



## FAQS: MEETING WITH A GI PSYCHOLOGIST

### WHAT IS A GI PSYCHOLOGIST?

A GI (gastrointestinal) psychologist has expertise in treating patients with GI conditions, such as Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS), Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) and Celiac disease. In contrast to general psychologists, a GI psychologist is very knowledgeable about GI symptoms and illnesses, including the medications used to treat them. Working with a GI psychologist may help improve GI symptoms, improve quality of life and decrease associated symptoms of anxiety, depression and stress. Comprehensive Gastrointestinal Health's GI clinical psychologist, **Sharon Jedel, PsyD**, has been working with patients with gastrointestinal conditions for 17 years.

### WHY SHOULD I SEE A GI PSYCHOLOGIST?

There are a number of reasons that working with a GI psychologist can be very helpful. These are described briefly below.

- 1) Brain-Gut axis:** The brain-gut axis refers to the pathways between your brain and your gut. Information is conveyed from your brain to your gut, and from your gut to your brain. How you think and feel can directly impact how your gut functioned; and what is happening in your gut can directly influence how you think and feel. Understanding the brain-gut axis is key to improving your symptoms and helping you cope more adaptively with them.
- 2) Strategies that may help GI symptoms:** Given the connection between the brain and gut, there are a number of strategies that help reduce gastrointestinal symptoms. A GI psychologist will help you develop a large tool box of behavioral strategies, which are useful for managing symptoms.
- 3) Coping with a chronic illness:** Living with a chronic illness, such as IBS or IBD, can be very difficult. These illnesses impact relationships and experiences with family, friends and co-workers. Although people in your life may be well-intentioned, they often do not understand what you are going through. In addition, you may experience medication side effects, dietary and lifestyle changes, more frequent visits to the doctor and unexpected medical bills. A GI psychologist can help you develop optimal coping strategies which can help improve your overall quality of life.
- 4) Symptoms of anxiety, distress, depression:** Studies have shown higher rates of depression, anxiety and distress among patients with a number of GI conditions, such as IBS and IBD. A GI psychologist can help you cope more effectively with these feelings, with the ultimate goal of reducing symptoms of depression, anxiety and distress.

### HOW CAN I MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITH DR. JEDEL?

Dr. Jedel sees patients in person, at the Northbrook location, as well as via telehealth. If you have been referred to Dr. Jedel, or are interested in her services, please call **224.407.4400**. Prior to setting up an initial appointment, Dr. Jedel likes to first have a 15-minute phone consultation, to ensure that you and she are a good fit as well as to answer any questions you may have.

### WILL MY HEALTH INSURANCE PAY FOR TREATMENT?

**OUR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SPECIALISTS ACCEPT MOST BLUECROSS BLUESHIELD INSURANCE PLANS.** If you have a BCBS plan, services MAY be covered. Otherwise, services will be considered out of network by your insurance. If you need assistance in helping to determine the coverage you have, please contact us and we would be happy to help you. Our staff are also available to answer questions regarding how to submit claims for reimbursement to your insurance provider. If your insurance does not cover these visits, see the self-pay fees listed below:

- Initial consultation (60 minutes): **\$250**
- Follow up appointments (50 minutes): **\$210**



## GUT-DIRECTED HYPNOTHERAPY FAQs

### HOW ARE THE BRAIN AND GASTROINTESTINAL SYMPTOMS CONNECTED?

There is a two-way superhighway between your brain and your gut called the Brain-Gut Axis. Science has shown us that a “second brain” lives in our gut that both sends signals to and takes cues from our brain in a continual “dance.” Some gastrointestinal disorders and their accompanying symptoms can cause — and/or be caused by — interruptions, agitations, and changes along the mind-gut axis. For example, particularly sudden and stressful experiences can shut down or even reverse the digestive process as our body and brain move into the “fight or flight” response. Digestive pain and discomfort themselves can trigger this stress response, generating anxiety that keeps us from engaging in activities, work, and play, adversely affecting our quality of life. Several factors — food choice, activity, disease, environment, even your thoughts and behaviors — can make a big difference in your overall health and well-being.

### HOW DOES GUT-DIRECTED HYPNOTHERAPY FIT IN?

First, hypnotherapy is not like the hypnosis seen in the movies or in entertainment. There is no “mind control.” Hypnotherapy is a collaborative process between therapist and patient. Patients are fully aware of the experience. The therapist works with the patient on progressive relaxation, guided healthy and protective imagery, and the creation of automatic behavioral responses. It is much like a guided meditation with imagery, breath work and language geared toward changing the body’s response to stimuli like stress, anxiety, fear, depression, and anything else that threatens to upset the balance of the GI tract. In short, the sessions are a “boot camp” for focused relaxation that better equip and train patients to respond to day-to-day stressors more effectively.

### CAN GUT-DIRECTED HYPNOTHERAPY REALLY HELP?

Olafur S. Palsson, PsyD, is one of the leading researchers on gut-directed hypnotherapy. His research and review of the existing literature has led to the following conclusions:

1. At least half of GI patients who have been unresponsive to standard medical therapy find relief through gut-directed hypnotherapy.
2. A treatment course of 7-12 session of hypnotherapy is sufficient to produce marked symptom improvement.
3. All of the central symptoms of IBS and other functional GI conditions — abdominal pain, constipation, diarrhea, and bloating — can be expected to improve substantially in those who respond to treatment.
4. Gut-directed hypnotherapy commonly provides broader benefits than bowel disorder symptom relief. These “positive side effects” include enhanced quality of life and reduction in other non-GI symptoms.
5. People that respond to treatment often having lasting improvements for many years after the sessions have been completed.

### HOW CAN I MAKE AN APPOINTMENT FOR GUT-DIRECTED HYPNOTHERAPY?

Comprehensive Gastrointestinal Health’s Behavioral Therapist, James E. Foster, Jr., MA-LMFT leads our gut-directed hypnotherapy program at Behavioral Health Specialists of CGH. He is a member of the American Society of Clinical Hypnosis and offers gut-directed hypnotherapy both on-site and through video telemedicine sessions. He is happy to answer any questions you have about this very effective treatment protocol. Please call 224.407.4400 or visit [www.compgihealth.com](http://www.compgihealth.com) to schedule an appointment or learn more.

### WILL MY HEALTH INSURANCE PAY FOR GUT-DIRECTED HYPNOTHERAPY?

**OUR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SPECIALISTS ACCEPT MOST BLUECROSS BLUESHIELD INSURANCE PLANS.** If you have a BCBS plan, services MAY be covered. Otherwise, services will be considered out of network by your insurance. If you need assistance in helping to determine the coverage you have, please contact us and we would be happy to help you. Our staff are also available to answer questions regarding how to submit claims for reimbursement to your insurance provider. If your insurance does not cover these visits, see the self-pay fees listed below:

- Individual gut-directed hypnotherapy sessions: **\$150**
- 8 sessions gut-directed hypnotherapy package: **\$995**