Life’s challenges can elicit strong emotions and difficult thoughts. You do not have to navigate these feelings alone. Your primary care provider can connect you with a therapist who can help.
What is Psychotherapy?

STRESSED? SAD? STRUGGLING?

Life throws challenges at all of us. Sometimes you find yourself navigating these challenges with ease, coming out feeling accomplished. Other times, the mere prospect of facing these challenges can leave you feeling anxious, stressed out, scared, or drained. Psychotherapy is the process of working with a licensed mental health professional to address your fears, concerns, stresses, and emotional difficulties. Therapy teaches you to channel distressing feelings into productive, self-supporting responses.

There are many different types of psychotherapy, ranging from short-term, problem-focused therapy lasting a few weeks to classical psychoanalysis lasting years. Therapists have different training and different styles, and it is important to find someone whose style works for you.

Just as physicians help you maintain your physical health, therapists can help you take care of your mental and emotional health, an important part of your overall wellness.

TYPES OF THERAPIES

There are many therapeutic modalities. Here are three of the most commonly practiced:

- **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy**: Helps you build awareness of how your thoughts connect with feelings. By becoming aware of your thoughts, you can change emotions, and even behavior.
  
  Good for: Anxiety, Depression, Eating Disorders, PTSD, OCD, Addiction

- **Psychodynamic Therapy**: Explore how unconsciously-held beliefs and thought patterns from early experiences affect your current behaviors and emotions.
  
  Good for: Anxiety, OCD, Phobia

- **Trauma-Based Therapy**: This therapy helps you to process traumatic memories. Includes Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing (EMDR) therapy and Exposure Therapy.
  
  Good for: PTSD, Addiction, Phobia

Therapists may use a combination of therapies. More than one type of therapy may work for you.

WHO CAN HELP ME?

A variety of mental health professionals may provide therapy, including:

- Marriage and Family Therapists (MFT)
- Mental Health Counselors (MHC)
- Social Workers (LICSW)
- Psychologists (MS, PhD)
- Psychiatrists (MD)

THERAPY CAN HELP WITH

Anxiety, depression, OCD, PTSD, phobias, substance use, relationship concerns, managing life stressors, and other mental health issues.

COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

“No one can fix my problems for me.”

- Anyone who is looking for tools to better cope with challenges in their lives can go to therapy. Just like physical therapy teaches you proper techniques for physical exercise, psychotherapy teaches you how to manage strong emotions and difficult thoughts in a self-supportive way.

“Therapy is not as effective as medication.”

- Studies have shown that cognitive therapy is as effective as medication for treating depression, and that for many, a combination of medication and therapy works better than medication alone. Plus, the effects of medications often stop once you stop taking them, while the skills you learn in therapy can last a lifetime.

HOW DO I FIND A THERAPIST?

At the University of Vermont Medical Center, we have adopted the medical home model. Your primary care provider will be happy to offer you a referral to a trained therapist to meet your mental healthcare needs.