Psychology

People working in the field of psychology apply clinical skills, and use specialized knowledge gained from experience in forensic mental health settings, and may conduct assessments, provide treatment, and evaluations. People working in this field typically have knowledge of the criminal court system and issues which exist where behavioral health and the law intersect.

About DSHS

The Department of Social and Health Services' Behavioral Health and Habilitation Administration provides information about careers in forensic behavioral health which play an important role in improving the lives of people with behavioral health conditions involved in the criminal court system. For more information about positions open within DSHS, please visit www.careers.wa.gov.

Forensic Behavioral Health

Forensic behavioral health is the intersection of behavioral health and the law. The system itself involves various entities that have a touchpoint to people who are involved with the criminal court system and may have a behavioral health condition.

Choosing a career as a practitioner in this human services field offers many diverse work environments. Examples include working with law enforcement in co-responder roles or in a corrections setting; in inpatient settings such as state psychiatric facilities and behavioral health and treatment centers; and in community settings such as outpatient competency restoration programs, or community behavioral health agencies. Service providers in this field often interact with legal partners such as lawyers and judges, corrections officers, and first responders.

For more information

Behavioral Health and Habilitation Administration, OFMHS
www.dshs.wa.gov/bha/office-forensic-mental-health-services

Workforce Development Administrator
Leah Henley | Leah.henley1@dshs.wa.gov
https://www.dshs.wa.gov/bha/office-forensic-mental-health-services/workforce-development

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Forensic Behavioral Health Career Path

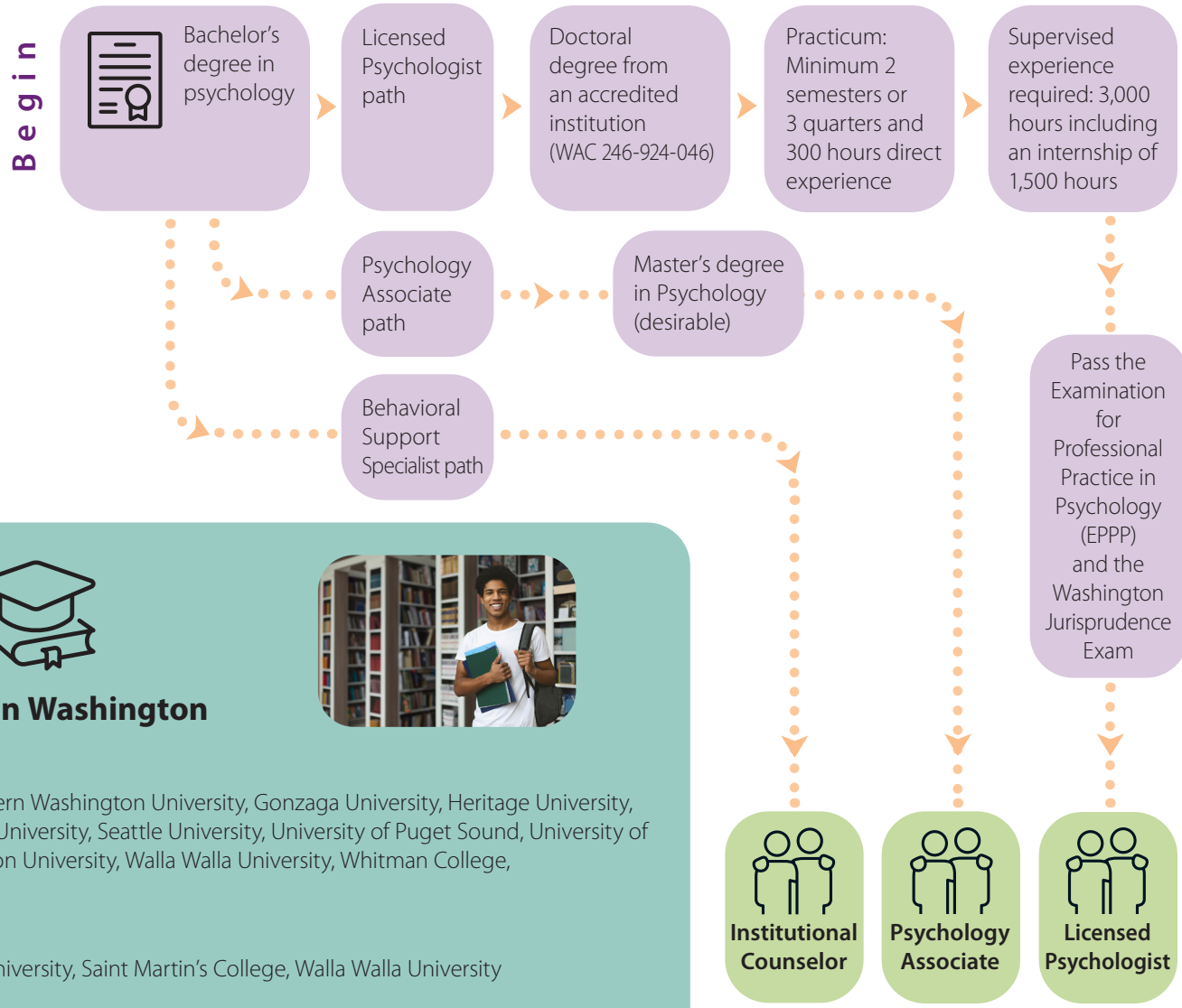
Behavioral Health and Habilitation Administration
Office of Forensic Mental Health Services

DSHS
WASHINGTON STATE
Department of Social and Health Services

Examples of Work Environments

With a bachelor's degree in psychology, an person may work in inpatient settings in state psychiatric facilities as an institutional counselor. With a master's degree in psychology a graduate might work in the same setting as a psychology associate. Community behavioral health organizations also hire graduates of psychology programs in various roles. At the doctorate level, as a licensed psychologist, you may choose to work as a forensic evaluator or as a treating psychologist.

This document is for illustrative purposes only. For detailed information on requirements, see: RCW 18.83, Chapter 246-924 WAC



Schools in Washington

Bachelors

Central Washington University, City University of Seattle, Eastern Washington University, Gonzaga University, Heritage University, Northwest University, Pacific Lutheran University, St. Martin's University, Seattle University, University of Puget Sound, University of Washington, Washington State University, Western Washington University, Walla Walla University, Whitman College, Whitworth University

Masters

Antioch University, CWU, EWU, Gonzaga University, Seattle University, Saint Martin's College, Walla Walla University

Doctorate

Antioch University Seattle, Northwest University, Seattle Pacific University, University of Washington, Washington State University

Education

Most forensic social work positions in Washington require a master's degree or above and licensure. There are two options: a licensed advanced social worker (LASW) or a licensed independent clinical social worker (LICSW). An LICSW allows for practice in a private setting. See the Council on Social Work Education for more information.