

CAREER QUICK FACTS: MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING



UNIVERSITY OF
GEORGIA
Career Center

Mental health counselors are licensed professionals who help individuals, groups, and families with mental health and substance use concerns on cognitive, behavioral, and emotional levels. Mental health counselors may promote healthy lifestyles and help to preserve or restore mental health by:

- Providing psychotherapy (talk therapy) to help clients understand their behaviors, emotions, and thoughts
- Identifying stressors
- Teaching healthy coping mechanisms and problem-solving techniques
- Specializing in certain types of therapy like cognitive behavioral therapy, marriage and family therapy, etc.

Important Skills/Knowledge: counseling techniques, mental health disorders and psychopathology, crisis management, verbal communication, active listening, empathy, critical analysis

Source: Healthline.com



How do I become a Mental Health Counselor?

There are many ways to become a mental health counselor. Mental health counselors are required to attain a graduate degree and state licensing, but there are multiple types of master's programs and licenses that can lead to a career in mental health counseling. Those interested in counseling should explore the types of degrees and licenses available in order to determine which is best for them. Requirements for licensure vary from state to state.

- **LCSW** – Licensed Clinical Social Worker. An LCSW holds a master's degree in social work and has completed two years of supervised clinical social work services (3,000 hours in GA)
- **LPC** – Licensed Professional Counselor. An LPC has a master's degree in counseling or a counseling-related field and has also completed the required amount of supervised counseling work. (usually 1,000 hours in 12 months)
- **LMFT** – Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. An LMFT holds a master's degree in marriage and family therapy or a related degree and has completed their required supervised therapy work.
- **NCC** – National Certified Counselor. A therapist with an NCC designation has a master's degree in counseling and is board certified on a national level.
- **PhD** – A doctorate of philosophy in psychology, with an emphasis in research. A therapist with a PhD in psychology is called a psychologist.
- **PsyD** – A doctorate in psychology, with an emphasis in clinical work. Therapists with a PsyD are also psychologists, but focus more on working with clients as opposed to conducting research.
- **MD** – Medical Doctor. Psychiatrists are medical doctors who can practice psychotherapy and can prescribe medication.

Source: mentalhealthmatch.com

Career Outlook

Projected Job Growth 2022-2032: 15-18% depending on specialty

- Average job growth for all occupations is 3%

Median Annual Salary: \$49,710- \$56,570 depending on specialty

- Median salaries represent the exact middle point of salaries for this career (half are higher, half are lower).
- This is not an expectation for your *starting* salary. You will likely start at a lower salary and may see increases as you progress through your career.

*According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (bls.gov) and US News and World Report, not including clinical and counseling psychologists at the PhD/PsyD level

The following minors and undergraduate certificates may be helpful in pursuit of this career.

Minors to Consider

*Communication Studies -
Educational Psychology - Human
Development and Family Science -
Human Services - International
Human Rights - Personal Health and
Well-Being - Social Work - Women's
Studies*

Certificates to Consider

Disability Studies - LGBTQ Studies

Courses to Consider

*ECHD 3020 Introduction to Counseling
PSYC 3100, 3230, 3250, 3260
PSYC 4220 Developmental Psychology
EPSY 3500 Psychology of Habit
HDFS & SOCI Family-Related courses
SOWK 2154, 2155, 2156, 2157S
WMST 1110, 2300, 3110, 3215, 3260,
3650*

*Want to talk to a Mental Health
Counselor?
Check out the UGA Mentor Program!*

