

MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDERS

Making the decision to seek mental health services for someone in your care can be an overwhelming step. Learning some mental health basics can help to reduce the stress and point you in the right direction.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ARE PROFESSIONALS AVAILABLE.	
1	Psychiatrist (Dr) – A psychiatrist is doctor who specializes in treating mental health illness, particularly through psychotropic medication. A psychiatrist is currently the only mental health professional who is able to prescribe medication. Psychiatrists work in hospitals as well as in some mental health clinics and occasionally in private practice. Psychiatrists offer brief talk therapy but focus primarily on medication management.
2	Psychologist (PhD/PsyD) – A psychologist has a doctoral degree in Psychology. Psychologists are trained to conduct psychological testing. This involves administering various tests to evaluate intellectual ability, cognitive strengths and weaknesses, personality characteristics and neuropsychological functioning. Some psychologists also provide individual psychotherapy to assist people with a variety of presenting problems. Psychologists work in a variety of settings including outpatient settings, hospitals, schools and more.
3	Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) – A licensed professional counselor has a master’s degree and is trained to work with individuals, couples, groups and families to treat mental, emotional, and behavioral problems and disorders. LPCs work in hospitals, residential treatment, outpatient clinics and private practice.
4	Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) – A licensed clinical social worker has a master’s degree in social work and is trained to provide psychotherapy. A LCSW places emphasis on psychosocial diagnosis, assessment and treatment and client advocacy. LCSWs can be found working in a variety of treatment settings.
5	Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist (LMFT) – Similar to LPCs and LCSWs, a licensed marriage and family therapist has a master’s degree and is trained to provide psychotherapy. LMFTs have special training in marriage and family therapy and related concerns. LMFTs work primarily with families and couples in outpatient settings.

In addition to the differences listed above, providers often have unique specialties and focus areas particular to them. Be sure to ask questions to find the provider best for you.

*Provider titles and credentials vary some from state to state