

So, you want to be a therapist? Mental Health careers and how to get them.
Presentation by Prof. Chris Ralston and Chad Berman

Types of mental health degrees (links to accredited programs)

- Bachelor of Arts or Sciences (BA)
 - Many human service jobs that do not require an advanced degree (e.g., Behavioral health technician, Social service specialist, case management)
- Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor – BA plus 1 yr. certificate program
 - [National Certification Commission for Addiction Professionals](#)
- Masters in Mental Health or Clinical Social Worker – 2-3 yrs. MA
 - [Council on Social Work Education](#)
- Masters or Ph.D. in Counseling (not Counseling Psychology) – 2-3 yrs. MA, 4-5 yrs. Ph.D.
 - [Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs \(CACREP\)](#)
- Masters or Ph.D. in Marriage and Family Therapy – 2-3 yrs. MA, 4-5 yrs. Ph.D.
 - [Commission on Accreditation of Marriage and Family Therapy Education](#)
- Masters or Ph.D. in School Psychology – 2-3 yrs. MA, 4-5 yrs. Ph.D.
 - [American Psychological Association](#) (for PhD programs); [National Association of School Psychologists](#) (for M.A./Ed.S. programs)
- Ph.D., Ed.D, or Psy.D. in Counseling Psychology – a 5-7 yrs.
 - [American Psychological Association](#)
- Ph.D. or Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology – 5-7 yrs.
 - [American Psychological Association](#)
- M.D. in Psychiatry – 8 yrs.
 - [Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education](#)

Types of mental health work

- Substance Use and Abuse, Mental Health, Career, Adjustment, Couples and Families
- School: Academic, career, personal guidance; Guidance for teachers, family; Assessment of academically-related variables
- Assessment (e.g., cognitive, achievement, ability/disability, personality, neuropsychological)
- Forensic Assessment (e.g., competency to stand trial, risk assessment)
- Student Affairs
- Psychotropic Medication Management

Populations and settings:

- Child/Adolescent, college student, adult, geriatric
- Inpatient, outpatient
- Correctional facilities, schools, hospitals, private practice, community mental health centers

Tips

- Figure out what you want to do. There's no shame in taking a couple post-grad years to decide.
- If yes, gain experience in human service. If you want a Ph.D. or Ed.D., get research experience.
- Do your research. Is the program accredited? What is the acceptance rate, and who do they accept? What training opportunities are available, and do they align with your goals for settings, populations, and types of practice? What are the programs stats (e.g. placement, financial aid)? Evaluate your academic potential, and be realistic. How much debt am I willing to take on?

Other helpful advice

- <https://www.apa.org/education/grad>
- <http://www.apa.org/gradpsych/2006/01/applicati.aspx>
- <http://www.apa.org/gradpsych/2007/11/cover-gradprograms.aspx>