

What is a Psychotherapist?

A psychotherapist interacts with patients to initiate change in the patient's thoughts, feelings, and behavior through adaptation. Psychotherapists provide treatment in individual and group settings. A licensed psychotherapist obtains a master's degree or doctorate in a chosen mental health field, undergoes a supervised clinical residency, and is licensed, certified, or registered by a government or psychological agency to which they are accountable.

Licensed professionals who practice psychotherapy include the following:

- Psychiatrists (M.D. or D.O.)
- Registered psychiatric nurses
- Clinical social workers (MSW, LCSW)
- Licensed professional counselors (LPC)
- Marriage therapists
- Family therapists
- Clinical psychologists (PhD, PsyD)

Drug and alcohol counselors, ordained priests, ministers, and rabbis may practice psychotherapy without a license. In some states, a person with a master's degree in education or psychology may also practice psychotherapy without a license.

Types of Psychotherapy

Psychotherapists use the following techniques to treat various psychological conditions and situations:

- Behavioral therapy (e.g., cognitive behavioral therapy, motivational enhancement therapy, controlled exposure with response prevention)
- Biofeedback
- Interactive group therapy (e.g., family therapy)
- Meditation
- Relaxation training
- Self-help groups
- Psychodynamic therapy