

A Guide to Careers in Clinical Psychology

This guide will walk you through different career options related to the field of Clinical Psychology. See the left panel for careers that require a Doctoral Degree (typically 4-6 years) and the right panel for careers that require a Masters Degree (typically 1-2 years). Some of these careers also require internships or residencies, indicated by a triangle. Stars indicate careers that have a strong foundation in empirically supported methods.

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Clinical Psychology

There are two paths for a Doctoral Degree in Clinical Psychology, the PsyD and PhD.



- ★▲ The **PhD** teaches students to "think like a scientist" when it comes to Clinical Psychology. One of the most versatile degrees, a PhD in Clinical Psych opens up doors in academia (as researchers and professors), clinical practitioners, industry, policy, and more. Excellent training in research and clinical areas.
 - ▲ The **PsyD** focuses more on clinical practice. There are career opportunities as practitioners at medical centers, residential programs, independently and more. The PsyD differs from the PhD in that the education (and often subsequent career paths) focuses more on direct work with clients than on research.
- Both** the PhD and the PsyD allow for a focus on mental health disorders, including externalizing and internalizing. Doctors of Clinical Psychology might work with children or adults, and people with a wide range of diagnoses and life experiences. These individuals often lead treatment teams composed of other professionals (many of whom work in other positions listed on this guide).

Counseling Psychology



- ▲ Counseling Psychology has historically differed from Clinical Psychology by being aimed towards less severe psychopathology (i.e., serious mental health disorders) and more towards typical daily life stressors and concerns. Today, that line is blurred. Differences exist more so in education – the focus in Counseling Psychology is more on clinical time and course work than with Clinical Psychology.

Psychiatry



- ★▲ Psychiatry requires a Medical Degree and, as with any MD, requires medical school and a residency. There is often a larger focus on medication and not as much on social, emotional, or holistic treatment methods. Sometimes psychiatrists do administer therapy, although they often do not have as extensive training in therapies as Clinical Psychologists or Counseling Psychologists.

Developmental, Social, Cognitive Psychology, and Neuroscience



- ★ Doctoral degrees in these areas are not directly related to clinical psychology, however they are related to understanding larger underlying patterns of human behavior and psychology. There are many intersections between all of these branches of psychology (e.g., clinical psychologists with a developmental focus), but these degrees do not all have the same focus on psychopathology as other careers listed here. Many careers in these fields exist within academia or industry.

Social Work

Social work requires either a Masters degree or a Doctorate. There are many careers within this field, including: Social Caseworkers, Medical Social Workers, School Social Workers, Clinical Social Workers, Community Organization, Social Policy and Research, and Administration and Management positions. Social workers serve a wide variety of people and may be involved in many different types of situations across a range of social and societal environments. There is also a heavy focus on advocacy and policy in social work professions.



School Psychology

- ★▲ School psychologists help kids both academically and emotionally. Often acting as a liaison between students, teachers, families, and important others, school counselors work with a variety of children to meet a variety of needs. It is often the duty of school counselors to evaluate students who may benefit from certain learning programs, including giftedness and learning disability programs, and support students' mental health.



Marriage & Family Therapy

Marriage and Family Therapists can have either Masters degrees or Doctoral degrees (including in mentioned fields). In this role, therapists work with couples and families to work through hardships. These are typically brief interventions where clients only talk to the therapist a few times and navigate through tough situations. They often use a Family Systems approach, which can be unique to this field.



Counseling

"Counseling" is the most vaguely defined word/role listed here, as counselors can fill a variety of roles and there is a wide range of education/experience required across different counseling positions. Counselors often have specialized expertise, ranging from addiction counseling and clinical mental health to school and family counseling. Typically, counselors will meet with clients on a set basis and focus on certain aspects of the client's life.



General Psychology

A Masters degree in general psychology is a great option for people who would like to continue their education in Psychology but need an extra stepping stone. It can be helpful for individuals who want something to counteract an undergrad GPA that doesn't make them as competitive as preferred for Doctoral programs or those who want more time and experience narrowing down research interests before moving on to Doctoral programs.

