

Carers First

A Mental Health Who's Who Guide

When someone is diagnosed with a mental health condition you'll meet a few different medical professionals. It can be hard trying to figure out who everyone is which is why we've created this glossary outlining the people you're most likely to come across.



Registered Mental Health Nurses

- RMNs support people in a hospital setting.
- They are a registered nurse with specialist training in mental health, supporting individuals with various mental health conditions.
- They offer support with recovery or with managing a long term mental health disorder.

Community Psychiatric Nurse (CPN)

- A CPN sees people who are living in the community. This is most often in the person's own home but it can also be in clinics, for example, in a GP's surgery.
- CPNs provide support to people through difficult periods of their illness. They may also see patients when they are well to check everything is going okay and may be the first point of contact if the patient starts becoming unwell again.
- A CPN will help patients with their medication, making sure they're taking the correct dosage etc
- Because CPNs see patients in their own homes, they also play a valuable role in helping the patient's family and carers understand and cope with the illness.
- Patients may be referred to CPNs from GPs, psychiatrists or inpatient wards to help the patient transition from hospital back into the community.

Approved Mental Health Assessors (AMHP)

- AMHPs are health professionals who have been approved by a local social services authority to carry out certain duties under the Mental Health Act.
- They are responsible for coordinating assessments and admissions to hospital if someone is sectioned.
- They may be: social workers; nurses; occupational therapists; psychologists

Consultant Psychologist

- A consultant psychologist will complete an initial assessment and will give a diagnosis. They will also be involved with prescribing medication.
- They will be the clinical lead providing advice to GPs and other people in the patient's team
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Psychologist

- Psychologists support the consultant psychologist, and may provide therapy and support the family as well as the person living with the condition.

Occupational Therapist

- An occupational therapist can have many different roles. They help people to adapt to their environment and to cope with their daily life.
- OTs may work in hospitals or in the community. They supervise and assess a person's ability to look after themselves, eg self-care, cooking and housework. This may be done in purpose-built occupational therapy departments in hospitals or in the patient's own home.
- OTs work with both individuals and groups. They can set goals for individuals with depression to encourage them to achieve more than they have been able to do while ill. They may get patients involved in job-related training schemes to improve their decision making and planning for the future. Group work is often aimed at increasing people's social interactions.
- OTs may use many different types of therapy on an individual or group basis, including cognitive behavioural therapy and art and music therapy. They may also be involved in providing relaxation training to patients referred to them by the mental health team or GPs.
- If patients have been in hospital for a long time, OTs become involved in rehabilitation work to help them reintegrate back into life outside hospital

Support, time and recovery (STR) worker

- A support, time and recovery (STR) worker helps adults and young people with mental health problems or a learning disability. By offering practical support and advice, they are improving people's lives across the local community.

Social worker

- Social workers may be employed by social services or the health service. However, most mental health social workers are based in multidisciplinary community mental health teams.
- Traditionally they will be involved if patients have social problems, such as housing, money and work. In recent years the role of social workers has expanded and they now share many roles with other members of community mental health teams.
- Social workers may organise attendance at services such as day centres, respite care, residential care or arrange community support services, such as home helps.

- One key role of an approved social worker (ASW) is to act as the guardian of the patient's rights. If a GP and an Approved Social Worker (ASW-a social worker with special training) agree that the patient is mentally ill and that it is in the interests of their health, safety or the safety of others, that they remain in hospital, then an order under the Mental Health Act will be applied to detain the patient. The ASW has responsibilities to contact the patient's next of kin and to help any appeals against the order that the patient wants to make.

Hospital discharge team

- If the cared for is admitted to hospital, they will deal with packages of care/ care home placements etc.

Community support worker

- Community support workers have a role very similar to support workers, but they are supervised by social services rather than the mental health team. They include residential social workers (who help to look after people in residential care), and domiciliary care workers (who act as home helps, visiting people who are unwell and helping with daily chores).

Counsellor

- Counsellors offer counselling to those in need. Counselling aims to identify the problems a person is facing in any sphere of life and to help them discover effective ways of dealing with these. Simply talking through a problem with somebody neutral can often help a person to see a way forward.
- Counsellors work in various settings such as the independent or voluntary sector, GPs' surgeries and hospitals.
- Counselling can be carried out informally by GPs, psychiatrists, nurses or in a more formal manner by counsellors. CPNs often carry out counselling in general surgeries.
- Counsellors have people referred to them by GPs, social workers, CPNs and, in many cases, the people themselves.

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