

The Benefits of a Licensed Professional

If you are suffering from a mental health challenge, it is critical that you seek guidance from a qualified and licensed professional. Of course, for many individuals suffering, support from family, friends, community members and Rabbonim is not only helpful but also an important part of achieving emotional well-being. However, mental health conditions can be serious – requiring a systemized approach to diagnoses and treatments.

Training of a Licensed Professional

The training of a licensed professional is rigorous and time-consuming. A psychologist, for example, trains for nearly a decade before they may practice independently. This lengthy training includes school studies and practical, clinical internships. After receiving their doctorate (the degree they are granted after training), psychologists enter “supervision” where they can see their own patients with oversight and are required to pass the licensing exam. Once a psychologist is licensed, the training continues with annual mandatory courses, so they stay up-to-date with accurate, timely, and evidence-based medical practices. While the specific training each professional requires differs by specialty and country, receiving a license requires extensive education and ongoing review.

In some cases, unlicensed professionals, may go through their own training. However, it is generally not as robust or clinically studied. In addition, unlicensed professionals are unlikely to have significant oversight or qualified supervision and are not required to partake in annual courses to sharpen their expertise and this is a critical component to maintaining skills.

Patient’s Protection

Anytime an individual seeks medical guidance or support from a professional, they need to feel protected.

Licensed professionals are monitored by the state and are required to adhere to confidentiality and ethics laws. Should either be breached, a patient can take legal action via the state licensing board and/or the state board of ethics.

Unlicensed professionals, however, have no outside body to regulate how they practice. In the event of a breach of ethics or confidentiality, a patient has no protection.

Health Plan Coverage

Health insurance coverage differs depending on the state and country you live in. However, in most cases, insurance companies prefer licensed mental health professionals over those unlicensed.

To understand your benefits, consider asking your health insurance provider the following:

- To receive coverage, what type of mental health professional must offer the care?
- What type of treatment is covered?
- How much will my copay be? What is my deductible?
- Am I limited to the number of sessions covered?

Premium Care

When you choose a licensed professional, you are choosing their expertise and ability to individualize your treatment.

A licensed professional can:

- **Set guided goals**
Be wary of professionals who guarantee results in a certain amount of time. A skilled mental health professional should work with you to set attainable, personalized goals, both short and long term.
- **Help you learn new skills**
They will challenge you to step out of your comfort zone and develop skills to use independently – after your time with the professional.
- **Adapt a personalized treatment plan**
Licensed mental health professionals have a lot of experience with different mental health challenges and treatments. With their expertise, they can build a treatment plan comprised of different, clinically proven approaches to fit your personal needs.

If you or someone you know is struggling with a mental health challenge, contact Relief for access to the right licensed, mental health professional.