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## Going to a Psychologist, Psychiatrist, or Therapist

If you have a broken arm or a bad cold, you go to the doctor for help and to feel better, right? Well, sometimes kids and adults have problems that can't be seen as easily as a broken bone or a runny nose.

When people have troubles with their emotions, their feelings, or the way they act, sometimes they see a **psychologist** (say: suh-**kah**-loh-jist), **psychiatrist** (say: suh-**kya**-uh-trist), or **therapist**. These are people who have gone to school for special training in the way people think and feel and know how to help people feel better.

The ones that see kids know a lot about kid stuff, like how kids think, how they grow up, and how they see the world. They are all experts who specialize in helping kids solve problems and deal with tough situations. They do their work mainly by talking with kids and helping them figure out what is causing the problems at school or at home. A therapist can help kids figure stuff out so they can feel better.

### Why Would a Kid Get This Kind of Help?

There are many reasons to see a therapist, psychologist, or psychiatrist, but the biggest reason is so that you can start feeling better. Maybe you're having trouble getting along with your classmates, your brothers or sisters, or your mom or dad. Or maybe you're having problems learning or paying attention in class, or your homework and your grades aren't as good as your mom or dad think they could be.

Other reasons to go see a therapist could be that you're very shy and have trouble making friends or that you feel sad, afraid, or anxious a lot. If your parents get divorced, or if someone who is close to you dies, seeing a therapist is a great way to talk about your feelings.

Sometimes kids can be the victims of abuse, and some kids your age can even have problems eating. These are all types of problems that can often get better if you get care from a psychologist, therapist, or psychiatrist.

### What Happens There?

During an appointment, you won't be examined on a table like you are at a typical doctor visit. You'll sit in a comfortable chair and just talk, play games, or sometimes draw pictures. There are no needles or shots. If you're having problems with schoolwork, the therapist may ask you to answer some questions or solve some puzzles. This can provide clues to how you think and learn.

You should always feel comfortable during these visits. That means you don't have to do anything you don't want to do or talk about anything you don't want to talk about. On your first visit, your mom or dad might come in with you. The three of you could talk together about your feelings, the problem or situation, and anything else that is bothering you. After you feel comfortable, your mom or dad can wait for you outside.