



Masters-Level Therapist

- Masters in Counseling
 - Counseling Psychology
 - Mental Health Counseling
 - Community Counseling
- Masters in Social Work
- Masters in Marriage & Family Therapy

Masters of Counseling

- Counseling Psychology, Mental Health Counseling, and Community Counseling
 - Leads to becoming a masters-level licensed therapist
 - In Nebraska, the title is Licensed Mental Health Practitioner (LMHP)
 - Clients will include individuals, couples, families, and groups
 - Clients will present with a wide variety of adjustment and mental health issues
 - Can practice independently in most states (including Nebraska)
Licensed Independent Mental Health Practitioner (LIMHP) – Must work for 3 years under the supervision of a doctoral-level practitioner
 - If you are looking for programs outside of Nebraska, you may see other program titles
Look for "Meets requirements for state licensure" on their website.
 - May be housed under Psychology, Educational Psychology, or Family Science departments

Masters of Social Work

- Masters of Social Work
 - Leads to becoming a Licensed Master of Social Work (MSW)
 - Clients will include individuals, couples, families, and groups
 - Clients will present with a wide variety of adjustment and mental health issues
 - Some Social Work programs require you to have a Bachelor's degree in Social Work or take a year of prerequisites if you do not. Others programs accept non-social work majors.
 - Social Workers can practice independently in all states
- Ignore the negative (and inaccurate!) stereotypes of Social Workers. This degree leads to many great career opportunities.

Masters of Marriage and Family Therapy

- Masters of Marriage and Family Therapy
 - Leads to becoming a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT)
 - Clients will include individuals, couples, families, and groups
 - Clients will present with a wide variety of adjustment and mental health issues
 - LMFT's can practice independently in all states
 - May also see "Couples & Family Therapy" (more inclusive)
 - Usually offered through Family Science departments
 - Offered through the Child, Youth, and Family Studies (CYAF) department at UNL

Process of Becoming a Masters-Level Therapist

1. Complete Masters course work (2 years)
2. Complete Masters internship (6 months – 1 year depending on the program)
3. Graduate
4. Apply for provisional license
5. Practice for 1 year under the supervision of a fully licensed therapist
6. Apply for full license
 - End of process for LMFT and LMSW. They can practice independently at this point.
7. Practice for 3 years under a PhD-level psychologist
8. Apply for independent license
 - Only for LMHP

Which degree is best?

- Masters in Counseling
 - Counseling Psychology
 - Mental Health Counseling
 - Community Counseling
- Masters in Social Work
- Masters in Marriage & Family Therapy

- **Depends on your individual interests and career goals.**

Masters v. Doctoral-Level Therapist

MASTERS - CONS	DOCTORAL - CONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Less pay (\$30-50K)▪ May need to be supervised by doctoral-level therapist▪ May not be able to perform some tasks such as assessment or diagnosis▪ Level of autonomy varies by state	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Longest time to earn degree (5-6 years)▪ Highest competition for admission▪ More focused on research▪ Relocation (often multiple times)▪ Administrative duties▪ Assessment and diagnostic duties (versus doing therapy)

Masters v. Doctoral-Level Therapist

MASTERS - PROS	DOCTORAL - PROS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Shorter time to earn degree (2-3 years)▪ Less competitive for admission into program▪ Less-focused on research▪ More focused on practice (therapy)▪ More jobs available in the job market▪ Being allowed more and more autonomy by law	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Allows for the most autonomy in practicing independently▪ Allows for the most broad set of skills and abilities▪ Allows for the highest level of upward mobility▪ Highest pay (\$60-80K+)

What can I do with a PhD that I can't do with a Masters degree?

