

# Comparing Different Types of Mental Health Providers

(School Counselor vs. Therapist vs. Psychologist vs. Psychiatrist)

Role	Education & Training	Primary Responsibilities	Work Setting	Scope of Practice	Can Diagnose?	Can Prescribe Medication?
<b>High School Counselor</b>	Master's degree (M.ED. or M.A.) in School Counseling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Academic Advising</li> <li>College/Career Planning</li> <li>Mental Health Support</li> <li>Crisis Intervention</li> <li>Social-Emotional Learning</li> <li>Group Counseling</li> </ul>	Schools	Provides short-term counseling and referrals for severe mental health issues	✗ No (Can identify concerns and refer out)	✗ No
<b>Therapist</b> (Licensed Counselor, Social Worker, or Marriage & Family Therapist)	Master's degree in Counseling, Social Work (LCSW), or Marriage & Family Therapy (LMFT)	Provides therapy for mental health, relationships, trauma, and behavioral concerns	Private Practice Clinics Schools (contracted) Hospitals Community Centers	Can treat mental health conditions through therapy	✓ Yes (may vary by state and licensure)	✗ No
<b>Psychologist</b>	Doctoral degree (Ph.D. or Psy.D.) in Psychology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Psychological assessment</li> <li>Therapy</li> <li>Research</li> <li>Teaching</li> <li>Mental health treatment</li> </ul>	Clinics Hospitals Private practice Academia Research	Can diagnose and treat mental illnesses, conduct psychological testing	✓ Yes	✗ No (Except in some states w/additional training)
<b>Psychiatrist</b>	Medical degree (M.D. or D.O.) with psychiatry residency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diagnoses and treats severe mental illnesses</li> <li>Prescribes medication</li> <li>May provide therapy</li> </ul>	Hospitals Private practice Mental Health Clinics	Can prescribe medication, diagnose mental disorders, and provide medical treatment	✓ Yes	✓ Yes