

MENTAL HEALTH

The mental health sector consists of organizations and professionals in both the public and private sector who provide services devoted to the improvement of people’s social, emotional, and psychological well-being in a variety of settings, including community organizations, healthcare providers, government agencies, residential and correctional facilities, schools, and private practice.



Market Growth & Trends: Job Outlook

The integration of AI in mental health: “In 2026, employees will increasingly use general-purpose AI tools for mental health support, which will create serious risks around privacy, confidentiality, and misuse.” A new title to explore related to AI is Clinical Prompt Specialist.

Employment of substance abuse, behavioral disorder, and mental health counselors is projected to grow 22 percent from 2021 to 2031, much faster than the average for all occupations.

According to the National Institute for Mental Health (NIMH), one in five U.S. adults experiences mental health symptoms each year; one in six youth aged 6-17 experience a mental health disorder each year.



Career Advisor Corner

Certifications and licenses are very important in this field to ensure ethical behavior and expertise. These certifications and licenses usually require a certain level of education, an exam, and practitioner hours.

Volunteering and/or leveraging personal experience is valued for entry-level work. Working in an administrative support or behavioral technician role can be a good start as well.

Representative Occupations

Peer Support Specialist / Youth Advocate	\$ 18-36/hour	HS Diploma
Behavioral Health Technician	\$ 21-34/hour	HS + cert.
Counselor / Case Manager	\$ 25-93/hour	BA/MA
Social Services Manager / Director	\$ 38-102/hour	BA/MA
Licensed Therapist (LMFT/LCSW)	\$ 45-66/hour	MA + license
Clinical Prompt Specialist	\$ 55-85/hour	Clinical/Engineering
Psychologist (PhD/PsyD)	\$ 58-100/hour	Ph.D. + license

Career Readiness Checklist

Is the Mental Health Field for You?

✓ Do you work well with others?

Mental health professionals typically work with physicians, nurses, social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, and other healthcare providers to offer a well-rounded plan of care for patients. You must be able to communicate well with all of these individuals and work as a team to create a treatment plan.

✓ Are you highly organized?

Attention to detail is vitally important. You will be writing numerous reports, keeping detailed notes, writing letters, passing along crucial information while maintaining client-patient confidentiality, and keeping up with numerous patients at once. Being organized isn't just an advantage – it's a necessity.

✓ Are you compassionate?

Having empathy for your clients is essential. Perhaps you won't fully understand what someone is going through, but you will likely be able to relate to feelings of sadness and loss. Compassion will allow you to listen more effectively and motivate you to help them even more.

✓ Can you reserve judgment?

Sometimes you will encounter individuals who have made bad decisions or can't seem to get on the right track. You must be able to set aside judgment of these people and instead focus on helping them as much as you can.

✓ Do you have ways to decompress?

Working in any field related to mental health can take a personal toll. You must have ways to "leave work at the office" and come home to a calm atmosphere where you can gather your thoughts and take a break from the intensity you experience during the day. Those who can't decompress will usually burn out quickly.

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<https://www.learnhowtobecome.org/>



Volunteer Opportunities

Idealist

<https://idealist.org/>

National Alliance on Mental Health

<https://nami.org/>

VounteerMatch

<https://www.idealists.org/volunteermatch>

Job Boards

Mental Health America

<https://mhanational.org/>

MentalHealthWork

<https://mentalhealthwork.com/>

PsychologyJobs

<https://psychologyjobs.com/>

Professional Associations

American Case Management Association (ACMA)

<https://acmaweb.org/>

American Counseling Association (ACA)

<https://counseling.org/>

American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMHCA)

<https://amhca.org/home>

National Association of Social Workers (NASW)

<https://socialworkers.org/>

CA Association of Marriage & Family Therapists (CAMFT)

<https://camft.org/>

CA Assn. of Licensed Professional Clinical Counselors (CALPCC)

<https://calpcc.org/>

Professional Licenses

Art Therapy Certified Supervisor (ATCS)

Board Certified Behavioral Analyst (BCBA)

Certified Alcohol & Drug Counselor (CADC-I, CADC-II, CADC-III)

Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)

Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist (LMFT)

Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor (LPCC)

Licensed Psychologist (LP)

National Certified Addiction Counselor (NCAC-1, NCAC-II)

Registered Art Therapist (ATR)

Registered Behavior Technician (RBT)

Certificates / Training Opportunities

Addiction & Mental Health

Addiction & Recovery Counseling Certificate

Chemical Dependency Studies

Human Services Drug & Alcohol Studies Certificate

Intro to Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

Mental Health & Wellness Professional

Peer Support Specialist Certificate

Victim Advocacy Certificate

