

# What Do All Of These Letters Mean???



What are the post nominal letters or initials?

Training: what kind of training does this title require?

Medication: can this person prescribe medication?

Therapy: can this person provide therapy?

## Licensed Professional Counselors

LPC, MFT

-LPC: Licensed Professional Counselor  
-MFT: Marriage & Family Therapist

Qualifying Master's or Doctoral Degree in Professional Counseling, completion of 3,000 hours post degree, passing certification exams

\*some variations on a state by state basis

No, but they can refer you to someone who can.

Yes. Most individuals have expertise in certain types of therapy with specific populations, like family counseling, school counseling, or marriage counseling. Ask about their areas of expertise!

## Social Workers

MSW, DSW, LSW, LCSW

-MSW: Master of Social Work  
-DSW: Doctorate of Social Work  
-LSW: Licensed Social Worker  
-LCSW: Licensed Clinical Social Worker

Qualifying Master's (MSW) or Doctoral Degree (DSW) in Social Work, completion of clinically supervised 3,000 hours experience post degree (LCSW), passing certification exams (LSW, LCSW).

\*some variations on a state by state basis

No, but they can refer you to someone who can.

Yes. Most individuals have expertise in certain types of therapy with specific populations. For example, some specialize in cognitive behavioral therapy with clients experiencing depression or anxiety. Ask about their areas of expertise!

## Psychologists

Ph.D. , PsyD

-Ph.D.: Doctor of Philosophy  
-PsyD: Doctor of Psychology

Qualifying Doctoral Degree Program. Ph.D.'s complete clinical and more research work. PsyD's focus more on clinical training. Completion of clinical hours required, typically 2,000 internship and 2,000 post degree, passing of certification exams.

\*some variation on a state by state basis

No, but they can refer you to someone who can.

Yes. Generally all are trained to practice psychotherapy. Similar to LPC's and Social Workers, some individuals specialize on a type of treatment or population (for example, working with psychotic illnesses). Ask about their areas of expertise!

## Nurse Practitioner

NP, APRN, CRNP

-NP: Nurse Practitioner  
-APRN: Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner  
-CRNP: Certified Registered Nurse Practitioner

Qualifying Master's or Doctoral Program, advanced clinical training, passing of certification exams

\*some variation on state by state basis

Yes, they can prescribe medications as overseen by a physician.

\*varies state by state

Generally no, however, some subspecialties like advanced psychiatric nurses can provide psychotherapy.

## Medical Doctor

MD, DO

-MD: Doctor of Medicine  
-DO: Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine

Qualifying Medical School completion and post school education (Medical Residency Program, generally 3 years long), potential fellowship (additional specialized training post education), passing of certification

Yes, they can prescribe medications. Some primary care doctors feel more comfortable prescribing psychiatric medications than others.

Generally no. This person can provide referrals for therapy.

## Psychiatrists

MD, DO

-MD: Doctor of Medicine  
-DO: Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine

Qualifying Medical School completion and post school education (Medical Residency Program), potential fellowship (additional specialized training post education), passing of certification

Yes. This person can prescribe medications and manage complex medication combinations.

Generally no. They may train in how to provide therapy but usually do not have the time to provide it. Therefore this person typically works closely with other mental & behavioral health providers to oversee care of patient.

# Main Professional Organizations

Click the box to follow a link!

