



# MENTAL HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

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What are the different types of mental health care providers? There is both significant overlap and important differences between the various mental health care providers. Each category has their own scope – although they all aim to help individuals, couples and families achieve their various treatment goals.

**Family physicians (MD)** can prescribe medication and generally refer their patients to a psychiatrist or psychologist. It is important to note that a referral from a family physician is not required to engage in therapy with a Psychologist, Registered Social Worker or Registered Psychotherapist.

**A psychiatrist (MD)** is a medical doctor specializing in the diagnosis and treatment of mental illness. Psychiatrists often focus on more complex issues and may hold expertise in a specific area of mental health.

**Registered Social Workers (MSW, RSW)** may take on a variety of roles including: case management, research/policy and clinical assessment/treatment. These individuals are trained to conduct assessments of an individual's functioning; including their biological, psychological, social, emotional and cultural needs. Their approach often takes into consideration the context of an individual's system (family, workplace, school) or environment (country, climate).



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**Psychologists (C. Psych)** are trained to assess and diagnose challenges in thinking, feeling and behaviour and to help individuals overcome or manage such challenges. Psychologists have completed a doctoral level degree in psychology (Ph.D., Psy.D., Ed.D., D.Psy.) which typically includes a one-year internship. Session fees typically range from \$160-\$250 and the recommended rate by the College of Psychologists of Ontario is \$225 per hour.

**A Registered Psychotherapist (RP or RP(Q))** is an individual who is trained and licensed to provide psychotherapy. These practitioners specialize in providing counselling on interpersonal, social and psychological obstacles which have come as a result of mental health challenges. Each psychotherapist will have their own approach and areas of specialization as a result of their individual experience and training. Session fees typically range from \$110-\$180 with a median of approximately \$140. Coverage under employer benefits programs is less common given that the regulatory body is a relatively new professional college. We urge employers to consider adding coverage for Psychotherapy as part of the paramedical services offered as fees are generally lower and wait lists are generally shorter than for psychologists.

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	REGULATORY BODY	DIAGNOSE	PRESCRIBE MEDS	COVERAGE	WAITLISTS
FAMILY PHYSICIAN	YES	YES	YES	PROVINCIAL PLAN	VARIABLES
PSYCHIATRIST	YES	YES	YES	PROVINCIAL PLAN	LONGER
REGISTERED SOCIAL WORKER	YES	NO	NO	MOST PLANS*	SHORTER
PSYCHOLOGIST	YES	YES	NO	MOST PLANS*	LONGER
REGISTERED PSYCHOTHERAPIST	YES	NO	NO	FEW PLANS*	SHORTER

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*\*To be considered eligible under employer benefits programs, practitioners must be licensed and registered with the regulatory body in the province/territory in which services are rendered.*

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