



# Psychotherapy Codes for Psychologists

All mental health professionals including psychologists, psychiatrists, nurses and social workers delivering psychotherapy services use the same applicable CPT® codes when billing clients and filing health insurance claims with third-party payers, including Medicare, Medicaid and private health insurance carriers. This family of codes was last revised in 2013 in order to simplify the coding framework and allows all codes to be used in all settings, instead of describing site-specific services.

Psychotherapy Codes	
CPT® Code	Descriptor
90832	Psychotherapy, 30 minutes with patient
90834	Psychotherapy, 45 minutes with patient
90837	Psychotherapy, 60 minutes with patient
90845	Psychoanalysis
90846	Family psychotherapy (without the patient present), 50 minutes
90847	Family psychotherapy (conjoint psychotherapy) (with patient present), 50 minutes
90849	Multiple-family group psychotherapy
90853	Group psychotherapy (other than of a multiple-family group)

## Key Facts for Utilizing Psychotherapy CPT® Codes

- The time for each psychotherapy code is described as time spent with the patient and/or family, and although the time for each code is specific (30, 45 or 60 minutes), the coding manual allows for some flexibility.
- When reporting a psychotherapy service, the provider may apply the CPT "Time Rule" and choose the code closest to the actual time of the session:

CPT® Code	Total Duration of Psychotherapy Session
90832	16-37 minutes
90834	38-52 minutes
90837	53 or more minutes
90846, 90847	26 or more minutes

- There are "add-on" codes for specific services that can be provided only in combination with other diagnostic evaluation, psychotherapy and group psychotherapy services. Add-on codes identify an additional part of the treatment above and beyond the principal service. Both the principal service code and add-on code should be listed on the billing form.
- There are Psychotherapy services that can be provided via telehealth. [See \(http://www.apapracticecentral.org/medicare/coverage/telehealth.aspx\)](http://www.apapracticecentral.org/medicare/coverage/telehealth.aspx) additional information.

Interactive Complexity Add-On Code for Psychotherapy	
CPT® Code	Descriptor
90785	Interactive complexity (List separately in addition to the code for primary procedure) *Can be reported with appropriate psychotherapy code based on length of session = For diagnostic evaluation (90791), psychotherapy (90832, 90834, 90837) and group psychotherapy (90853)

## Key Facts for Utilizing the Interactive Complexity Add-on Code

- Add-on code 90785 for Interactive complexity refers to factors that complicate the delivery of a mental health procedure.
- At least one of the complicating factors identified in the CPT manual **must** pertain in order for providers to bill the interactive complexity code as an add-on to the principal psychiatric procedure.
- Complicating factors include, for example, difficult communication with acrimonious family members and engagement of verbally undeveloped children. These factors are typically found with patients who:

- a. Have others legally responsible for their care, such as minors or adults with guardians
- b. Request others such as family members or interpreters to be involved during the visit, or
- c. Require the involvement of third parties such as schools or probation officers

▪ Code 90785 may be reported with codes for diagnostic evaluation (90791), psychotherapy (90832, 90834, 90837) and group psychotherapy (90853).

Pharmacologic Management Add-On Code for Psychotherapy	
CPT® Code	Descriptor
90863	Pharmacologic management, including prescription and review of medication, when performed with psychotherapy services (List separately in addition to the code for primary procedure)

#### Key Facts for Utilizing the Pharmacologic management Add-on Code

- Of particular interest to prescribing psychologists, add-on code 90863 is used for pharmacologic management, including prescription and review of medication, when performed on the same day as one of the stand-alone psychotherapy codes (90832, 90834, 90837).
- A psychologist providing a psychotherapy service with medication management should report the 90863 add-on code along with the applicable psychotherapy code identified above.

Psychotherapy for Crisis	
CPT® Code	Descriptor
90839	Psychotherapy for crisis; first 60 minutes *Billed for the first 60 mins of psychotherapy for a patient in crisis, and add-on code 90840 billed for each additional 30 mins.
90840	Psychotherapy for crisis; each additional 30 minutes (List separately in addition to code for primary service)

#### Key Facts for Utilizing the Crisis Codes

- CPT code 90839 is the principal code for a crisis psychotherapy session requiring urgent assessment and history of the crisis state, mental status exam and disposition. It is billed for the first 60 minutes of psychotherapy for a patient in crisis.
- If/when the crisis psychotherapy session lasts longer than 60 minutes, the add-on code, 90840, can be billed for each additional 30 minutes of psychotherapy for crisis.
- In order for the new crisis codes to apply, the presenting problem must typically be life-threatening or complex and require immediate attention to a patient in high distress.

## Psychotherapy Codes Resources

- [The 2013 Psychotherapy Codes: An Overview for Psychologists \(/practice/reimbursement/billing/psychotherapy-codes\)](#)
- [Psychotherapy Services Frequently Asked Questions \(/practice/reimbursement/health-codes/psychotherapy-services-faq\)](#)

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