

FACT SHEET: What type of license should I pursue?

Licensed professional Counseling without a Mental Health Services Provider designation (LPC):

What can an LPC do? The scope of practice for an LPC is defined in statute at Tenn. Code Ann. § 63-22-150, parts (2), (3), and (4).

Essentially the LPC may provide “individuals, groups, organizations, or the general public any service involving the application of principles, techniques, methods, or procedures of the counseling profession, including appraisal activities, as defined by the law, counseling, consulting and referral activities” in order to assist “with their personal, social, career or educational development as they pass through life stages.”

LPCs may not treat any mental, emotional or adjustment disorder other than marital problems, parent-child problems, child and adolescent antisocial behavior, adult antisocial behavior, other specified family circumstances, other interpersonal problems, phase of life problems, other life circumstance problems, occupational problems, and uncomplicated bereavement. They MAY NOT assess or diagnose under the DSM or treat, counsel, or develop plans of treatment for those with a diagnosis under the DSM. LPCs without the MHSP rider may only provide counseling on normal social and family dysfunctions.

LPCs practice as independent practitioners, however, if an LPC is counseling a person and begins to suspect that the person needs to be diagnosed, they should refer that person to an LPC/MHSP or other professional licensed to treat mental health disorders.

What qualifications are required to be an LPC? The statutes outlining qualifications for licensure are at Tenn. Code Ann. § 63-22-104 and elaborated in the Board rules at 0450-01-.04(01) and 0450-01-.05(01):

- Be at least eighteen (18) years of age; and
- Be of good moral character, as shown by letters of recommendation and a background check; and
- Hold master degree in counseling from an accredited program which includes sixty (60) graduate hours in counseling or a closely related field and completion of a supervised field experience as either a practicum or internship that includes a minimum of five hundred (500) clock hours of training, at least three hundred (300) of which must be completed in a mental health or community agency setting. This field experience must be supervised by an individual with at least a master's degree in counseling, social work, psychology or psychiatry; and
- Complete at least two (2) years of professional experience which consists of at least 1000 hours of face-to-face professional counseling work and at least 50 hours of consultation with an approved supervisor each year; and

- Pass the National Counselor Examination and the Tennessee Jurisprudence Exam as administered by the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC).

Licensed professional Counseling with a Mental Health Services Provider designation (LPC/MHSP):

What can an LPC/MHSP do? The scope of practice for an LPC/MHSP is defined in statute at Tenn. Code Ann. § 63-22-150, part (5).

LPC/MHSPs may “**prevent, diagnose, and treat mental, emotional or behavioral disorders and associated disorders which interfere with mental health,**” as opposed to only those listed in the LPC scope of practice. They may make a diagnosis using methods and techniques which they are trained and educated to use, such as clinical interviews, observation and documentation of behavior demonstrating DSM criteria, and assessments of a non-psychological or projective nature that are also not intelligence tests. They may also perform the general counseling for non DSM disorders as outlined in the LPC scope of practice.

LPC/MHSPs may not prescribe medication or use “psychological and clinical tests designed to identify and classify abnormal or pathological behavior.”

LPC/MHSPs may practice as independent practitioners.

What qualifications are required to be an LPC/MHSP? The statutes outlining qualifications for licensure are at Tenn. Code Ann. § 63-22-120 and elaborated in the Board rules at 0450-01-.04(04) and 0450-01-.05(04):

- Be at least eighteen (18) years of age; and
- Be of good moral character, as shown by letters of recommendation and a background check; and
- Hold master degree in counseling from an accredited program which includes sixty (60) graduate hours in counseling or a closely related field and completion of a supervised field experience as either a practicum or internship that includes a minimum of five hundred (500) clock hours of training, at least three hundred (300) of which must be completed in a mental health or community agency setting. This field experience must be supervised by an individual with at least a master's degree in counseling, social work, psychology or psychiatry; and
- Complete a minimum of nine (9) graduate semester hours of coursework specifically related to diagnosis, treatment, appraisal and assessment of mental disorders – these 9 hours can be completed as part of the sixty graduate hours required above or as post-graduate hours.
- Complete two (2) years of professional experience which consists of at least 1500 hours of face to face counseling, 1500 hours of clinically related work, and 150 hours

- of consultation with an approved supervisor “in a clinical setting that provides substantial opportunities to diagnose, treat, appraise and assess mental disorders;” and
- Pass the National Counselor Examination and the Tennessee Jurisprudence Exam as administered by the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC); and
 - Pass the National Clinical Mental Health Examination as administered by the NBCC.

