

Dual Diagnosis Questions for Parents to Ask

There are many questions to think about as you work to support your child with a dual diagnosis. Some of them may include:

Questions for my insurance:

- Contact your insurance regarding mental health coverage.
- Find out if a referral is needed for coverage.
- Find out what the co-pay is
 - In the plan
 - Out of network



Searching for a Mental Health Provider

- Ask your doctor or other professionals you trust for recommendations.
- Keep a list of providers approved on your insurance with you.
- Ask friends who children have seen a Mental Health Provider for recommendations.

Questions to ask when deciding on a Mental Health provider

Background:

- What is your degree or certification?
- What kind of training and experience do you have?
- What is your experience in treating children with my child's disability or children with intellectual disabilities?
- What is your experience/expertise in treating the kind of problem my child is experiencing?
- What is your treatment philosophy?
- What are your core values as a practitioner?

Treatment:

- What is your approach to treatment?
- What kind of techniques or therapies do you incorporate into sessions?
- Do you give children "homework" to complete in between sessions?
- Do you usually work with the child alone or do you conduct family sessions as well?
- How much parent involvement is needed?
- How often do you check in with parents about the course of treatment?
- How do I get help after hours if there is a crisis?
- What is your policy regarding confidentiality?
- What if my child tells you something that sounds risky or dangerous or unbelievable?
- How long does a typical session last?
- How many sessions might be expected overall? Or what do you see was the course of treatment?



Psychotropic medications and Psychological testing

- What is your opinion on the use of medication in treatment?
- If you did recommend medication for my child, who would prescribe/monitor this?
- Do you administer psychological testing? (Ask about any specific tests you are interested in.) If you do not, do you know people whom you would recommend and refer me to?

Communication with Parents and other Professionals

- Will you be in contact with my child's school?
- How do you communicate with the school? Do you attend school meetings if needed?
- How do you collaborate with other professionals my child sees?
- What is your policy about sharing information?
- How can I as a parent communicate with you when I have questions or concerns? In an emergency or crisis?



Questions to ask about medications:

- What are you prescribing this medication for?
- What are the risks of this medication?
- What am I likely to see happen once my child starts it?
- How long should it take before I see a difference?
- What are the possible side effects? What do I need to watch for?
- Are there any other medications, supplements, or foods that my child should avoid while taking this medication?
- What if a dose is missed?
- What do I do if it causes problems or my child has a negative reaction to it?
- What follow-up is needed?
- If it becomes necessary to discontinue this medication, what is the procedure?

As you can see, this is a lengthy list, and it may trigger other questions and thoughts for you. Write them down and take your questions with you to your appointment, and be sure to take notes. Remember, that you know your child the best and what you see as changes and concerns are a crucial piece to helping professionals understand what your child needs are throughout their life.

Questions?

Do you have questions or need resources about dual diagnosis? You can call to speak with one of the Utah Parent Center Parent Consultants at 801-272-1051. Or email info@utahparentcenter.org.