

## **Why Use a Clinical Mental Health Counselor?**

Clinical mental health counselors provide flexible, consumer-oriented therapy. They combine traditional psychotherapy with a practical, problem-solving approach that creates a dynamic and efficient path for change and problem resolution.

Clinical mental health counseling is a distinct profession, licensed in 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, with national standards for education, training and clinical practice. And clinical mental health counselors are uniquely qualified to provide high quality care at very cost-effective rates.

- According to the report, "Mental Health, United States, 2004" published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service's (HHS) Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), more than 100,500 mental health counselors are licensed or certified for independent practice in the United States.
- The median cost per session for clinical mental health counselors is \$63, compared to a median cost of \$75 for psychologists, and \$60 for clinical social workers and marriage and family therapists, according to a January 2006 study by Psychotherapy Finances.
- Clinical mental health counselors adhere to a rigorous code of ethics.

Clinical mental health counselors are highly skilled professionals who provide a full range of services including:

- Assessment and diagnosis
- Psychotherapy
- Treatment planning and utilization review
- Brief and solution-focused therapy
- Alcoholism and substance abuse treatment
- Psychoeducational and prevention programs
- Crisis management

A licensed clinical mental health counselor has met or exceeded the following professional qualifications:

- Earned a master's degree in counseling or a closely related mental health discipline;
- Completed a minimum of two years post-master's clinical work under the supervision of a licensed or certified mental health professional; and
- Passed a state-developed or national licensure or certification examination.

Licensure requirements for clinical mental health counselors are equivalent to those for clinical social workers and marriage and family therapists

Clinical mental health counseling practice settings:

- independent practice
- community agencies
- managed behavioral health care organizations
- integrated delivery systems
- hospitals
- employee assistance programs
- substance abuse treatment centers.