

Careers in Behavioral Health



What is Behavioral Health?

Behavioral health is a collective term that refers to both mental health and substance abuse. **Behavioral health** is an integrated, holistic approach that allows treatment of co-occurring, or co-existing symptoms with the goal of achieving wellness.



Welcome!

The purpose of this booklet is to introduce you to all of the exciting career opportunities that exist in the mental health and substance abuse field in the counties of California's public service departments. Our Behavioral Health departments offer an array of career choices.

Career rewards can be both personal and financial. Careers exist for various educational backgrounds, and can be **clinical** or **administrative**.

We hope the following information will help you take the next step toward a career with us in **public service**, helping those with mental health and substance abuse challenges. We have included a resource page for you to obtain more information.

We look forward to you becoming part of our workforce in the future!



Whom Do We Serve?

Children & Families

(0-16 yrs)

Youth & Transitional

Age Youth

(16-25 yrs)

Adults

(25-60 yrs)

Older Adults

(60+ yrs)

Our Behavioral Health department serves persons with mental health and/or alcohol and substance use conditions, and individuals experiencing mental health crises. Services are provided on an inpatient, outpatient and crisis basis. Clients include children experiencing serious emotional disorders, adults with severe mental illness, people experiencing psychiatric episodes and individuals with co-occurring mental health and substance use conditions.

Additionally, our department is committed to serving under-served, or inappropriately served populations: culturally or historically marginalized populations, low income populations, persons experiencing homelessness, disabled populations, and Medi-Cal recipients.

The focus of our department is to promote behavioral health throughout life to ensure a healthy start for children and to achieve wellness in adulthood and old age.



If you answer yes to any of the following questions, then a career in Behavioral Health may be for you.

Do you enjoy working directly with people to help them overcome problems?

Do you enjoy working to solve practical, real-world issues?

Would you enjoy working with clients in a doctor's office, hospital, or behavioral health clinic?

Are you a good listener?

Are you curious about people?

Are you good at picking up non-verbal communication?



How We Serve: Career Pathways

Behavioral health is a broad field with a wide range of career choices.

CLINICAL

On the clinical side, a career will involve counseling patients or clients in order to promote their optimum wellness, with an emphasis upon prevention. Working with individuals and/or groups of all ages, health professionals in this field help our populations deal with a variety of stresses and problems.

Peer Support Specialist: This position is for a person with significant lived experience who works to assist individuals with behavioral health challenges. Because of their life experience, such persons have expertise that cannot be replicated.

Psychiatric Technician: This position helps mentally or emotionally challenged patients cope with everyday life, often in clinical or group home settings.

Behavioral Health Case Manager: This position is for a mental health professional, whose responsibility is to help clients attain their recovery goals while they are receiving services. A behavioral health case manager acts on clients' behalf to make sure they receive the best services they need to recover.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PRACTITIONER/CLINICIAN

Licensed Professional Clinical Counselors (LPCC), Licensed Clinical Social Worker(LCSW), and Marriage and Family Therapists(MFT) all provide psychotherapeutic services to individuals and groups, and can diagnose emotional, mental and behavioral disorders and problems. They combine traditional psychotherapy with a practical, problem solving approach that creates a dynamic and efficient path for change and problem resolution. A LPCC requires a Master's or Doctorate Degree in Counseling or Psychotherapy. A LCSW requires a Master's in Social Work. A LMFT requires a Master's in Marriage and Family Therapy.

MENTAL HEALTH NURSE/NURSE PRACTITIONER

A **mental health nurse** specializes in mental health and cares for people of all ages with behavioral health disorders. A MHN requires either an Associate's Degree, or a Bachelor's Degree in Nursing.

A **mental health nurse practitioner** (PMHNP) is an advanced practice registered nurse trained to provide a wide range of mental health services to patients and families in a variety of settings. PMHNPs diagnose, conduct therapy, and prescribe medications for patients who have psychiatric disorders, medical organic brain disorders or substance use concerns. Mental Health Nurse Practitioners must have either a Master's or a Doctorate in advanced practice nursing with a focus on psychiatry.

Psychologist: This position is a professional specializing in diagnosing and treating people with mental health concerns. Psychologists use talk therapy as a treatment, they do not prescribe medication.

ADDITIONAL CLINICAL CAREERS:

Alcohol and Drug Counselor
Family Advocate
Parent Partner
Prevention Specialist
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor

Psychiatrist: This position is a medical doctor who specializes in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of behavioral health challenges.

ADMINISTRATIVE

For administrators, careers in our behavioral health departments mean using a variety of skill sets: mathematical, technical, or legal to help our populations get the services they need:

- Clinical Manager
- Fiscal Supervisor
- Accounting Manager
- Quality Assurance Coordinator
- HIPAA Privacy and Security Officer
- IT Manager
- Healthcare Administrator
- Compliance Officer

How You Get There: Educational Pathways

JOB POSITION	CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS	ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE
PEER SUPPORT SPECIALIST	must complete a state-mandated certification program*	
LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSE	must complete a one-year training program at a community college or technical school	
PSYCHIATRIC TECHNICIAN		requires an A.A. in Psychiatric Technology
DRUG AND ALCOHOL COUNSELOR		requires an A.A. in Counseling or Substance Abuse Counseling
MENTAL HEALTH NURSE		
MENTAL HEALTH CASE MANAGER		
LICENSED PROFESSIONAL CLINICAL COUNSELOR		
LICENSED CLINICAL SOCIAL WORKER		
MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPIST		
MENTAL HEALTH NURSE PRACTITIONER		
PSYCHOLOGIST		
PSYCHIATRIST		
COMPLIANCE OFFICER		

* peer certification program pending in California

BACHELOR'S DEGREE	MASTER'S DEGREE	DOCTORATE'S DEGREE
requires a BSN in Nursing		
requires a B.A. in Mental Health or Social Work		
	requires an M.A. in counseling or Psychotherapy	
	requires an M.A. in Social Work	
	requires an M.A. in Marriage and Family Therapy	
	must have either an M.A. or a Ph.D. in Advanced Practice Nursing with a focus on Psychiatry	
		requires either a Ph.D. or a Psy.D. With a Psy.D. one can work in a clinical or counseling setting
		requires a Medical Doctorate (M.D.)
		requires a Juris Doctorate (J.D.)

