

Types of Mental Health Professionals

Psychiatrist

A psychiatrist is a medical doctor, meaning they have a medical degree. They are medically trained and licensed to make diagnoses, prescribe medication, and administer treatments.

Psychiatry is a specialized field in medicine, like a cardiologist, or pediatrician. Therefore, along with attending medical school, they have specialized training of about 5 or 6 years on top of their MD in the field of mental health. They are the only professionals that can diagnose with a complete mental and physical evaluation, interpret laboratory analyses, medical images, and take a detailed psychosocial history. Once a diagnosis is made, a psychiatrist can also use psychotherapy techniques to treat a patient. Psychiatrists in Quebec are members of the [Association de médecins psychiatres du Québec](#).



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Psychologist

A psychologist is a professional specialized in human behaviour, emotions, and mental health. They work with people who experience distress, or psychological issues. Psychologists in Quebec typically complete between 7 and 9 years of university level studies in psychology. This training allows them to understand human behaviour and know the best ways in which to help their clients with their psychological difficulties. Psychologists use a number of psychotherapeutic interventions to help their patients. Psychologists can perform psychological evaluations, determine a course of treatment using psychotherapy, and can consult with medical professionals about medications if a client agrees. They can recommend clients see a medical doctor if they feel they are in need of medication. In Quebec a psychologist is required to complete a PhD in psychology (this has been a requirement since 2006) and are registered members of [l'Ordre des psychologues du Québec](#). Although Quebec's governmental health insurance plan (RAMQ) does not cover mental health services, many private insurance companies will offer coverage for sessions with a licensed psychologist.



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Psychotherapist

Professionals from a variety of mental health backgrounds can complete specialized training to be licensed to practice psychotherapy. Psychotherapy is a set of therapeutic techniques and interventions that promote a *change* in attitudes, behaviours, ways of thinking or reacting in persons to enable them to feel better, find answers to their questions, solve problems, make better choices, and better understand themselves and others. Counselors, criminologists, occupational therapists, nurses, psycho-educators, social workers,



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couple & family therapists, and sexologists, can be psychotherapists with a special permit from [l'Ordre des psychologues du Québec](#). Many private insurance companies will offer coverage for sessions with a licensed psychotherapist.

Psychoeducator

Psychoeducators work with people who have behavioural problems that manifest in different environments in their daily life. Psychoeducators will integrate themselves into a client's daily life as part of their work to evaluate different issues and propose solutions that are specific to the needs of the client they are helping. Psychoeducators perform evaluations of a person's psychosocial adaptation and capacities through observation and participation using questionnaires, standardized tests. Based on their evaluations, they can subsequently establish a suitable intervention plan for their clients. They will also evaluate the results and effectiveness of their plan. You could consult a psychoeducator for many reasons such as: problems with your teen, experiencing a family crisis that affects you or your family, reorganizing your life as a result of a life disruption, returning to work after illness or accident, managing your emotions, better understanding and interacting with a person suffering from mental illness.

Psychoeducators in Quebec are licenced by the [Ordre des psychoéducateurs et éducatrices du Québec](#).



Sexologist

The title of sexologist is unique to Quebec and requires specialized training from the department of sexology at l'Université de Québec à Montréal (UQAM) where they are trained on comprehensive issues related to different aspects of human sexuality. The minimum requirement for this title is a Bachelor's degree in sexology. Sexologists work on prevention and sex education with a diverse clientele. Their knowledge can help support individuals of all ages adopt a more positive and healthy attitude in sexuality. Sexologists with a Masters degree and psychotherapist licence can practice as clinical sexologists and can do individual sex therapy, couple therapy, family therapy, or group therapy. Sexologists must be licenced by [l'Association des sexologues du Québec](#).



Counselor/Guidance Counselor

Various needs and difficulties can lead you to use a guidance counselor (c.o.), regardless of your age, your level of education, your personal or professional experience. Counselors can help



you with multiple problems such as choosing a career that best suits your personality, creating a plan of action to help you with your professional integration, indecisiveness about your life choices and paths, defining new career paths as a result of a life changing event (ex. disability), not feeling ready for retirement and planning for life's changes once retirement begins, etc. Counselors can be found in private practice or working in the public sector. In Quebec, counselors are educated in psychology, personality development, identity and intellectual, cognitive, and affective functioning. Their training also involves psychometric testing, individual and group counseling, psychopathology, and theories of vocational development. Some counselors may also have a psychotherapy license and practice psychotherapy with a license from l'Ordre des psychologues du Québec. Counsellors are licensed by [l'Ordre des conseillers et conseillères d'orientation du Québec](#).

