

# 'Clearing the mind' can lead to fresh start in new year

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Many consider therapy as something you do only if you are struggling with a major crisis — perhaps the death of a loved one or the dissolution of your marriage. And while therapy can provide prompt help, talking to a licensed medical professional also can provide long-lasting benefits.

"Mental health impacts every individual on the planet. Unfortunately, at least in our society, asking for help regarding mental health remains a stigma in many ways," said Debbie Edmunds, a master's

degree-holding licensed professional counselor supervisor and Certified Anger Resolution Therapist (CART). Edmunds is owner of H.O.P.E. Psychotherapy of Houston.

"The brain is the only organ that to date cannot be grown in a lab or transplanted, yet it is often the most neglected. When it isn't functioning in a healthy manner, our lives suffer. So having a healthy brain is paramount to mental, physical and spiritual health."

There are many reasons to consider sitting on the couch, so to speak, and airing out feelings. According to an article published by *Psychology Today*

(2014), the benefits of regularly seeing some kind of counselor or therapist range from improving the communication in your marriage to managing your stress more appropriately at work. Life's daily stressors can gradually — and suddenly — take tolls on your relationships.

"Therapy is empowering and fun when gaining insight and learning to use healthy coping strategies and self-soothing techniques," she said.

Selecting a mental health professional will depend on your needs and expectations. Nurse practitioners hold a nursing degree and are able to prescribe psychotropic



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medication; however, these professionals typically do not offer psychotherapy.

Licensed psychotherapists and counselors typically have master's degrees in clinical psychology or a variety of other fields. These professionals often do offer counseling and

psychotherapy, utilizing talk-therapy, play therapy and other forms based on their training and therapeutic orientation.

Psychologists, who hold doctoral degrees in clinical psychology or related fields, often perform psychological testing, IQ

testing, neuropsychological testing and educational testing. Some of these professionals will offer psychotherapy.

Psychiatrists, who have a medical degree, perform biopsychosocial evaluations and offer psychotropic medication management, but they rarely, if ever, provide psychotherapy.

The kind of professional you choose will depend on the severity of your symptoms or issues and what you hope to get from the experience. Are you stressed at work? Do you have problems managing anxiety or anger? Or do you feel like your symptoms may be indicative of a medical issue, like a mental disorder?

In addition, check with your insurance provider to find professionals who accept your insurance.



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