

Psychology vs. Psychiatry

One of the most common questions you'll be asked as a student of psychology is, "What's the difference between a psychologist and a psychiatrist?" Now you'll know how to answer...

Psychologists:

- Ψ **Doctorate in Psychology (Clinical, Counseling, Social, etc.)**
- Ψ **Have obtained B.A./B.S., M.A./M.S. in psych degrees before even getting to doctorate training**
- Ψ **The focus of their doctorate work is psychology**
- Ψ **Licensed psychologists (i.e., those who end up working with patients) have obtained at least 3,000 supervised clinical experience and passed difficult licensing examinations**
- Ψ **Can work as clinicians, consultants, university professors, researchers, therapists, etc.**
- Ψ **Clinicians provide therapy as well as psychological testing**
- Ψ **Historically were not "allowed" to prescribe medication, but there are huge efforts underway to change this.**
 - **Prescription privileges have been granted to psychologists in New Mexico and Louisiana. However, both states are still working on how to put this into practice.**

Psychiatrists:

- Ψ **Medical Doctors (i.e., M.D.) who did residency training in psychiatry**
- Ψ **Do not necessarily have any other training in psychology/psychiatry except for their residency training**
- Ψ **The focus of their doctorate work is general medicine**
- Ψ **Psychiatrists typically complete 1–2 year residency programs after becoming M.D.s, in which they "shadow" other psychiatrists in hospitals and learn the trade that way. In other words, their training is radically different than psychologists' training**
- Ψ **Usually work as clinicians in hospitals but some are researchers and professors**
- Ψ **Used to provide therapy but insurance companies are now only willing to pay them for short visits with patients. This means that they are mainly used to prescribe medication**
- Ψ **Are totally against psychologists being granted prescription privileges, perhaps because it will put them out of business?**
- Ψ **Make a *ton* of money! Way more than psychologists ever do...**