

Finding and using mental health providers for Long COVID support



LONG COVID ESSENTIALS: A series by [The Sick Times](#) & [Long COVID Justice](#)

Long COVID and the potential disability that comes with it can impact your mental health. It is common for mental health to suffer from dealing with chronic illness, stigma, and isolation – especially as there is little acknowledgment of the disease or prevention of it in the ongoing pandemic. A SARS-CoV-2 infection could also trigger symptoms by increasing the levels of [inflammation in the brain](#), leading to depression and other mental health concerns.

For Long COVID support, therapists who have experience [with chronic illness](#) and [disability](#) are often a good fit. A good therapist will treat your mental health concerns and will not dismiss your symptoms as psychological, since Long COVID is a biological disease.

* **How to find a therapist for Long COVID**

1. You can find potential options online through this [COVID-conscious therapists database](#). The database provides a listing of mental health professionals who have self-identified that they don't pathologize or shame people taking precautions against COVID-19 in the U.S., Canada, and a handful of other countries.
2. It may also help to ask other people with Long COVID for recommendations, such as in online patient groups. Many people benefit from telehealth providers since they can access the appointment from home.
3. You can find therapists on [Psychology Today](#) or local databases. Look for therapists who have experience working with chronic illness and disability (in some cases this specialty may be listed as “rehabilitation psychology” or “health psychology”). Ask if they offer sliding-scale options for therapy. If you are a college or university student, you may be automatically enrolled into a supplemental insurance plan that can help cover the cost of therapy.



4. Importantly, always check that the mental healthcare professional is a licensed practitioner. In the U.S., OpenCounselling has a [state-by-state guide](#) to help you check that someone is licensed. In other countries or regions, check for registries of mental health professionals. **Remember that you can change therapists at any time for any reason.**

* **How to tell if the therapist is a good fit**

The first session with a therapist will give you an opportunity to learn about their expertise and treatment philosophy.

You can also ask questions over email before the first session. Consider asking:

1. Do you have experience working with other clients who have Long COVID? What about other chronic illnesses or disabilities?
2. Do you take any precautions to prevent infections and reinfections? Do you mask and use HEPA filtration in the office?
3. Do you offer virtual therapy options?
4. Will you take time to learn and research about my condition to prepare?
5. What therapeutic approaches do you use? (Some forms of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) [may be traumatizing](#) for people with chronic illness because it wrongly frames you and your thoughts as the cause of illness. However, it's important to know that CBT is a large family of therapies; some CBT approaches can be helpful when used by a skilled therapist.)
6. What is the cancellation policy? (Many therapy clinics may require you to pay if you miss a session without advanced notice, even if you are feeling unwell.)



* **How a therapist can help**

After finding the right fit, you and your therapist will work together to make a realistic plan of what you want to achieve. Goals may include:

- Treating symptoms of anxiety or depression
- Adapting to cognitive symptoms that may affect concentration, memory, and thinking
- Coping with changes in self-identity and daily life
- Setting up healthy boundaries with unsupportive or invalidating people in your life
- Strategies to reduce loneliness or isolation that don't put health at risk

* **Resources:**

- [COVID-Conscious Therapist Directory](#)
- [How to find the right therapist if you have a disability](#) – *Healwise*
- [How to find a therapist who helps with Long COVID](#) – *HuffPost*
- [Support groups and mental health resources](#) – Long COVID Alliance
- [Unpacking a problematic CBT study for Long COVID](#) – *Virology Blog*

FULL SERIES OF FACTSHEETS WITH LINKED RESOURCES + MORE:
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This series was designed by people living with Long COVID and associated diseases. Each resource sheet has been reviewed by patient and medical experts. This is an informational resource, not medical advice. Publication date: 12/13/2024.