

Mental health professional

A career in health fact sheet series

What is a mental health professional?

Mental health professionals provide clinical assistance to people with severe mental illness. A person is described as having a mental illness when their thoughts, feelings and behaviours cause them or others distress, and are not in keeping with their cultural background. Examples of mental illness include schizophrenia, depression and anxiety disorders.

What kind of professionals work in mental health?

- Mental Health Nurse
- Psychiatrist (Doctor)
- Occupational Therapist
- Psychologist
- Social Worker
- and other allied health professionals.

“I have always been fascinated by the evolution and development of humans and the way society works. Psychology allowed me to provide my passion with a profession. Working with CYMHS I am supported by my colleagues and I love the diversity of cases I am faced with on a daily basis!” Bron Hocking, Internal Psychologist, Child and Youth Mental Health Service (CYMHS)

Is this you?

- good communication skills
- able to work independently and as part of a team
- interested in people and human behaviour
- able to relate to people and make them feel valued
- can listen to, analyse and understand other people.



What do mental health professionals do?

- Support consumers, or people with a mental illness, through their illness towards recovery
- Provide interventions that promote psychological well being and emotional health, improve relationships with others and peace of mind
- Work within a multi-disciplinary team including doctors, nurses, psychologists, occupational therapists, social workers, dieticians, speech pathologists and other allied health professionals, indigenous health workers and consumer consultants
- Protect the rights of consumers
- Support carers
- Advocate and promote good mental health in the community
- Work within a wide range of specialties
- Deal with a broad cross section of the community and people from all walks of life
- Teach and educate others
- Engage in professional development and further training.

Where can you work in mental health?

Here are some examples:

Child and Youth Mental Health (CYMHS)

CYMHS provide specialised inpatient and community care to children and young people with a mental illness and provide support to their families. Conditions treated may include anxiety, depression, suicidal or self harming behaviours, eating disorders or trauma.

Forensic Mental Health

Working in Forensic mental health provides opportunities to work with consumers within secure inpatient environments, prisons and in court liaison roles.

Adult Mental Health

Adult mental health provides clinical treatment to people with a mental illness either as an inpatient or within the community. Specialty programs across Queensland Health include eating disorders, alternatives to admission, and homelessness.

Older Person's Mental Health

Working in this area requires a good knowledge of mental health and aged care to provide services within the community and in specialised inpatient units to consumers aged over 65 and their families.

Transcultural Mental Health

Queensland Health has its own Transcultural Mental Health Service that supports and enables better access and outcomes for people with mental illness from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Indigenous Mental Health

These services, often in rural and remote areas, provide opportunities for mental health clinicians to work alongside Indigenous Health Workers to provide culturally supportive services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders with mental illness.

Do great things every day

What can Queensland Health offer you?

- Mental Health Scholarships and Cadetships
- Practice Supervision
- Mental Health Induction Program
- Transition to Practice Nursing Education Program
- Study and Research Assistance Scheme (SARAS) including study leave
- Professional Development Allowance
- Diversity in career options as previously mentioned
- Mental Health specific Registered Training Organisation – Queensland Centre for Mental Health Learning (QCMHL)
- Rural Incentives.

Pathways into a mental health career

- Choose mental health electives and placements through your university course
- Investigate training as an allied health assistant in mental health
- Register for training in mental health with QCMHL
- Register for transition to mental health programs
- Apply for a mental health cadetship.

What can working in mental health offer you?

It is an exciting time to get involved with the future of mental health care in Queensland. The *Queensland Plan for Mental Health* is driving innovative changes in service delivery and attracting additional funding for new roles, new facilities and exciting new initiatives.

Working in mental health can provide you with diversity in your career with a wide range of specialties to choose from, experience in multi disciplinary team work and an excellent basis for developing skills that are consumer and recovery focused.

You can become involved in innovative clinical work such as working with homeless health outreach teams, promoting mental health within local and indigenous communities or working with at risk youth.

Queensland Health mental health staff have also been involved in various community support projects such as crisis and disaster relief programs.

Where can I find out more info?

Graduate Nurse Online Recruitment

Website: www.health.qld.gov.au/nursing/gnor

Queensland Centre for Mental Health Learning (QCMHL)

Website: www.health.qld.gov.au/qcmhl

Mental Health Branch

Website: www.health.qld.gov.au/mentalhealth

The QTAC website has a list of universities and tertiary institutions with links to universities and courses offered. Go to www.qtac.edu.au and select Institutions.

To find out more about the exciting career opportunities in Queensland Health and what we can offer you go to www.health.qld.gov.au/workforus