

# Differences Amongst Mental Health Professionals

## PSYCHIATRISTS

Psychiatrists have an MD degree (Doctor of Medicine) or DO (Doctor of Osteopathy). They attend medical school (4 years) and do specialty training in psychiatry (3 years for adult psychiatry and 2 more years for child/adolescent specialty). Look for a board-certified psychiatrist, this means they have passed specialized exams to show a specialty in this area.

- They have chosen to specialize in the branch of medicine focused on mental health. A psychiatrist treats patients by prescribing medication (if needed) and can do psychotherapy (talk treatment) as well.

## PSYCHOLOGISTS

Psychologists have one of the following degrees: PhD (Doctor of Philosophy), PsyD (Doctor of Psychology), or EdD (Doctor of Education). They attend graduate school (4 to 6 years) and do at least 2 to 3 additional years in specialized training. Look for a licensed psychologist who has passed national and state tests in the area.

- A psychologist is qualified to administer and interpret neuropsychological or psychological tests and assessments that can help diagnose conditions. They treat patients through psychotherapy (by talking with them) but they do not prescribe medication. They may use individual, group or family therapy.

## INTERNS, RESIDENTS AND FELLOWS

Provide services under the supervision of a Licensed Professional.

## SOCIAL WORKERS

Social Workers have the following degree: MSW. They go to graduate school for two years. They treat patients with psychotherapy (by talking with them) and can provide individual, family- and group therapy. They may also provide case management and coordination of resources.

- To obtain Licensure (LCSW), they must complete a certain amount of additional supervised clinical hours, and receive a passing score on a national and state licensing examination.

## MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPIST

Marriage and Family Therapist have the following degrees: MFT or MA. They go to graduate school for two years. They treat patients with psychotherapy (by talking with them) and can provide individual, group, and family therapy.

- To obtain Licensure (LMFT), they must complete a certain amount of additional supervised clinical hours, and receive a passing score on a state licensing examination.

*When referring children and adolescent patients, ensure the professional has specific training and experience in seeing children and adolescents. Licensure is an added assurance of minimal standards of training.*