

HOW TO CHOOSE AN ATTORNEY

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In my experience working on a state ethics committee for 12 years and later on a state licensing board for 12 years, I have observed that one of the biggest mistakes made by mental health professionals is when they ask other mental health professionals for legal advice. Asking a psychotherapist for legal advice can be more costly than asking an attorney for psychotherapy. It is wise to obtain consultations with respected colleagues, who can discuss clinical and ethical aspects of cases, but mental health professionals do not practice law nor can they provide privileged attorney-client consultations. Obtain legal consultation at the **first sign** of a potential problem. If you wait until a problem has developed, it is much more difficult to limit the potential damage. There is no such thing as a stupid question or unnecessary call. When choosing an attorney for a consultation or for representation in a matter related to professional practice, choose one with appropriate education, training, and experience.

Clinical Supervisors

If you are under supervision by a licensed professional, then contact your supervisor, because your supervisor is ethically and legally liable for the services you provide. If your supervisor cannot address your situation, then he or she should obtain a legal consultation on your behalf. To locate an LPCA certified supervisor, contact the [Licensed Professional Counselors Association of Georgia](#).

Professional Legal Service Plans

Legal Service Plans are offered by most national and state professional associations (SPA). For psychologists, the [Georgia Psychological Association](#) (404-634-6272) has a Legal Services Plan for its members. For counselors, contact the [Licensed Professional Counselors Association of Georgia](#) (770-449-4547). When SPAs do not offer such plans, they are often able to recommend an attorney that is used by members of the association.

Professional Liability Insurance Companies

Particularly with respect to matters related to professional liability, contact the risk management department of your professional liability insurance company. For example, [The Trust Advocate](#) (800-477-1200) is affiliated with the American Psychological Association Insurance Trust (“the Trust”). Similarly, the [American Professional Agency](#) (800-897-0033), which insures practitioners in several mental health professions, has a similar program for its insured. Your professional liability insurance company has an interest in protecting you so that they don’t later have to defend a claim.

State Bar Associations

The [State Bar of Georgia](#) is the governing body of the legal profession in the State of Georgia, operating under the supervision of the Supreme Court of Georgia. Membership is a condition of admission to practice law in Georgia. The State Bar of Georgia has contact information for those seeking to locate an attorney.

Private Attorneys

Choose a lawyer with experience in the area about which you are seeking a consultation (e.g., administrative law, statutory laws, compliance with state and federal regulations, professional liability, representation before licensing boards). If an attorney does not reply to your initial inquiry in a timely manner, then contact someone else. Failure to return calls in a timely manner can be an early warning sign of an attorney who will not be there when really needed. The following list (in [alphabetical order](#) by last name) is not exhaustive, but simply includes local attorneys who have experience in various areas.

Disclosure of Possible Conflicts of Interests

Some of these attorneys may be my former students, colleagues, or attorneys with whom I have consulted. However, I do not have any financial relationship or supervisory authority over any of these attorneys because they are governed by the State Bar of Georgia and they have their own independent practices.

Peter Acker, J.D. 404-644-4533
Acker Berger Immigration Law, LLC
110 Mansell Circle
Roswell, Georgia 30075

Frances Cullen, J.D. 404-806-6771
Areas: License defense, criminal defense
[Frances Cullen, PC](#)
125 Clairmont Avenue – Suite 550
Decatur, GA 30030

Howard A. Gold, J.D. 404-692-6470
31 Lenox Pointe NE
Atlanta, GA 30324
<https://www.howardgoldlaw.com/Attorney/>

Melvin Goldstein 770-425-4277
Areas: License defense, criminal defense
<http://www.melvinmgoldstein.com/>
248 Roswell Street, NE
Marietta, GA 30060

Allison B. Hill, J.D., Ph.D. 404-999-2702 Ext 406
Areas: Clinical forensic psychology
3330 Cumberland Boulevard – Suite 230
Atlanta, GA 30339

Miles Hurley, J.D. 404-843-0121
Areas: Elder law
Hurley Elder Care Law
<https://hurleyelaw.com/>
2727 Paces Ferry Road
Building 1 - Suite 100
Atlanta, Georgia 30339

Nisbet (Ken) S. Kendrick, III, J.D. 770-242-0471
Areas: Arbitration and conflict resolution
[Kendrick Conflict Resolution](#)
4738 Talleybrook Drive
Kennesaw, Georgia 30152

Stanford N. ("Stan") Klinger, J.D. 404-892-1212
Areas: Personal injury, premises liability, wrongful death
<https://stanfordklinger.com/>
1745 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, NW
Atlanta, GA 30314

Donald Meck, Ph.D., J.D. 478-929-0294
Areas: Forensic testimony, licensing
[Mood Road Behavioral Health](#)
2278 Moody Road – Suite D
Warner Robins, GA 31088

Joy Thornburg Melton, J.D. 770-512-8383
Areas: Church and non-profit consulting
[Hindson & Melton LLC](#)
400 Perimeter Center Terrace - Suite 900
Atlanta, GA 30346

Robert Remar, J.D. 404-420-4631
Areas: License defense, liability defense
[Rogers and Hardin](#)
2700 International Tower
229 Peachtree Street, NE
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Bob Rubin, J.D. 404-296-5300
Areas: Criminal defense, Licensing defense
[Peters, Rubin, Sheffield, & Hodges](#)
2786 North Decatur Road, Suite 245
Decatur, GA 30033

M. Burt Satcher, III, J.D. 678-252-0360
Areas: License defense, liability defense
[Coleman | Talley](#)
3475 Lenox Road, N.E. - Suite 400
Atlanta, Georgia 30326

Matthew R. Simpson, J.D. 404-240-4221
Areas: Labor and employment law
[Fisher Phillips](#)
1075 Peachtree Street, NE
Suite 3500
Atlanta, Georgia 30309

Rush Smith, Jr., J.D. 404-954-6937
Areas: License defense, liability defense
[Hall Booth Smith, PC](#)
191 Peachtree Street NE - Suite 2900
Atlanta, GA 30303-1775

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