



Australian Government

Department of Health
and Aged Care

FACT SHEET

BUSTING MYTHS ABOUT CAREERS IN MENTAL HEALTH



Are you curious about pursuing a career in mental health, but want to make sure it's the right fit for you?

A career in mental health is not just for psychiatrists or psychologists although they play an important role in the sector.

In fact, many roles within the mental health sector are suited to people from all types of backgrounds. There is growing demand for social workers, mental health nurses, counsellors, occupational therapists, lived experience (peer) workers, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health workers. For all these roles, working in mental health can be an incredibly rewarding career choice.

Let's explore further!

Things you may not know about a career in mental health:



1 MYTH: You need to be 'superhuman' to work in mental health

Reality: Think you need to have superhero-like skills to work in mental health? The reality is that when it comes to caring for people struggling with mental ill-health, there is demand for people from all walks of life with various skillsets and training. So, whether you're a compassionate listener or creative problem solver, there may be role for you in the mental health sector.

2 MYTH: You need a university degree to work in mental health

Reality: Some mental health professions require university degrees, such as psychiatry, psychology or social work. However, you can start your career in the field through several other study pathways like TAFE, paid training, or volunteering. Examples include mental health support workers or lived experience (peer) workers for which a Certificate II/IV might be an appropriate qualification.

3 MYTH: Mental health jobs are only about counselling and 'talk therapies'

Reality: Therapy and counselling are important aspects of mental health care, but a variety of other roles play a critical role in supporting patients. For example, mental health nurses and occupational therapists work closely with patients in different ways to help them rehabilitate, cope with everyday tasks and improve their overall wellbeing.

4 MYTH: Mental health jobs are just emotionally draining and not rewarding

Reality: Working in mental health can be challenging at times, but the benefits of working in this field make it overall a very positive and rewarding experience. Helping people to overcome mental health struggles or simply be there to support someone through a difficult time in their life can be very rewarding.

5 MYTH: Mental health is a limiting career path

Reality: The mental health workforce is a growing and dynamic industry with many opportunities for personal and professional growth. Even within the same occupation, different professionals can have different skill sets, specialities and styles. For example, one psychologist may specialise in drug and alcohol addictions, and another may specialise in eating disorders.

When it comes to considering a career in mental health, the opportunities are broad and diverse and you can make a big difference in someone's life.

Are you ready to make a difference? Take the next step and visit health.gov.au/mental-health-careers or scan the QR code to learn more about pursuing a career in mental health today!



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