

## What Is a Psychiatrist?

A psychiatrist is a physician who specializes in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of mental, addictive, and emotional disorders, such as the following:

- Anxiety
- Depression or Manic-Depressive/Bipolar
- Developmental disabilities
- Psychosis
- Substance abuse
- Sexual dysfunction

Psychiatrists are trained in the medical, psychological, and social components of mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders. They order diagnostic tests, prescribe medications, practice psychotherapy, and help patients and their families cope with stress and crises. Psychiatrists often consult with primary care physicians and psychotherapists, such as psychologists and social workers.

## Educational requirements

A psychiatrist must have an M.D. or D.O. degree from an accredited school of medicine or osteopathy (or international equivalent) and must complete at least 4 years of accredited residency training, including a minimum of 3 years in psychiatry.

## Examination requirements

Psychiatrists must pass a daylong written examination that covers the basic sciences, the clinical science of psychiatry, and psychiatric subspecialties. They must also pass an oral examination that assesses clinical skills through the observation of an actual patient history and examination.

## Board certification

After completing educational and examination requirements, psychiatrists may seek certification from the **American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology (ABPN)**. The ABPN is a member of the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS). Board certified psychiatrists have achieved the highest level of education and training possible in the field of psychiatry.

Psychiatrists seeking board certification must have an unrestricted license to practice medicine in the United States, must maintain a high standard of personal and professional conduct, and must meet standards set by the ABPN. They also must pass both a written and oral exam administered by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology.

Psychiatrists must be re-certified every 10 years.

Subspecialty board certification requires additional training. Board-certifiable subspecialties include **child and adolescent psychiatry** and **geriatric psychiatry**.

Additional areas of interest that psychiatrists may pursue include the following:

Addiction psychiatry, Clinical neurophysiology, Forensic psychiatry, Neurodevelopment delays, Pain management