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## **Lower Cost and Free Psychotherapy**

By Martha Childers, EdS & Tracy Ochester, PsyD

Excessive stress is a physical and mental health hazard sometimes leading to depression and anxiety. The National Alliance on Mental Illness ([NAMI](#)) states that nearly one in four adults suffers from mental illness in any given year. However, around 60 percent are not receiving any form of mental health treatment. Counseling (psychotherapy) is effective in treating most forms of mental illness and can help people manage daily life stressors like relationship conflict, grieving, and life transitions. Stigma, accessing treatment, and cost can be impediments. Cost does not have to be a barrier.

Some behavioral healthcare services are subsidized by federal, state, and local governments. These include community mental health centers like [Johnson County Mental Health Center](#), [Wyandot Center](#), [ReDiscover](#) and [KC Care Clinic](#). The [Missouri Coalition of Community Counseling Centers](#) and [Johnson County Community College](#) websites maintain a list of community counseling centers. Other subsidized outpatient clinics include: [Tri-County Mental Health Service](#), [Truman Medical Center Behavioral Health](#), [Swope Health Center Behavioral Health](#), [Comprehensive Mental Health Services](#), and [Samuel U. Rogers Health Center](#).

Faith-based organizations, such as [Jewish Family Services of Greater Kansas City](#) and [Healing Grace Counseling Center](#), offer counseling. Many churches, like [The Church of the Resurrection](#), provide mental health support and education. Also, ministers, priests, nuns, rabbis, and religious leaders counsel or refer to other professionals. Counselors and psychologists often offer pro bono or sliding scale services. Some counseling practices have interns providing free service.

Many elementary, secondary, and schools of higher education have counselors serving students, their families, and alumni. Some colleges and universities have community counseling centers open to non-students offering services on a sliding scale. See the [Center on Family Living](#) (Friends University), [Community Counseling Center](#) (Nazarene University), [Kansas University Psychological Clinic](#), and [Community Counseling and Assessment Center](#) (University of Missouri-Kansas City).

Support and self-help groups can be invaluable. People with mood disorders can contact the [Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance](#) and [Recovery International](#). [The Pregnancy and Postpartum Resource Center](#) website lists support groups for postpartum depression. [The National Alliance on Mental Illness, Kansas City](#) educates individuals and their family and provides a wide range of support, including groups. [The Kansas City Center for Anxiety Treatment](#) (KCCAT) helps friends and family members. They recruit volunteers for research on

a [treatment for panic disorder](#). [The Kansas City Chronic Pain Support Group](#) and [Obsessive-compulsive support groups](#) are available. [ADHD support groups](#) can be found on meet-up.com.

Grieving support is available at hospices, [Solace House](#), [Compassionate Friends of Kansas City](#) (for loss of child), and [Turning Point](#) (for people with serious illnesses and their supporters). Hospice organizations, hospital chaplain's offices, places of worship, and hospitals offer resources for support groups and workshops.

[Alcoholics Anonymous](#) (AA) is supported and maintained through volunteers. For AA-approved 12-step groups, contact 816-471-7229. [Guadalupe Center's Dia Por Dia](#) serves Spanish-speakers. [Smart Recovery](#) is an alternative program to AA (contact: SRMail1@aol.com). Other addictions services include [Kansas City Indian Center Morningstar Outreach Center](#), [Renaissance West](#), and [Salvation Army Addiction Recovery](#).

People with pre-existing disabilities may be able to find subsidized or free counseling through their county department of vocational rehabilitation. [Kansas](#) and [Missouri](#) have their own websites listing contact information for various counties. [The Kansas City Regional Office](#) assesses needs for the developmentally disabled in Missouri.

Veterans may contact local [Veterans Administration](#) for [mental health](#) and [Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder](#) (PTSD) treatment. [Agencies for the homeless](#) often include mental health services as part of their mission. Victims of domestic violence can receive free individual, group, and family therapy at domestic violence shelters (hotline 816-461-HOPE). [The Metropolitan Organization to Counter Sexual Assault](#) (MOCSA) provides specialized treatment for children, adults, and victim's loved ones. Among others, a support group for male survivors of childhood sexual abuse is available (call 816-285-1338). [Sunflower House](#) serves children who have been sexually and physical abused. Children are also served at: [The Children's Place](#), [Marillac](#), [KVC Health Systems](#), [Spofford](#), [Gillis Center](#), [Crittenton Children's Center](#), [Ozanam](#), and [Niles Home for Children](#).

Cost need not be a barrier to relieving life stressors or mental illness. Treatment can reduce healthcare and social service spending by reducing the longer-term individual and social consequences. Affordable and free services are available.

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