

## Behavioral Health

Careers within behavioral health primarily care for the emotional and behavioral wellbeing of individuals. They may focus on internal or external circumstances and work in settings such as hospitals, outpatient clinics, schools, or government agencies.

Some of the most common careers within behavioral health include Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSW) and Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselors ([LCMHC](#)), who provide behavioral support and counseling to patients. They vary mainly in their education, as LCSW have more background in social work, case management, and community resources, while LCMHC education focuses more strongly on psychotherapy and counseling techniques.

| What can I do in High School?   | What can I do in College?  | What about Licensing?   |
|---|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Take the <a href="#">ACT</a> and <a href="#">SAT</a>. Verify individual school requirements to see if standardized tests are required.</li> <li>2. Complete the <a href="#">FAFSA</a> to determine eligibility for federal financial aid.</li> <li>3. Complete College Applications: <a href="#">The Common Application</a></li> <li>4. Ask for <a href="#">letters of recommendation</a>.</li> <li>5. Check out the <a href="#">CFNC</a>, a free resource that helps students plan, apply, and pay for college in NC.</li> <li>6. Be aware of transcripts and transfer credit such as: Early College, AP, IB, CLEP, or Transfer Credit.</li> <li>7. Participate in extracurricular activities such as: sports, jobs, clubs, organizations, and volunteering.</li> <li>8. Pay attention to deadlines and start planning early!</li> </ol> | <p>LCSW and LCMHC programs require you to first have at least a Bachelor's Degree. You can <a href="#">transfer</a> from a NC community college to a public NC university and still get a masters degree in either field.</p> <p>Picking a major does not affect your acceptance into a graduate program as long as you have the general course requirements. <b>Be sure to look at individual schools for their requirements.</b></p> <p>Once you finish your bachelor's degree, you will apply to a masters program. If you are interested in becoming a LCSW, this would be a Masters of Social Work (MSW), which takes about 2 years to complete. If you are interested in becoming a LCMHC, you would apply to a Masters program in counseling or a related field (must be accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs), which also takes about 2 years to complete.</p> <p>For most masters programs, you will need to submit transcripts, GRE scores (some schools), letters of recommendation, and a personal statement.</p> <p>Other opportunities to distinguish your application include: Shadowing, volunteering, clinical experiences, research, and extracurriculars.</p> | <p>After you have completed a Masters degree in social work, counseling, or a related (accredited) field, you must complete a supervised clinical experience.</p> <p><b>For LCSW:</b> After earning a MSW, prospective LCSWs need to complete a set number of supervised clinical hours. This varies by state, but for North Carolina it is 3,000 hours. This usually takes about 2 years. In addition to this, prospective LCSWs must pass the <a href="#">Association of Social Work Board</a> clinical exam. Once you have completed a MSW, 3,000 supervised clinical hours, and passed the ASWB exam, you can apply for licensure to become a LCSW.</p> <p><b>For LCMHC:</b> After completing a Masters degree in counseling, you can apply for a Licensed Mental Health Counselor Associate (<a href="#">LCMHC-A</a>), which is a restricted license. This is a prerequisite to becoming a LCMHC and allows you to gain professional practice experience under the supervision of a qualified LCMHC. After completing 3,000 hours of supervised clinical experience as a LCMHC-A, you can then apply for your LCMHC license. In addition to supervised clinical hours, you must pass the North Carolina Jurisprudence Exam through the <a href="#">NCBLCMHC</a>.</p> <p>Check out the <a href="#">US Bureau of Labor Statistics</a>.</p> |

