

## MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELOR

**Licensing Authority** Paulette Lappe  
Board of Behavioral Science  
Iowa Department of Public Health  
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**Legal Authority** Code of Iowa, Chapter 154D; Iowa Administrative Code, Chapters 30-34

**Job Description** Mental health counselors provide counseling services involving assessment, referral, consultation, and the application of counseling, human development principles, learning theory, group dynamics, and the etiology of maladjustment and dysfunctional behavior to individuals, families, and groups. They help individuals deal with addictions and substance abuse, family, parenting, and marital problems, suicide, stress management, problems with self-esteem, problems associated with aging, and other issues of mental and emotional health. Mental health counselors work closely with other mental health professionals, including psychiatrists, psychologists, clinical social workers, psychiatric nurses and school counselors.

**Education & Experience Required** An applicant must hold a 45-hour master's degree or a doctoral degree in mental health counseling or its equivalent from an accredited college or university, have two years of supervised clinical experience, and pass the National Counselor Examination of the National Board for Certified Counselors or the Clinical Counselor Examination of the National Academy of Certified Clinical Mental Health Counselors. Licensure by interstate endorsement is available if another state's requirements are equivalent to Iowa's.

An applicant who has achieved Certified Clinical Mental Health Counselor status with the National Academy of Certified Clinical Mental Health Counselors is considered to have met the education and clinical experience requirements.

Since April 2, 1998, licensure to practice the profession of Mental Health Counseling has been mandatory. Qualified members of other professions may provide services of a mental health counseling nature consistent with the accepted standards of their respective professions, but these persons shall not use a title or description denoting that they are licensed mental health counselors without first securing licensure. The Iowa Department of Public Health can be contacted to ascertain the various exemptions associated with this Act.

**Continuing Education** Forty hours of continuing education are required biennially for license renewal.

**Examination** Once the Board approves the application, information is sent to the applicant regarding how to make arrangements to take one of the tests listed above.

**Fees** Application: \$100  
Duration: Two years  
Renewal: \$100  
Exam: \$120 (paid to the exam center)

**SOC Code, Title, & Avg. Hourly Wage** 21-1014 – Mental Health Counselors (\$10.88)

**Number of Licenses Issued** Total number of licenses active as of December 31, 2001: 517

**For Additional Information** Iowa Department of Public Health Web site:  
<http://www.idph.state.ia.us/licensure>