

Health Career Observer



The Official Newsletter of the WNY R-AHEC

October, 2025

Licensed Mental Health Counselor

Licensed Mental Health Counselors (LMHC's) help individuals, groups or families cope with mental, emotional, and behavioral challenges by developing treatment plans, facilitating therapy, and providing support for issues like addiction, depression, anxiety and relationship problems. Some work with specific populations, such as children or older adults. LMHC's can specialize in addiction counseling, career counseling, clinical mental health counseling, clinical rehabilitation counseling, marriage and couple counseling, trauma counseling, child and family counseling and grief counseling. LMHC's may work in community mental health clinics, hospitals, private practice, schools, universities, government agencies, non-profit organizations, inpatient and outpatient treatment centers and correctional facilities.

Average Annual Pay: \$69,000



"The most rewarding part of my job is seeing growth in people over time." -Ken Tangel

How Do I Become a Licensed Mental Health Counselor?

**PROJECTED JOB
GROWTH RATE IS
19% BY 2034**

To become a LMHC a master's degree with at least 600 internship hours is required or a doctoral degree in counseling by a school that is accredited. Common fields of undergraduate study include psychology, public policy and social services, and social science. After completing the degree, you'll need to complete supervised clinical experience, typically under the guidance of a licensed professional. In New York, 3,000 hours are needed. In addition, some counselors must be licensed. To become licensed take a national licensing exam such as the National Clinical Mental Health Counselor Examination (NCMHCE), or the National Counselor Examination (NCE) which are offered by the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC) and then apply to your state's licensing board.

What Does a Licensed Mental Health Counselor Do?

- ✓ Patient interaction, encouraging patients to communicate experiences and feelings.
- ✓ Conduct assessments and evaluations.
- ✓ Develop and implement treatment plans.
- ✓ Work with patients to define life goals, plan for the future and help develop coping skills.
- ✓ Document and maintain records of clients' progress & perform administrative work.
- ✓ Crisis Intervention
- ✓ Provide support and refer clients to other resources, services, professionals and support groups.
- ✓ Prepare clients for transition out of counseling through discharge planning.



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A Professional Account

Tammy Kling, LCSW and owner of Clear Skies Counseling PLLC and Ken Tangel Biblical Counselor and owner of Terebinth Counseling share their insight on the field of Mental Health Counseling

What is the most rewarding part of your job?

"The most rewarding part of my job is the times when people have success in making progress and are able to get well! It doesn't happen as often as we would like, so when it does, it is extra rewarding!" -Tammy Kling

"The most rewarding part of my job is seeing growth in people over time. My two favorite things are getting to know new people and that "lightbulb" moment when a person has a realization that will change the rest of their life." -Ken Tangel

What is the most challenging?

"In an agency setting work loads can be stressful. My thought often has been, we are in the human services field and we preach self care to our clients all the time, yet administration at agencies can make it difficult for workers in this field to practice self care. On the other hand managing a private practice has its own challenges..." -Tammy Kling

"The most challenging aspect of my job is working with people who are not able to see the changes they need to make and figuring out how to help them realize their thoughts, feelings, or behavior are negatively affecting themselves and those around them. Sometimes I need to accept that they aren't ready yet and wait and sometimes I need to be creative in my approach. Knowing which is difficult because sharing something about a person they don't see, can't see, or don't want to see can be mean if not done carefully and kindly." -Ken Tangel

What do you wish you knew back in school that you know now?

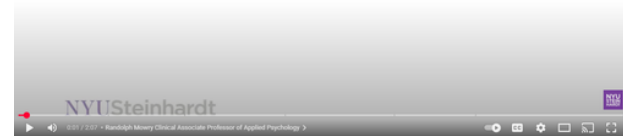
"I wish I had known that when they told us in school that we are not in this field to make money that they were telling the truth!" -Tammy Kling

"I wish I knew how little school would prepare me for the issues I would actually be dealing with and the approaches I would actually use most." -Ken Tangel

Anything else you want to share?

"I do not regret my career choice. My love of people and passion for helping outweighs the negatives!" -Tammy Kling

What is a mental health counselor?



Click on the image for information on Mental Health Counseling

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UpsQX4nxZUI>



Click on the image for a day in the life of a Mental Health Counselor

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DU1u-w2Gaxo>



For more information visit the Bureau of Labor

<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/community-and-social-service/substance-abuse-behavioral-disorder-and-mental-health-counselors.htm>

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What is Behavioral Health?



Behavioral health is a comprehensive term that incorporates mental health, substance use, eating disorders, gambling addictions, and other behaviors that can have negative consequences on physical and emotional health that affect well-being.

Behavioral Health Care Includes:

- Prevention
- Diagnosis
- Treatment

What Do Behavioral Health Professionals Do?

- Focus on helping individuals, from youth to older adults, modify harmful behaviors and develop coping strategies to improve their overall quality of life.

Where Do Behavioral Health Professionals Work?

- Hospitals
- Community Mental Health Centers
- Schools
- Private Practice
- Correctional Facilities
- Sports Settings
- Residential Treatment Facilities
- Substance Abuse Centers
- Criminal Justice System
- Government Agencies
- Non-Profit Organizations
- Nursing Homes

Increase in Demand for Behavioral Health Services in U.S.

- Employment is projected to increase by 19% between 2023-2033.
 - Due to increased awareness and destigmatization, global events, telehealth services, and workplace and school focus.

Careers in Behavioral Health

Professional Careers *Most require a 4-year college degree or more	Other Careers *May not require a college degree
• Psychiatrists • Psychologists • Substance Abuse Counselors • Licensed Mental Health Counselors (LMHC) • Marriage and Family Therapists • Social Workers	• Peer Support Specialists • Case Manager • Behavioral Health Technician • Psychiatric Technician • Care Coordinator • Crisis Specialist • Community Health Worker (CHW)

*Each of these behavioral health careers offer several specialties or focus areas that allow professionals to work with specific populations, disorders, or treatment approaches.

Profession	Years of Fulltime Schooling Needed	Average Salary
Psychiatrists	12	\$257,976
Psychiatric NP/PA	6-8	\$144,386 (NP)/\$121,542 (PA)
Psychologist	8-12	\$113,590 *With a wide salary range
Licensed Mental Health Counselors (LMHC)	6-7	Between ^64,774 and \$74,381
Substance Abuse Counselors	CSACs (0-2+) and (4+)	\$27.87/hr (CSAC)/\$70,673 (SA Counselors)
Marriage and Family Therapists	5-7	\$89,343
Social Worker (MSWs)	5-6	Between \$61,330 and \$74,000

Want to Learn More About Behavioral Health Careers and Other Careers?



Career Resource Guide

For More Information Contact: info@r-ahec.org | 585-786-6275