

Psychiatric social work steady material.

Psychiatric social workers provide mental health services to individuals with high needs. They may perform psychotherapy and even diagnose mental illness.

Duties vary according to work setting. Social workers in inpatient settings often have primary responsibility for putting together the discharge plan. This is not something that is filled out right before discharge – it's an ongoing process during much of the time the person is hospitalized. The goal is ambitious: that the person will have the resources to function optimally within the community. Hospital stays are shorter than they were in the past, but patients sometimes need to transition to a residential care center or a day program.

Social workers who are employed at psychiatric hospitals also do psychosocial assessments and provide therapy. They are in frequent contact with the family members of patients. They meet with other members of the mental health team (psychiatrists, nurse practitioners etc.) to discuss patient care. If the patient is involved in any legal procedures, the social worker may have a role in information gathering.

Psychiatric social workers may also be employed in outpatient centers, working with juveniles and adults. They perform psychotherapy and assessments, educate the patient and his or her family, and make referrals as necessary. Mental health therapies include more than just talk. Social workers may, for example, employ Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing with young trauma survivors.

Master's level social workers serve as case managers for individuals who have severe needs, those who may require periodic hospitalization as well as intensive use of community resources. Clients may include those with schizophrenia and those with complex sets of co-occurring conditions.

Governmental agencies and residential care facilities are among the other employment options for psychiatric social workers. Some eventually go into private practice as psychotherapists.