The mental health sector consists of organizations and professionals in both the public and private sector who provide services devoted to the improvement of people’s social, emotional, and psychological well-being in a variety of settings, including community organizations, healthcare providers, government agencies, residential and correctional facilities, schools, and private practice.

"Working in the mental health field is a great way to find meaningful work and a supportive work culture with colleagues that share your vision of helping other."

**Representative Occupations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Hourly Rate</th>
<th>Education/Qualification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peer Support Specialist</td>
<td>$18-28/hour</td>
<td>HS Diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crisis Line Counselor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Advocate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health Technician</td>
<td>$20-29/hour</td>
<td>HS + cert.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselors</td>
<td>$19-51/hour</td>
<td>BA/MA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Managers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Services Manager</td>
<td>$32-57/hour</td>
<td>BA/MA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Services Director</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensed Therapist</td>
<td>$50-125/hour</td>
<td>MA + license</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(LMFT, LCSW, LPCC)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical Psychologist</td>
<td>$54-100/hour</td>
<td>Ph.D. + license</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling Psychologist</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Market Growth & Trends: Job Outlook**

Employment of substance abuse, behavioral disorder, and mental health counselors is projected to grow 22 percent from 2021 to 2031, much faster than the average for all occupations.

According to the National Institute for Mental Health (NIMH), one in five U.S. adults experiences mental health symptoms each year; one in six youth aged 6–17 experience a mental health disorder each year.

**Career Advisor Corner**

Certifications and licenses are very important in this field to ensure ethical behavior and expertise. These certifications and licenses usually require a certain level of education, an exam, and practitioner hours.

Volunteering and/or leveraging personal experience is valued for entry-level work. Working in an administrative support or behavioral technician role can be a good start as well.
Is the Mental Health Field for You?

✓ Do you work well with others?
Mental health professionals typically work with physicians, nurses, social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, and other healthcare providers to offer a well-rounded plan of care for patients. You must be able to communicate well with all of these individuals and work as a team to create a treatment plan.

✓ Are you highly organized?
Attention to detail is vitally important. You will be writing numerous reports, keeping detailed notes, writing letters, passing along crucial information while maintaining client-patient confidentiality, and keeping up with numerous patients at once. Being organized isn’t just an advantage – it’s a necessity.

✓ Are you compassionate?
Having empathy for your clients is essential. Perhaps you won’t fully understand what someone is going through, but you will likely be able to relate to feelings of sadness and loss. Compassion will allow you to listen more effectively and motivate you to help them even more.

✓ Can you reserve judgment?
Sometimes you will encounter individuals who have made bad decisions or can’t seem to get on the right track. You must be able to set aside judgment of these people and instead focus on helping them as much as you can.

✓ Do you have ways to decompress?
Working in any field related to mental health can take a personal toll. You must have ways to “leave work at the office” and come home to a calm atmosphere where you can gather your thoughts and take a break from the intensity you experience during the day. Those who can’t decompress will usually burn out quickly.

Career Readiness Checklist

Volunteer Opportunities

Idealist
https://idealist.org/
National Alliance on Mental Health
https://nami.org/
VolunteerMatch
https://volunteermatch.org/

Job Boards

Mental Health America
https://mhanational.org/
MentalHealthWork
https://mentalhealthwork.com/
PsychologyJobs
https://psychologyjobs.com/

Professional Associations

American Case Management Association (ACMA)
https://acmaweb.org/
American Counseling Association (ACA)
https://counseling.org/
American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMHCA)
https://amhca.org/
National Association of Social Workers (NASW)
https://socialworkers.org/
CA Association of Marriage & Family Therapists (CAMFT)
https://camft.org/
CA Assn. of Licensed Professional Clinical Counselors (CALPCC)
https://calpcc.org/

Professional Licenses

Art Therapy Certified Supervisor (ATCS)
Board Certified Behavioral Analyst (BCBA)
Certified Alcohol & Drug Counselor (CADC-I, CADC-II, CADC-III)
Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)
Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist (LMFT)
Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor (LPCC)
Licensed Psychologist (LP)
National Certified Addiction Counselor (NCAC-1, NCAC-II)
Registered Art Therapist (ATR)
Registered Behavior Technician (RBT)

Certificates / Training Opportunities

Addiction & Mental Health
Addiction & Recovery Counseling Certificate
Chemical Dependency Studies
Human Services Drug & Alcohol Studies Certificate
Intro to Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
Mental Health & Wellness Professional
Peer Support Specialist Certificate
Victim Advocacy Certificate