

Mental Health for Kids and Caregivers FAQs & Resources

1) Who do I contact for mental health evaluations or therapy for my child?

- a. Community Behavioral Health: [\(888\) 545-2600](tel:8885452600)
- b. If the child is 14 or older they can call and set it up for themselves

2) Where can I get an Autism assessment or Autism services?

- a. Talk to the child's primary care doctor first (they have a lot of great resources)
- b. The Center for Autism
 - i. 215-878-3400
 - ii. info@cfa.phmc.org
- c. CHOP Fostering Help is a good resource for navigating the system while seeking autism services. They can find any history of referrals made and get them set up again, and they do a developmental screening in the meeting.

3) Can we change our child's therapist to someone closer to us?

- a. Yes, but if there's a history with the previous provider you should only do so if you feel the child's needs aren't being met
- b. Speak with the child's CUA worker first to discuss concerns
- c. There may be a gap in services if you switch because of the waiting lists for therapy, ask Community Behavioral Health or the child's insurance (the CUA worker can reach out) about keeping the previous provider during the transition

4) What do I do if my child is suicidal or self-harming?

- a. Call 988, the police and a crisis van should arrive and do an evaluation to determine the level of risk. Call CUA with an update so they can come out to assist, as some steps require legal guardianship status
- b. If it seems like there is an immediate threat to their life, the crisis team will offer the child the option to voluntarily commit to a psychiatric care
- c. If they don't agree and there is an immediate threat, they could be involuntarily committed (people may call it a 302)



- d. Alternatively, there is a children's crisis center you can go to 24/7 without an appointment, make sure CUA comes with you to avoid any issues
 - i. Philadelphia Children's Crisis Response Center
 - ii. Falls Center 2, 3300 Henry Ave Suite 3N, Philadelphia, PA 19129
 - iii. [\(877\) 203-2491](tel:877-203-2491)
- e. If the child is 14 or older they can consent themselves without bio parent approval
- f. CUA will contact the bio parent with updates and get any required releases

5) My child was put in inpatient treatment for mental health, what do I do now?

- a. In this situation if the bio parents' rights aren't terminated, they have final say in who can visit the child, what medications they are put on, and any further treatment. DHS has physical custody so they are the ones who can remove the child from the facility and back into your care. Some things are up to the facility to determine, it varies by location.
- b. Keep in communication with CUA, them and the bio parent will have the decision making power in this situation.

6) How much control do I have over what medications my child is on? What if they want to go off them?

- a. The bio parent has the power to make those decisions, but a case can be made with their doctor to suggest changes.
- b. Take note of side effects and keep a journal on any behavioral changes or physical/emotional symptoms
- c. The doctor will talk to CUA about medication changes if they think a change is appropriate. A change may need to be court ordered if the bio parent isn't in agreement and CUA doesn't have signing rights.

7) What do I do if there is an issue with their prescription?

- a. Contact CUA and/or CBH. CBH may need CUA's approval depending on the situation.

8) Are there support groups for parents?

- a. Yes, the kinship program at turning points runs a bi-weekly support group on zoom, the link is texted out the day of (every other Wednesday).
- b. Getting Off the Emotional Rollercoaster – Mental Health Partnerships
 - i. <https://www.mentalhealthpartnerships.org/programs-and-services/family-caregiver-support>

9) What if my child doesn't have insurance?

- a. DHS should ensure the child has insurance, but depending on the situation there may be a lapse or administrative slow downs in securing it. Call CUA and DHS until they set it up, and if it's not happening quickly enough escalate it to a supervisor. Keep notes on timelines and information you receive and get things in writing as much as possible.
- b. Call CBH and ask for assistance, they have a fund from the city to help

10) How do I find therapy for myself?

- a. Start by calling your insurance, they can find someone in your network.
- b. Check online for kinship parenting groups to post in, it can be a great help in between getting formal services.
- c. If you don't have insurance try some of the resources at the link below:
- d. <https://thephiladelphiacitizen.org/mental-health-services-philly/>