



Supporting a Loved One

Understanding the Journey and Seeking Professional Help

Being Supportive

Watching someone you care about suffer is difficult. If the person has a physical injury, it is easier to see where the pain is and to try and help them recover and heal. When our heart is hurting, we cannot visibly see the wound, the scars, or when something causes the pain to surface. This is when it is really important to be a caring and supportive person to your loved one.

- Give them time and space to express their emotions without judgment
- Don't overwhelm them with too much information or advice or ask them too many questions
- Do not try to "fix" them
- Focus on what you have, rather than what is missing in your life (Chardi Kala)
- Respect their privacy and confidentiality
- Encourage the person to speak with a mental health professional to get additional support

Just as some wounds may need stitches rather than a bandage, mental health support can range from a caring listener, counseling services, medication, to hospitalization.

Why is Seeking Professional Help Important?

Mental health professionals are **highly trained** and respected for their education and skills. A **therapist** is a person whose job it is to create a **safe, trusting environment** in which the person seeking help can share their experiences and learn more coping skills. While a good friend or family member can be a support for a loved one, it is best to seek the help of a professional when their mental health is not improving. When we **avoid** or **delay** addressing mental health concerns, it can lead to **more symptoms**, physical health issues, suicide attempts, or even death.



What are the Different Types of Mental Health Professionals?

Mental health **therapists** have different education and training backgrounds. A **counselor** or **clinical social worker** has a master's degree, is licensed, and has specific training to conduct therapy. A **psychologist** has a doctorate and has both the counseling and research background within the field of psychology. A psychiatrist is a medical doctor who can prescribe medications for mental health issues, but they do not conduct therapy sessions.

How to Find a Counselor or Therapist

- Ask your doctor
- Check with your insurance company for behavioral health services
- Check online directories for South Asian mental health professionals
- Call 211 (United Way) to find nonprofits and local health centers that offer mental health services for free
- Ask for a counselor that speaks your preferred language and has familiarity with your culture
- Many therapists can offer tele-health services (via phone/video)
- It is important to take time and interview several therapists before choosing the one with whom you feel most comfortable

Scan Me!



If you have any symptoms, questions or concerns, consult with your healthcare provider. If you have a psychiatric or medical emergency, please contact 911 or seek immediate care. This is not medical advice and does not replace care provided to you by your physician. If you need additional support, you may contact Sikh Family Center at 866-732-7392. This educational information may be reproduced or distributed with attribution and without alteration or permission. Additional educational resources are available at saldef.org. The content of this video or document was developed by the Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund (SALDEF) in partnership with the Sikh Healing Collective (SHC). This project was funded through a grant from The Asian American Foundation (TAAF). Learn more at: saldef.org.