Becoming a Professional: A Plan of Action



FIND A MENTOR

Find someone in your field who is more experienced and can offer you advice and help steer your career path.

INTERN IN YOUR DESIRED FIELD OF WORK

Interning in your field is essential. You will gain work experience and also determine if this is really the right career path for you.

GET DIRECT-CARE EXPERIENCE

Get direct-care experience in a non-clinical position before earning your degree. This will give you work experience, allow you to start earning money, and make you a more desirable candidate once you complete your degree.



JOIN AN ASSOCIATION IN YOUR CHOSEN FIELD

Joining an association will allow you to befriend colleagues and gain greater expertise in your field.



PREPARE APPLICATIONS

Including references, resumes, and cover letters.



INTERVIEW FOR POSITIONS IN YOUR FIELD

Benefits of Working in Public Service

PUBLIC SERVICE IS A WAY FOR YOU TO GIVE TO YOUR COMMUNITY; HERE ARE SOME OF THE WAYS YOUR COMMUNITY CAN GIVE BACK TO YOU:

Feels Good: it feels good to help people!

Loan Forgiveness: some Behavioral Health positions qualify for loan forgiveness for school loans.

Loan Repayment: Working full time for a government agency may make you eligible for a reduced repayment program for your school loans.

Benefits: County employees enjoy excellent employee assistance programs, medical benefit and retirement plans, and paid vacation and sick leave. For additional benefits, please check your county's Human Resources web page.



Living and Working in Riverside County

With rivers, mountain peaks, deserts and fertile valleys, Riverside County offers the diversity that few locations can match. More than two million people live in Riverside County, taking advantage of affordable housing, nearby beaches, mountains, hiking and bike trails, the Wine Country near Temecula and resorts that offer a haven in the desert.

The County is working to diversify beyond the housing industry that has driven the region's economy for years. Transportation corridors — highways, airports and rail lines — support Southern California's shipping connection to Asia, a vital link for California and the rest of the nation. California's fourth-largest county population is expanding its economy, working to make Riverside County as business-friendly as possible and using health and recreations strategies to make the County a healthier place for residents.

Each year, millions visit the County to take advantage of the glorious desert winter, attend the Riverside County Fair and National Date Festival, the Balloon and Wine Festival, the Palm Springs International Film Festival, the Coachella and Stagecoach mega-concerts, the Paribas Open at the Indian Wells Tennis Center and the famous Humana Challenge Golf Tournament in La Quinta. All those, combined with rich cultural heritage and frontier history, make Riverside County a great place to live, work or visit.

Riverside University Health System — Behavioral Health provides effective and efficient community-based programs and services that partner with individuals and families who are addressing mental health and substance abuse needs. Our Public Guardian program provides essential services to those on conservatorship. All of our programs and services are delivered in settings that are friendly, accessible and sensitive to cultural and linguistic needs. These services and programs enable people to achieve and maintain their optimal level of healthy personal and social functioning.

We strive to build partnerships with individuals and families that promote a recovery-focused, person-first approach and that helps each person reach his or her fullest potential. Each year, RUHS — Behavioral Health reaches more than 50,000 people across Riverside County through our wellness, substance abuse, mental health, and prevention programs.

CONTACT

www.rcdmh.org

www.rc-hr.com/Find-A-Job/Job-Searching/County-Job-Openings



Resources

CALIFORNIA LICENSING BOARDS

California Board of Psychology
www.psychology.ca.gov

Board of Behavioral Sciences
<https://www.bbs.ca.gov>

Medical Board of California
www.mbc.ca.gov

Board of Registered Nursing
www.rn.ca.gov

Board of Vocational Nursing and Psychiatric Technicians
www.bvnpt.ca.gov/

STATE RESOURCES

California Institute for Behavioral Health Solutions
www.cibhs.org

Mental Health Services Division
www.dhcs.ca.gov

California Psychology Internship Council
www.capic.net

National Alliance for the Mentally Ill in California
www.nami.org

County Behavioral Health Directors Association
www.cbhda.org/member.info/county-job-announcements

NATIONAL RESOURCES

Mental Health America
www.mentalhealthamerica.net

The Annapolis Coalition
www.annapoliscoalition.org

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
www.samhsa.gov

LOAN REPAYMENT RESOURCES

National Health Service Corps
Nhsc.hrsa.gov/loanrepayment.gov

National Institute of Mental Health
www.nimh.nih.gov

Indian Health Services Loan Repayment Program
www.ihs.gov/loanrepayment

California State Loan Repayment Program
www.oshpd.ca.gov/HWDD/SLRP.html

“I come to work every day knowing that I have the opportunity to expand my skills, tackle new challenges and serve the community that I love. My favorite part of working in human services for Riverside County is being able to assist people who I know would not get access to care anywhere else. And, I know that we provide some of the best, most cutting-edge services in this region. As someone with lived experience, I can really see how genuine and caring the staff are, and how much they really believe in the work they’re doing.”

— Heather Sylvester, Senior Clinical Therapist



4095 County Circle Drive, Riverside, CA 92503 • (800) 706-7500

