A psychologist works with individuals, families, couples, and groups to help them understand and address their emotional, interpersonal, and behavioral difficulties. Psychologists use scientific evidence to help people manage situational problems, trauma, short- and long-term emotional needs, as well as chronic serious mental illnesses. Psychologists have a doctoral degree, spending an average of 6-8 years studying the science of human behavior, which includes more than 3,500 hours of supervised training. All psychologists are trained in psychological testing and assessments.

Texas has more than 5,000 psychologists whose education, certification, and clinical and research experience positively impacts the mental health of Texans every day. Psychologists:

Ψ Provide individual and group therapy with people of all ages, as well as couples and family therapy, to address common problems such as depression, anxiety, and substance abuse

Ψ Work with other healthcare providers to help patients improve their well-being

Ψ Conduct academic evaluations to help students enhance their ability to learn and apply neuropsychological services to evaluate and treat learning disabilities, developmental disabilities, cognitive problems, as well as stroke and head injuries

Ψ Provide behavioral analysis and interventions and work with performers—including athletes, actors, and musicians—to help develop concentration, reduce anxiety, and enhance performance

Ψ Consult with and provide expert testimony in a variety of high-stakes court proceedings (e.g., child custody, criminal responsibility, or mental competency), facilitate hiring of law enforcement personnel, and help people understand their strengths and weaknesses in order to make better life decisions

What are the differences between mental health professionals?

Psychiatrists are licensed medical doctors who have completed advanced training in diagnosing and treating patients with psychiatric disorders. They can diagnose mental health conditions, prescribe and monitor medications, and provide therapy. Psychiatrists often work in multi-disciplinary teams, which can include psychologists as well as other mental health professionals.

Licensed clinical social workers (LCSW) have a master’s degree in social work, which trains them to evaluate a person’s mental health and use therapeutic techniques. They are also trained in case management and advocacy services.

Licensed professional counselors (LPC) must have a master’s degree in counseling or psychology to evaluate a person’s mental health and use therapeutic techniques.

Licensed marriage and family therapists (LMFT) generally work with couples or family members to address behaviors of the clients involved and how those behaviors may impact the family unit. LMFTs have a master’s degree in marriage and family therapy.