

## *Mental Health/Cognition Provider Fact Sheet*

### What is our role as Physical Therapists in mental health?

The APTA states that “it is within the professional scope of physical therapist practice to screen for and address behavioral and mental health conditions in patients, clients, and populations. This includes appropriate consultation, referral, or co management with licensed health services providers in the prevention and management of behavioral and mental health conditions.”<sup>1</sup>

### Primary Care Physician

Primary care physicians (PCPs) are a major provider for depression and anxiety as well as a large source of prescription providers for those with severe persistent mental illness.<sup>2</sup> PCPs also report that 40.1% of their patients receiving mental health care receive only medication; 29.6% receive medication and are also referred for therapy; 17.2% are referred to a psychiatrist; and 12.8% are referred just for therapy.<sup>2</sup>

### Psychologist

Education to be a licensed psychologist can look a little different per state but usually psychologists have their PhD in psychology along with two years of supervised clinical care.<sup>3</sup> Psychologists provide psychotherapy for those struggling with anxiety, depression, substance abuse, relationship issues, family related problems, PTSD, and much more.<sup>3</sup>

### Psychiatrist

Psychiatrists are Medical Doctors who can perform full medical laboratory tests in addition to psychological tests to diagnose and treat mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders including substance use disorders.<sup>4</sup> Talk therapy, medications, and psychosocial interventions among many others are utilized by psychiatrists to treat the mental and physical aspects of each patient.<sup>4</sup>

### Neuropsychologist

Neuropsychologists are similar to psychologists but usually have extended education in neuropsych and focus more on biological factors of the brain.<sup>5</sup> Neuropsychologists may diagnose and treat the behavioral aspects of many disorders of the brain such as autism, learning and attention disorders, concussion and traumatic brain injury, epilepsy, brain cancer, stroke and dementia.<sup>5</sup>

### Neurologist

Neurologists are Medical Doctors who specialize in diagnosing and treating pathologies of the central nervous system (brain, brain stem, and spinal cord).<sup>6</sup> These pathologies include Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, Alzheimer’s Disease, Multiple Sclerosis, Spinal Cord Injury, Concussion, and many others. Neurologists and neurosurgeons perform surgery, prescribe medications, and refer to other programs to treat neurological conditions.<sup>6</sup>



## References

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- 3) Psychologists promote health and well-being throughout our nation. American Psychological Association. Accessed September 6, 2023. <https://www.apa.org/health/promote-well-being>.
- 4) What is psychiatry? Psychiatry.org - What is Psychiatry? Accessed September 2, 2023. <https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/what-is-psychiatry>.
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