

COMPARISON OF LICENSED MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELORS AND LICENSED SOCIAL WORKERS IN NEW YORK STATE

Prepared by the New York Mental Health Counselors Association (NYMHCA)

REQUIREMENTS FOR LICENSURE

| MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS | FIRST LEVEL | | ADVANCED LEVEL | | |
|-------------------------------|--|--|---|---|---|
| | MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELOR WITH LIMITED PERMIT | LICENSED MASTER SOCIAL WORKER | LICENSED MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELOR | LICENSED MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELOR WITH DIAGNOSTIC PRIVILEGE | LICENSED CLINICAL SOCIAL WORKER |
| EDUCATION | 60 semester hours master's degree in Mental Health Counseling in an NYSED-approved program or equivalent. Specific content areas must include human growth and development; social and cultural foundations of counseling; counseling theory and practice; psychopathology; group dynamics; lifestyle and career development; assessment and appraisal of individuals, couples, families and groups; research and program evaluation; professional orientation and ethics; foundations of mental health counseling and consultation; and clinical instruction. | 60 semester hour master's degree in NYSED approved program or equivalent. Specific content areas must include social work values and ethics; diversity, social justice and at-risk populations; human behavior in the social environment; social welfare policy and service delivery systems; foundation and advanced social work practice; and social work practice evaluation and research. No clinical instruction is required. | See limited permit holder. No additional education is required. | See MHC-Limited Permit Holder. In addition to the content areas listed, the 60 semester hour master's degree must include at least 12 semester hours of clinical coursework including: diagnosis and assessment-based treatment planning in the practice of the mental health counseling and psychotherapy; assessment, evaluation and diagnosis using accepted classification systems in the practice of the mental health counseling; developing and implementing assessment-based treatment plans for the provision of mental health counseling; and clinical interventions with diverse populations using mental health counseling. | See LMSW. In addition to the content areas listed, the 60 semester hour master's degree must also include at least 12 semester hours in clinical coursework including: diagnosis and assessment in clinical social work practice; clinical social work treatment; and clinical social work practice with general and special populations. |
| INTERNSHIP | The degree program must include a one year defined as a minimum of a 600 clock hours - supervised internship in mental health counseling. | 900 clock hours of supervised internship in social work practice | See limited permit holder. No additional internships are required. | No additional clinical internship required beyond original master's degree | No additional clinical internship required beyond the requirements for a LMSW. |
| LIMITED PERMIT | The setting and supervisor must be approved by NYSED Office of the Professions. Permits are granted only to persons who meet all requirements but experience and examination. After June 24, 2024, the limited permit includes the authority to diagnose and develop assessment-based treatment plans in approved settings under appropriate supervision. | N/A | N/A | Limited permit for diagnostic privilege is only required for currently licensed mental health counselors after 6/24/2025 who wish to obtain the experience required for the diagnostic privilege. The limited diagnostic permit experience may only be obtained in approved settings under appropriate supervision. | N/A |
| EXPERIENCE | The limited permit is used to obtain 3,000 total supervised hours of experience. If the permit holder wants to be licensed only 1,500 hours must be direct client hours. If the permit holder wants to be licensed with the diagnostic privilege 2,000 hours must be direct client hours and they must include but not be limited to diagnosis, psychotherapy and assessment based treatment planning. | No clinical mental health experience necessary to become a LMSW. | The LMHC has completed 3,000 hours of supervised experience of which at least 1,500 are direct client contact clock hours. These hours must have occurred post graduation in an approved setting and under the supervision of either a LMHC, LCSW, licensed psychologist, psychiatrist, psychiatric nurse practitioner, or physician's assistant. | The LMHC-D must have met all the requirements of the LMHC, however, of the 3,000 hours of supervised experience (see Limited Permit Holder) 2,000 hours must be direct client contact clock hours that include but not be limited to diagnosis, psychotherapy and assessment based treatment planning. These hours may be supervised by LMHC with diagnostic privilege, LCSW, licensed psychologist, or psychiatrist. | The LMSW must complete 2,000 direct client contact hours over a minimum of 3 years. The experience must be completed in an approved setting under the appropriate supervision of either a LCSW, licensed psychologist, or psychiatrist. |
| EXAMINATION | N/A | Must pass LMSW exam - Assn. of Social Work Boards (ASWB) | Must pass LMHC exam – National Clinical Mental Health Counselor Exam (NCMHCE) | No additional examination required. | Must pass LCSW exam - Assn. of Social Work Boards (ASWB) |
| ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENT | Child Abuse Reporting Training | Child Abuse Reporting Training | No additional requirements beyond the MHC-Limited Permit Holder | No additional requirements beyond the LMHC. | No additional requirements beyond the LMSW. |