- Assessment/Testing/Diagnosis
- Administrator
- Faculty Member/Professor

Masters v. Doctorate Considerations

- Try to avoid viewing one as “better than” the other
 - There are pros and cons for both
 - Similar examples: Doctor v. Nurse, Teacher v. Principal, etc...
- Select the degree that is best for you based on interests, skills, abilities, commitment, and future professional goals

School Counseling & Psychology

- Masters of School Counseling
 - Leads to becoming a School Counselor (aka Guidance Counselor)
 - Provide educational and vocational guidance to students. Help resolve academic, behavioral, or personal issues that may be blocking success.
 - In many other states, you must have your teaching certificate and teach for 2 years before you can become a School Counselor
 - In Nebraska, there is a Non-Teacher Pathway (Masters in School Counseling + 12 credits of online training)
- Educational Specialist Degree (Ed.S) in School Psychology
 - Leads to becoming a licensed School Psychologist
 - Provide assistance with the learning and education process. Diagnosis and treat learning and behavior problems.

Industrial/Organizational Psychology

- Masters in I/O Psychology
 - Apply principles of psychology to human resources, business administration, management, sales, and marketing problems.
 - In-demand field
 - High salary (\$50-80K+)
 - Some programs may require some business courses as prerequisites
 - Consider a minor in Business

Other Areas of Psychology

- For most other areas of psychology, you need a PhD:
 - Behavioral, Biological, Child & Adolescent, Clinical, Cognitive, Consulting, Developmental, Educational, Environmental, Experimental, Multicultural, Neuropsychology, Neuroscience, Personality, Physiological, Psychoanalytic, Psycholinguistics, Psychopharmacology, Quantitative, Rehabilitation, Social, and Sport

Clinical v. Counseling Psychology

- Clinical Psychology
 - Assess, diagnosis, and treat people with severe mental illness, such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, major depression, PTSD, eating disorders, addiction, etc...
 - Most jobs requires a PhD
- Counseling Psychology
 - Assess and treat people with problems related to social, emotional, educational, or work-related adjustment, such as marriage problems, the death of a loved one, problems adjusting to college, problems at work, etc...
 - Requires a Masters degree
 - Individuals can pursue a PhD if they are interested in teaching or research
- The differences are blurry and overlap with some issues.

If I want a PhD, do I need a Masters first?

- No. Students who are interested in a PhD should apply directly to a PhD program.
- You can complete a Masters degree first, but it may not shorten your path to a PhD.
- Masters degrees can serve as a stepping-stone for undergraduates who are not yet competitive enough to get into a PhD program.
- Masters degrees can serve as a back-up plan for PhD-bound students.
- Most PhD programs will allow you to earn a Masters degree en route to your PhD, but it is not necessary (and they will not accept you into the PhD program if you only want a Masters degree).

Do I need to do research to get into a Masters program?

- "Scientist-Practitioner Model" Masters degrees (Yes)
 - Research-based thesis
- "Practitioner-Based" Masters degrees (No)
 - No (or very little) research
 - Replace thesis with non-research-based project or longer internship

Preparing for a Masters Degree

- High GPA
 - At least a 3.0
 - 3.5 or higher is best
- Experience
 - Volunteer work, internship, or part-time job in human services or mental health facility
- Research
 - Generally required for Counseling Psychology
 - Generally not required for Mental Health Counseling, Community Counseling, Social Work, or Marriage and Family Therapy
 - Either way, it's good resume builder and leads to letter of recommendation
- GRE
 - You may or may not have to take the GRE (1/3 of Masters programs require it)
- Three Letters of Recommendation

Non-Psychology Graduate School

- You do not have to attend graduate school in a *psychology* program.
- There are many other types of programs you could attend.

Non-Psychology Graduate Programs

- Student Affairs
- Public Health
- MBA (Masters in Business Administration)
- Communication Studies
- Youth Development
- Leadership Development
- Public Relations
- Community and Regional Planning
- Public Administration
- Legal Studies
- Genetic Counseling
- Speech-Language Pathology
- Communication Disorders
- Applied Behavior Therapy
- Child Development
- Early Childhood Education
- Gerontology
- Urban Studies
- Educational Administration
- Survey & Behavioral Statistics
- Psychiatric Nursing
