

Consultation with a psychologist?

People who encounter difficulties may have various needs for help. One type of assistance available is treatment by a psychologist.

What is a psychologist?

A psychologist is a professional with 6 to 7 years of university studies. Many psychologists have also taken even more specialised education afterwards. Only persons who have been educated and trained as psychologists may work in the profession in Norway. Psychologists have special knowledge about the emotions and reactions of human beings. Psychologists work in many fields, but one of the main areas is working with people with emotional problems.

How does a psychologist work?

A psychologist uses professionally recognised methods, based on research and accumulated knowledge, to diagnose and treat the psychological and emotional problems of children and adults. By addressing difficult topics in their sessions together, the psychologist and patient try to alleviate the discomfort that comes from painful memories, thoughts and feelings, and together they try to find better strategies which the patient can use to master his or her life situation. A psychologist can also help a family deal with or change negative behaviour patterns within the family. Psychologists do not prescribe medicine, but often consult with doctors on the possible benefit of medication.

Psychologists are not consultants for persons who want help with practical tasks such as inquiries about references for moving, new housing etc.

Confidentiality

Psychologists are bound by the law of professional secrecy. This means that anything discussed with a psychologist in his or her work will not be passed on to anyone else, neither to other members of the family, the health services, school, the social welfare office or the police, without the express consent of the person seeking help. The only exception from this is if children are abused or if a person's life is in danger.

Interpreter

It is very difficult to talk about one's feelings in another language than the native language. It may therefore be a good idea to have an interpreter present, even if the person seeking help speaks some Norwegian. The interpreter is also bound by the laws of confidentiality and will not repeat anything said during the consultations.