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| DEFINITION OF PRACTICE | Under the supervision of an approved supervisor: the evaluation, assessment, amelioration, treatment, modification, or adjustment to a disability, problem, or disorder of behavior, character, development, emotion, personality or relationships by the use of verbal or behavioral methods with individuals, couples, families or groups in private practice, group, or organized settings; and the use of assessment instruments and mental health counseling and psychotherapy to identify, evaluate and treat dysfunctions and disorders for purposes of providing appropriate mental health counseling services. | The LMSW may independently apply the professional application of social work theory, principles, and the methods to prevent, assess, evaluate, formulate and implement a plan of action based on client needs and strengths, and intervene to address mental, social, emotional, behavioral, developmental, and addictive disorders, conditions and disabilities, and of the psychosocial aspects of illness and injury experienced by individuals, couples, families, groups, communities, organizations, and society; engage in the administration of tests and measures of psychosocial functioning, social work advocacy, case management, counseling, consultation, research, administration and management, and teaching; provide all forms of supervision other than supervision of the practice of licensed clinical social work. The LMSW may diagnose, psychotherapy and assessment based treatment planning under supervision of a LCSW. | The LMHC may independently provide an evaluation, assessment, amelioration, treatment, modification, or adjustment to a disability, problem, or disorder of behavior, character, development, emotion, personality or relationships by the use of verbal or behavioral methods with individuals, couples, families or groups in private practice, group, or organized settings; and the use of assessment instruments and mental health counseling and psychotherapy to identify, evaluate and treat dysfunctions and disorders for purposes of providing appropriate mental health counseling services. | The scope of the LMHC-D encompasses the scope of practice of licensed mental health counselor and, in addition may diagnose defined as distinguishing, beyond a general assessment, between similar mental, emotional, behavioral, developmental, and addictive disorders, impairments, and disabilities within a psychosocial framework on the basis of their similar and unique characteristics consistent with accepted classification systems; and develop assessment based treatment plans defined as the development of an integrated plan of prioritized interventions, that is based on the diagnosis and psychosocial assessment of the client, to address mental, emotional, behavioral, developmental, and addictive disorders, impairments, and disabilities. | The scope of the LCSW encompasses the scope of practice of licensed master social work and, in addition, includes the diagnosis of mental, emotional, behavioral, addictive and developmental disorders and disabilities and of the psychosocial aspects of illness, injury, disability and impairment undertaken within a psychosocial framework; administration and interpretation of tests and measures of psychosocial functioning; development and implementation of appropriate assessment-based treatment plans; and the provision of crisis oriented psychotherapy and brief, short-term and long-term psychotherapy and psychotherapeutic treatment to individuals, couples, families and groups, habilitation, psychoanalysis and behavior therapy; all undertaken for the purpose of preventing, assessing, treating, ameliorating and resolving psychosocial dysfunction with the goal of maintaining and enhancing the mental, emotional, behavioral, and social functioning and well-being of individuals, couples, families, small groups, organizations, communities and society. |
| DIAGNOSTIC PRIVILEGE | Starting on June 24, 2024, a Limited permit holder is permitted to diagnose and develop assessment based treatment plans under supervision of an approved supervisor (LMHC with diagnostic privilege, LCSW, licensed psychologist, or psychiatrist). | The LMSW may diagnose, provide psychotherapy and develop assessment based treatment planning under the supervision of the LCSW. | Prior to 6/24/2025: Allowed under supervision of an approved supervisor (LMHC with diagnostic privilege, LCSW, licensed psychologist, or psychiatrist). After 6/24/2025: Limited permit for diagnostic privilege required and supervision by an approved supervisor. | Allowed without supervision. | Allowed without supervision |
| CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS | Consultation with a physician is required for treatment on a continuous and sustained basis for "serious mental illness." | N/A | Consultation with a physician is required for treatment on a continuous and sustained basis for "serious mental illness." | No consultation with a physician is required. | No consultation with a physician is required. |