

# Learn the differences among behavioral health providers

When looking for behavioral health support, knowing the different provider types and who offers what type of care will help you understand what to expect.

Here's an overview of the specialties that help with behavioral health issues. (The job titles and licenses can vary by state.)



## Psychiatrist

- Licensed as a medical doctor who has completed psychiatric residence training and has an M.D. credential
- Able to diagnose behavioral health conditions, prescribe medication and provide therapy
- Can be a specialist in child and adolescent mental health, substance misuse and geriatric psychiatry, just to name a few



## Psychologist

- Has a doctorate degree in clinical psychology or other specialty, such as counseling or education, and a Ph.D. credential
- Evaluates your mental health using clinical interviews, psychological evaluation and diagnostic testing
- Provides individual and group therapy
- May be specially trained in specific types of behavioral therapy interventions



## Counselor, clinical social worker, clinician or therapist

- Has a master's degree and operates under a variety of job titles based on the treatment setting
- Trained to evaluate mental health and use therapeutic techniques for improved thinking, feeling and quality of life
- Clinical social workers trained in case management and advocacy services

**Providers must be licensed to be covered by insurance. Various job titles include:**

- Licensed professional counselor (LPC)
- Licensed certified professional counselor (LCPC)
- Licensed clinical alcohol & drug abuse counselor (LCADAC)
- Licensed marriage & family therapist (LMFT)
- Licensed independent social worker (LICSW)
- Licensed clinical social worker (LCSW)



### Certified peer specialist

- Has lived a personal experience with a mental health condition or substance misuse
- Not licensed or a therapist but trained and certified to mentor and guide to support recovery by providing help with setting goals and developing strength (check with us, as many certified peer specialists may not be covered under your benefits)



### Finding the right mental health professional

Your primary care provider is a good place to start when you're looking for behavioral health support. They can help you by making a referral to a mental health specialist and prescribe medication. If you're seeking help with emotions, behaviors and thinking patterns, be open and honest with your primary care provider. Discuss which type of behavioral health provider can help with what you're experiencing.



### Crisis resources

- If you're in crisis or experiencing difficult or suicidal thoughts, call the National Suicide Hotline, 24/7 at 1-800-273 TALK (8255).
- If you or a loved one is experiencing substance abuse and mental health crises, call the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) at 1-800-662-HELP (4357) or visit **samhsa.gov**.
- If you're uncomfortable talking on the phone, you can also text the National Alliance of Mental Illness (NAMI), 741-741, to connect with a free, trained crisis counselor on the crisis text line.



## Questions?

Call 1 (866) 240-9580 (TTY: 771)

Monday to Friday, 5:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. PT

Saturday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. PT



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