

WHAT TEXAS PSYCHOLOGISTS BRING TO TEXAS MENTAL HEALTH

All mental health professionals play important roles in Texas's mental health system. Licensed doctoral-level psychologists are uniquely trained to provide comprehensive psychological assessment and evidence-based care in situations involving increased clinical complexity, risk, and long-term impact.

Why Doctorally Trained Psychologists Matter in Texas

Mental health systems work best when the right services are delivered to the right people at the right time. Psychologists support this goal through accurate assessment and specialized services that require advanced training and clinical judgment. Their training prepares them to evaluate complex symptoms, determine appropriate care, and guide treatment planning across healthcare, education, legal, and community settings.

Specialized expertise includes:

- Psychological assessment and diagnostic evaluation
- Evidence-based treatments (ESTs)
- Crisis and violence risk assessment
- Neuropsychological evaluations
- Medication prescribing (with additional training)
- Forensic and court-related evaluations
- Public safety psychological evaluations (law enforcement, first responders)
- Integrated behavioral health in primary care and health systems

Doctoral-level psychologists complete 6–8 years of doctoral education and 3,500+ hours of supervised clinical training.

Accurate Assessment Improves Outcomes

Psychological assessment is a defining competency of licensed psychologists with doctoral-level training. Advanced training in testing and assessment allows psychologists to evaluate complex symptoms, suicide risk, violence risk, cognitive functioning, and impaired functioning. These evaluations guide appropriate care and help ensure individuals receive the right treatment at the right time.

Quality Care Is Cost-Effective

Studies consistently show that access to high-quality mental health care improves outcomes and reduces overall healthcare utilization; research also shows healthcare cost reductions of approximately 10–30% with effective behavioral interventions.

Accurate assessment reduces unnecessary treatment, evidence-based interventions improve recovery, and appropriate care planning lowers downstream costs across healthcare, education, public safety, and disability systems.

Licensed doctoral-level psychologists support healthier Texans, safer communities, and more efficient use of public resources.

REAL-WORLD IMPACT: WHAT PSYCHOLOGISTS DO IN PRACTICE

Veteran Access to Care in a Rural Community

A Vietnam-era veteran, Mark*, lived for decades with untreated psychological symptoms related to military service. Distance, stigma, and limited access to specialized providers prevented him from seeking care.

When a licensed psychologist with doctoral-level training began offering evaluations locally, Mark was able to complete a comprehensive assessment without traveling several hours. For the first time, his symptoms were formally evaluated and documented.

Outcome:

The evaluation connected Mark to appropriate treatment and services, improving his quality of life and long-term functional stability.

Why a psychologist mattered:

Licensed psychologists are trained to conduct complex diagnostic evaluations that connect clinical findings to functional impact and access to care, particularly in underserved and rural communities.

Trauma Recovery, Cost Containment & Return to Work

An adult, Taylor*, who was the victim of a violent assault, was referred for treatment through a state program supporting crime victims after developing post-traumatic stress symptoms with co-occurring depression that interfered with her daily functioning and her ability to work. A doctoral-level psychologist provided evidence-based, trauma-focused psychotherapy applying structured interventions matched to the clinical complexity of symptoms and her recovery goals.

Outcome:

Symptoms decreased, functioning improved, and Taylor was able to return to work and resume independent living. Effective use of evidence-based treatment reduced the need for prolonged services and supported timely recovery.

Why a psychologist mattered:

Licensed psychologists are trained to apply and integrate empirically supported treatments for complex, co-occurring conditions, supporting recovery that restores functioning while helping limit downstream costs to state and healthcare systems.

Learning and Behavior Challenges: Accurate Diagnosis

An elementary school child, Brandon*, struggled with learning, behavior, and emotional regulation. Even with school-based assessment and intervention, Brandon continued to have significant difficulties, and the source of his struggles remained unclear.

A licensed doctoral-level psychologist at a local children's hospital conducted a comprehensive neuropsychological evaluation. The evaluation identified previously unidentified neurodevelopmental factors influencing Brandon's attention, behavior, and learning, and clarifying the cause of his struggles.

Outcome:

The psychological evaluation identified targeted interventions that were implemented at school and home. Brandon's behavior and academic performance improved, and he was able to function more successfully at school and at home.

Why a psychologist mattered:

Licensed doctoral-level psychologists are trained to conduct advanced diagnostic evaluations, especially when complex learning, behavioral, and emotional concerns are present. This helps children more quickly receive the most effective supports and treatment for their needs, allowing interventions to target root causes rather than surface behaviors.