Licensed Marital and Family Therapist (LMFT):

What can an LMFT do? The Scope of Practice for LMFTs is defined in statute at Tenn. Code Ann. § 63-22-115 part (5).

LMFTs may practice marital and family therapy. Marital and family therapy involves the professional application of psychotherapeutic family systems theories and techniques in the delivery of services to individuals in the context of family systems theory and practice, couples and families. It includes the diagnosis and treatment of cognitive, affective and behavioral problems and dysfunctions within the context of marital and family systems. They may administer and utilize appropriate assessment instruments which measure and/or diagnose cognitive, affective and behavioral problems and dysfunctions of individuals couples and families as part of the therapy process or in the development of a treatment plan (in the context of marital and family systems).

LMFTs may not perform psychological testing intended to measure and/or diagnose mental illness or prescribe medications.

What qualifications are required to be an LMFT? The statutes outlining qualifications for licensure are at Tenn. Code Ann. § 63-22-106 and elaborated in the Board rules at 0450-02-.04(01) and 0450-02-.05(01):

- Be at least eighteen (18) years of age; and
- Be of good moral character, as shown by letters of recommendation and a background check; and
- Hold master or doctoral degree in marriage and family therapy or equivalent field from an accredited program. If the degree is not in marriage and family therapy there is a required body of course work including a course in the DSM and also a supervised practicum/internship of no less than three hundred (300) hours which includes experience in the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of cognitive, affective and behavioral problems or dysfunctions in the current DSM.
- Pass the AAMFT Exam; and
- Pass the Tennessee Jurisprudence Exam for LMFTs as administered Board Staff; and
- Complete two (2) years of professional experience which consists of at least 1000 hours of face to face clinical practice and 200 hours of supervision by an approved AAMFT supervisor.

Clinical Pastoral Therapists (CPT):

What can a CPT do? The Scope of Practice for CPTs is defined in statute at Tenn. Code Ann. § 63-22-201 part (7).

CPTs may provide clinical pastoral therapy to the public on a fee based system, as opposed to solely through his or her role as clergy of a church. CPTs may diagnose and treat, from a clinical pastoral perspective, the psychodynamics, interpersonal dynamics and spiritual dynamics of persons experiencing emotional behavioral or relational distress or dysfunction. CPTs use professional application of resources and techniques from the religious community's traditions of pastoral care and counsel along with recognized principles, methods and procedures of the contemporary psychotherapy community in the delivery of counseling and psychotherapeutic services to individuals, couples, families and groups.

What qualifications are required to be an CPT? The statutes outlining qualifications for licensure are at Tenn. Code Ann. § 63-22-203 and elaborated in the Board rules at 0450-03-.04(01) and 0450-03-.05(01):

- Be at least eighteen (18) years of age; and
- Be of good moral character, as shown by letters of recommendation and a background check; and
- Completion of a minimum of one hundred twenty (120) graduate semester hours from a recognized educational institution of which sixty (60) graduate semester hours shall be in a course of studies in clinical pastoral therapy as designated by the board, of which nine (9) graduate semester hours must relate specifically to the diagnosis and treatment of mental disorders; and
- Completion of a practicum consisting of at least one (1) unit of full-time clinical pastoral education in a program accredited by the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education; and
- Hold a master of divinity degree or its equivalent; and
- Hold a master or doctoral degree in pastoral therapy or a closely related field; and
- Completion of an internship consisting of at least two (2) years of clinical pastoral therapy training in an approved training program; and
- Has provided a minimum of one thousand four hundred (1,400) hours of pastoral therapy with individuals, couples, families and/or groups while receiving a minimum of two hundred seventy (270) hours of supervision of such therapy with an approved supervisor; and
- Pass one of four examinations acceptable to the Board; and
- Pass the Tennessee Jurisprudence Exam for CPTs as administered by Board Staff.