nurses and hospitalists! It definitely can be confusing to try and navigate the healthcare system without a solid understanding of what's what and who's who.



You might assume that "going to the doctor" means just that, but there are other important health care professionals that also play a valuable role in the system, like APPs such as, PAs, NPs, APRNs, CRNAs, and CNMs, to name just a sampling of the alphabet you may run into while receiving medical care.

What is an APP?

APP stands for Advanced Practice Provider. An APP is a health care professional who undergoes specialized education, training, and certification to provide services like medical diagnosis and treatment. Physician assistants (PAs), advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs), nurse practitioners (NPs), clinical nurse specialists (CNSs), certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs), and certified nurse midwives (CNMs) are some common titles in the medical field that fall under the APP umbrella.

In many cases and clinical settings, APPs are the primary health care providers (which means you may see and interact with your APP more often than you see a typical "doctor").

UPMC's *Health Beat* explains below how each of these APPs add value to the healthcare system, including the basics of their training and what they do.

Physician assistants (PAs) - As one of the fastest growing medical professions in the U.S., PAs can diagnose illnesses, develop and manage treatment plans, prescribe medication, and act as a patient's primary care provider. During their education, including undergraduate and graduate studies, PAs undergo intense training, including 2,000 hours of clinical rotations in different areas of medicine. With their exposure to the various medical and surgical specialties and practice types, PAs are a well-rounded group of health care professionals.

Advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) - An APRN is an advanced practice registered nurse with at least a graduate-level nursing education. APRNs can work as one of the following four career specialties: nurse practitioner (NP), clinical nurse specialist (CNS), certified registered nurse anesthetist (CRNA), or certified nurse midwife (CNM).

Nurse practitioners (NPs) - NPs are registered nurses who prescribe medication, diagnose and treat minor illnesses and injuries, and provide comprehensive health care across the lifespan with an emphasis on prevention. NPs must currently hold at least a graduate-level nursing education but in 2025 will be required to earn a doctorate.

Clinical nurse specialists (CNSs) - CNSs are registered nurses with clinical specialty expertise for a population. CNSs practice in three spheres of impact: direct patient care, nurse/nursing practice, and at the organization/systems level.

Certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs) - CRNAs are registered nurses who receive special training and certification to administer anesthesia to patients for a surgical procedure. Prior to surgery, they evaluate patients to determine which type and amount of anesthesia they need. They work alongside anesthesiologists during a procedure to help monitor a patient's vital signs. They also monitor patients after surgery.

Certified nurse midwives (CNMs) - CNMs are registered nurses with special training and certification catered towards women's health. Like an OB-GYN doctor, CNMs provide a variety of health care services to women, like family planning, gynecological exams, and prenatal care. Their primary role is to help deliver babies safely and naturally, and they work alongside physicians during cesarean section births.

Sources: [UPMC Health Beat](https://www.healthbeat.upmc.com), [NursingWorld.org](https://www.nursingworld.org), [NIH](https://www.nih.gov)

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

NECA/IBEW Family Medical Care Plan
410 Chickamauga Avenue, Suite 301
Rossville, GA 30741

PPO - Anthem 1-800-810-BLUE (Provider locator services) www.anthem.com

Rx Drugs - SavRx 1-866-233-4239 www.savrx.com

Teladoc Health 1-800-TELADOC www.teladoc.com (if applicable)

Dental - MetLife 1-800-942-0854 www.metlife.com (if applicable)

Vision - VSP 1-800-877-7195 www.vsp.com (if applicable)

1-877-937-9602 www.nifmcp.com