SEATTLE UNIVERSITY

Counseling and Psychological Services
C A P S

Who are Mental Health Practitioners?

The various titles and qualifications required for working directly with clines or patients towards improving their mental health can be pretty confusion. Below is a table that outlines some basic similarities and differences among various professions.

Title	Minimum Education for Licensure	Special Features of Profession
Clinical Psychologist	Doctorate (Ph.D., or Psy.D.) from accredited program & 3000 hrs. of supervised experience	Rooted in a medical model of mental disorders (e.g., diagnose and treat pathology). Along with counseling and psychotherapy, may conduct psychological testing, be professor, conduct research. Not licensed to prescribe medication (except in New Mexico)
Counseling Psychologist	Ph.D. or Ed.D. from accredited program & 3000 hrs. or supervised experience, pass state board	Rooted in amelioration of career and daily life problems, but may perform same work as clinical psychologist. Less likely to work with in-patient populations.
Psychiatrist	Medical doctor with M.D. degree & 4 year Psychiatric residency, pass state board	Assesses and treats more severe mental illness and prescribes medication. May not conduct psychological testing
Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT)	Master's Degree in Marriage and Family Therapy, pass state board	Primarily treats couples and families

Licensed Independent Social Worker (LISCW) **Licensed Advanced Social Worker (LASW)**	Master's Degree, 4000 hrs. post-Master's work experience – 1000 of which are direct client contact, pass state board	Rooted in promotion of social change, working with the individual and environment, empowerment of the disenfranchised LISW may work as independent mental health clinician LASW may work in clinical setting under supervision, or in non-clinical setting such as community organization
Registered Counselor	No advanced degree required, but applicants often in process of finishing counseling or chemical dependency programs. Pay registration fee to WA State Board of Health, take 4 hours of HIV/AIDs training and pass criminal background check	
Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC)	Master's or doctoral degree in Mental Health Counseling & 3000 hrs. of supervised experience	
Therapist	Anyone may call himself 'therapist'. There is no governing body for the practice of 'therapy'.	