



Australian Government

Department of Health
and Aged Care

FACT SHEET

EDUCATION AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS FOR MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS



Mental health professionals all have different skill sets to provide diverse types of support to people with mental ill-health. Some have undergone years of study and training, others have lived experience of mental health, including caring for someone with mental ill-health.

Depending on their area of expertise, mental health professionals offer various forms of care including:

- diagnosing mental health conditions
- treating mental ill-health using different types of care including psychotherapy and counselling
- prescribing medications to patients
- organising care for people who have complex mental health needs
- providing mental health education.

While some careers in the sector require a degree, not all of them do.

Mental health professions are generally sorted into 4 categories:



Medical professionals



Medical professionals have specialised medical training.

Examples of these professions include:

- General Practitioners (GPs)
- psychiatrists
- other medically trained specialists such as geriatricians and paediatricians who work in mental health.

Vocationally qualified professionals



Vocationally qualified mental health professionals are typically not clinically trained and do not have a university qualification.

They usually have a TAFE qualification up to Advanced Diploma level in mental health or a related area. It includes:

- enrolled nurses
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health workers
- counsellors.

Tertiary qualified professionals



This includes university trained (or equivalent) professionals, with a Bachelor degree in a discipline related to mental health care.

It includes:

- psychologists
- nurse practitioners
- registered nurses
- social workers
- occupational therapists.

Lived experience (peer) worker



Lived experience (peer) workers usually have lived experience as mental health service consumers or mental health carers.

A broad, inclusive approach to this category recognises that peer workers currently have a range of qualifications, including formal or informal training. Lived experience (peer) workers include:

- consumer peer workers
- carer peer workers
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health peer workers.

FOR CASE STUDIES please see **Exploring Career Paths in Mental Health** fact sheet.

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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