Clinical Social Worker

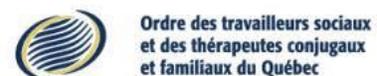
A social worker is a professional who helps people with difficult life situations. They are frequently involved in helping people with family violence or poverty, or people who can no longer live on their own. A social worker's role is to help people find ways to solve their problems. Clinical social workers have training in human behaviour and the common problems that people face. Many will work with special groups like teens, refugees, the homeless, etc. Typically, social workers will work along with other professionals like psychologists, psychiatrists, lawyers, as part of a healthcare team for their clients. They can also work as mediators in cases of divorce or parental separation and can help parents decide what is best for their children. Social workers will have a minimum of a bachelor's degree in social work or can have a Masters or PhD in social work. Some social workers can also have extra training in couple and family therapy or in psychotherapy which allows them to work therapeutically with people. Often, social workers will work in the public system but many also work privately. Social workers in Quebec are licensed by [l'Ordre des travailleurs sociaux et des thérapeutes conjugaux et familiaux du Québec](#). Although RAMQ does not cover mental health services, many insurance companies will cover sessions with a licensed clinical social worker.



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Couple & Family Therapist (CFT)/Marital & Family Therapist (MFT)

Couple and family therapy (CFT) is a fairly new title special to Québec. It was previously known as marital and family therapy (MFT) however new training requirements and the new title is in place. Essentially, MFTs and CFTs have specialized training to work with couples and families, as well as individuals. They are trained in multiple modes of psychotherapy including systemic



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therapy, cognitive behavioural therapy, psychodynamic psychotherapy, sex therapy, etc. The title of CFT has special reserved acts associated with it that only CFTs are licenced to perform such as, guiding adoptive parents through the adoption process and performing psycholegal evaluations in cases of divorce involving children.

In Quebec, CFTs are required to have a professional Master's degree and are licenced by both the [Ordre des travailleurs sociaux et thérapeutes conjugaux et familiaux](#) and have a psychotherapy permit issued by the Ordre des psychologues du Québec. Many CFTs will work in the public system (CLSC, CSSS) or will work as therapists in the private sector.

Art Therapist

Art Therapists complete graduate training in art therapy which focuses on the use of visual imagery in a therapeutic framework.

In art therapy, clients are able to work on many of the same issues they would work

on in with other types of therapy, however, creating visual imagery is part of the therapeutic process. This type of therapy is helpful for people who enjoy expressing themselves creatively or who don't connect with traditional talk therapies alone. Clients are not required to have special skills in art to fully benefit from the sessions. Art therapy is also frequently with children who can often express themselves more fully through art than with words alone. Art therapists in Quebec typically have a Masters level degree in art therapy and a background in both psychology and fine arts. They are professional members of the [association des art-thérapeutes du Québec](#) and may have additional licenses such as a psychotherapy permit from the [Ordre des psychologues du Québec](#).



Drama Therapist

Drama Therapists complete graduate training in drama therapy which uses techniques from theatre, role play and psychodrama within a therapeutic framework.

Drama therapists use active and experiential techniques in sessions. This method of therapy can help clients tell their stories, set goals, solve problems, express emotions in a way that is very different from traditional talk therapies. Clients can use enactment and role playing to explore interpersonal relationships or gain skills in relationship enhancement. Drama therapists in Quebec typically have a Masters level degree in drama therapy and a background in both psychology and theatre. Drama therapists can work both in the public sector or the private sector. Drama therapy is beneficial for individuals, couples, and even families. Drama therapists are typically members of the [North American Drama Therapy Association](#), the [Quebec Art Therapy Association](#). They may also have other licenses specializing in psychotherapy from the [Ordre des psychologues du Québec](#).



Coach

A life coach is a professional who counsels people and encourages clients with matters related to careers or personal challenges. In Quebec, a life coach can have a certification as a Certified Coach Practitioner from the [Certified Coaches Federation](#). Certification can range from a weekend workshop to a few months of education. It does not require graduate or post graduate level training or education. Universities such as Concordia University's John Molson School of Business in Montreal offers [certification in coaching](#) that is approved by the [International Coaching Federation](#). Life coaches typically have backgrounds in personal and professional coaching, reflection and inquiry into client problems, helping clients identify passion, strengths, and resources, enabling creativity and motivation, dreaming and visioning, goal setting and action planning, influencing behaviour, etc. Coaches typically work with individuals but can work with groups as well.

