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# How long to train to become a psychologist

Finding a JobHow Long Does It Take To Become A Clinical Psychologist?By Indeed Editorial TeamJuly 23, 2021Clinical psychology is the largest field within psychology. Clinical psychologists have the opportunity to make a positive difference in the lives of their clients. If you are interested in this career, you should know what the educational requirements are and the available specialties. In this article, we look at how long it takes to become a clinical psychologist and the varieties of specializations available to a clinical psychologist.What is a clinical psychologist?A clinical psychologist is a trained mental health professional who evaluates, diagnoses and treats mental, behavioral and emotional illnesses. Clinical psychologists may have their own private practices, but they might also work in hospitals, in outpatient clinics, in schools or for government agencies. Their work involves meeting with clients and, through interviews, tests and observation, evaluating and diagnosing clients' mental health issues. They then develop a treatment plan with the client that includes ongoing assessment to measure the treatment's success.Related: Learn About Being a PsychologistHow long does it take to become a clinical psychologist?After graduating high school, it can take up to 12 or more years to become sufficiently qualified to be a clinical psychologist. The exact length of time depends on factors such as whether you study full or part time and state licensing requirements. Most of this time is spent in school, including:Four to five years earning a bachelor's degree. This degree should be in psychology or a related field, such as sociology, anthropology or some other social science.Two to four years earning a master's degree. If your bachelor's degree is in an unrelated field, you may need to complete some qualifying courses before being accepted into a master's program in psychology.Up to eight years to complete a doctorate. Those wanting a career in clinical psychology often choose one of two possible doctorates, a Ph.D. in clinical psychology, or a Psy.D., a Doctor of Psychology. Ph.D. programs tend to be focused on research, where students are paired with a mentor and learn how to design, conduct and evaluate psychological research. Psy.D. programs are usually shorter and focused more on training students to provide clinical services.One to two years of pre or post-doctoral supervised experience. In most regions, you are required to complete a certain amount of supervised experience to be licensed. This is commonly a year or two, but there may be variation depending on where you live, as state requirements can vary. Research the licensing requirements in your state.Types of clinical psychologistsOne of the rewards for the time you spend training to become a clinical psychologist is the wide range of specialty fields open to you. They include:Child psychologistSubstance abuse counselorForensic psychologistLearning disabilities specialistClinical social workerSpecial education teacherPsychotherapistNeuropsychologistFamily counselorClinical case manager1. Child psychologistA child psychologist works with both children and adolescents. There are many stresses and traumas children can go through, including divorce, death and changes in home or school. Child psychologists teach coping strategies and help their clients to work through their problems. Clinical psychologist training is particularly helpful for providing long-term therapy. As well as private practice clinics, child psychologists work in schools, juvenile detention centers and inpatient or outpatient treatment facilities.2. Substance abuse counselorSubstance abuse counselors provide support and counseling to people with alcohol, drug, gambling, eating and other addictive disorders. You may only need a master's degree in clinical psychology to practice as a substance abuse counselor, depending on your regional requirements. These professionals might counsel their clients privately or in a group setting in a treatment center, hospital, clinic or private practice. It is not uncommon for substance abuse counselors to be active in their communities with public outreach and education programs around the dangers of substance abuse.3. Forensic psychologistForensic psychologists work within the legal system in a number of ways. They help law enforcement narrow down lists of suspects, determine possible motives for crimes and evaluate whether defendants are competent to stand trial. A forensic psychologist might also be called upon to give testimony in criminal cases. Child abuse and child custody cases often use forensic psychologists to give evaluations and provide counseling.4. Learning disabilities specialistA learning disabilities specialist works with high school and older students with learning disabilities. This involves helping students with disabilities get the most out of the education experience offered by their school. Learning disabilities specialists have a good knowledge of local and national legislation and can evaluate schools to make sure they are compliant. You may be able to start as a learning disabilities specialist with only a relevant bachelor's degree. However, you will need a master's degree to advance.5. Clinical social workerA clinical social worker is a social worker who specializes in the evaluation, diagnosis, treatment and care of people with mental, behavioral or emotional disorders. Clinical social workers tend to take a holistic approach to treatment. They look not only at the mental health of the individual, but also the external factors contributing to the person's mental health. You usually need to be licensed as a clinical social worker to practice. The specific requirements may vary depending on where you live. Clinical social workers normally work in clinics, hospitals or through government assistance offices.Related: Learn About Being a Social Worker6. Special education teacherA special education teacher assists students with mental, emotional or behavioral development problems that hinder their ability to receive a quality education. This might involve adapting a school's curriculum in a way that accommodates the particular needs of students. They might also teach social skills, such as cooking, paying bills and making decisions. Special education teachers normally work in a classroom. They often interact with their students' parents before or after class to provide updates on progress and learn helpful information about the students that might influence the classroom experience.Related: Learn About Being a Special Education Teacher7. PsychotherapistPsychotherapists meet with clients who need help overcoming problems or obstacles in their lives. They meet individually with each client, building a trusted relationship so their clients feel at ease to speak openly. A psychotherapist can then ask insightful questions and offer advice and guidance that promotes productive change. Psychotherapists normally meet with clients in a clinical environment that is also conducive to relaxed conversation. Even with a clinical psychology background, you will probably need special training and licensing to practice as a psychotherapist.8. NeuropsychologistA neuropsychologist treats people who, either through injury or illness, have nervous system problems that affect the way they think, feel or behave. People who have had traumatic brain injuries, strokes or who suffer from neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's are often referred to neuropsychologists for specialized treatment. Through interviews and testing, they can help determine the precise nature of each patient's problem and develop an appropriate treatment plan. Neuropsychologists work in hospitals, research facilities and rehabilitation centers.9. Family counselorA family counselor, or family therapist, works with families who experience issues affecting their well-being and ability to function as a unit. Sometimes the family counselor is the main treatment provider while other mental health specialists work with individual family members. At other times, the family counselor is called in to help address specific issues as part of a broader treatment plan.10. Clinical case managerA clinical case manager is responsible for a number of clients, sometimes with a broad range of psychological problems, other times within a particular field, such as eating disorders. Clinical case managers maintain contact with each client, meeting with them, helping them with their problems and providing resources to further assist them.Jobs for clinical psychologistsIf you're interested in helping others and providing counseling, there are a variety of careers for you to consider. Here's a list of 10 jobs similar to a clinical psychologist position:1. Therapist2. Behavioral psychologist3. Counselor4. Psychotherapist5. School psychologist6. Child psychologist7. Marriage and family therapist8. Clinical case manager9. Mental health technician10. Neuropsychologist





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