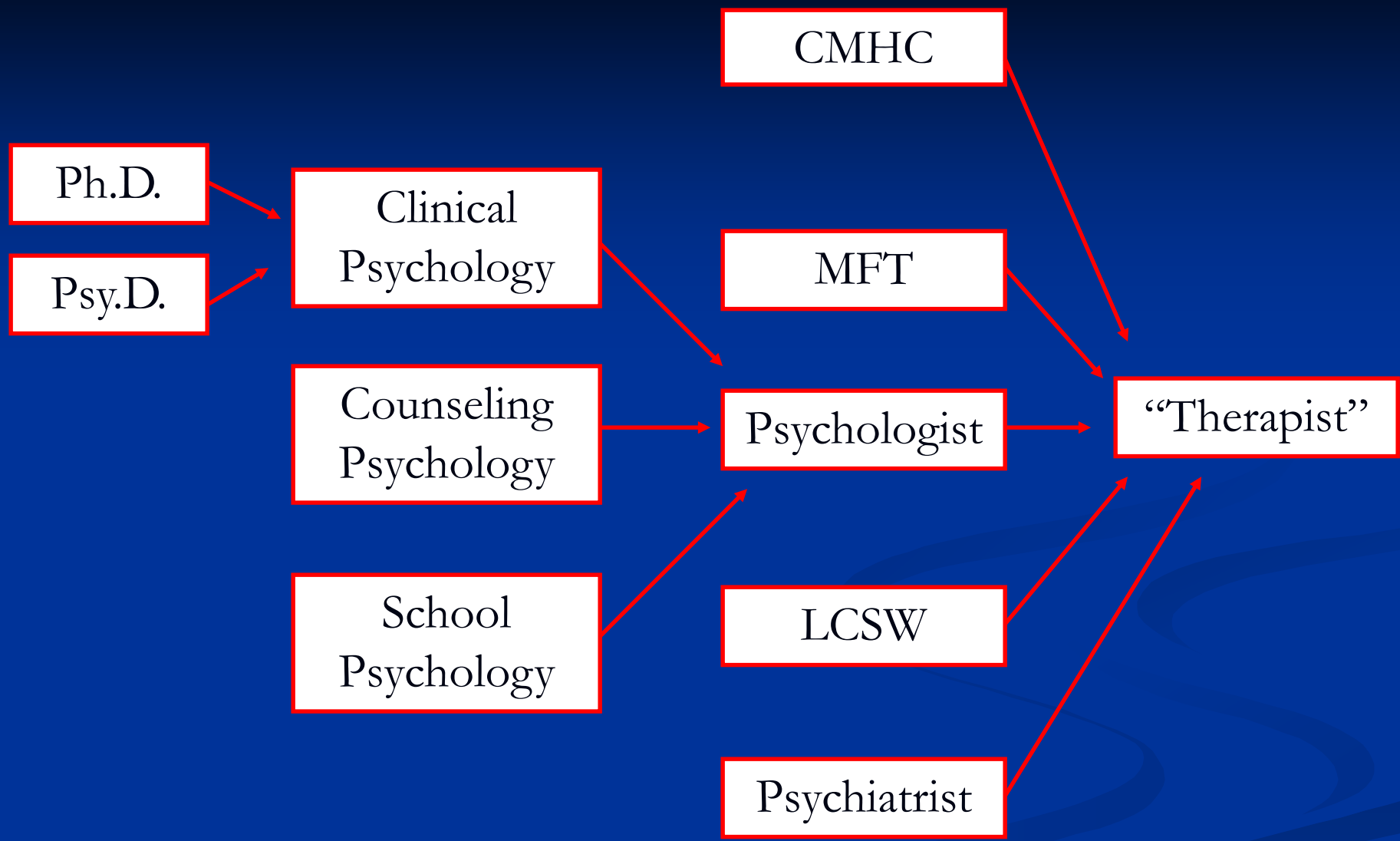


So, you want to be a  
mental health  
professional?

Jim Graham

- Mental health professionals provide services intended to treat mental illness or improve the mental health of individuals.
  - Individual treatment of adults and children
  - Group treatments
  - Treatment of family and couples
  - Assessment and diagnosis

- Mental health services fall within the scope of practice of several licensures
- Licensure types and requirements vary by state.
  - Check the laws for the state you'd like to practice
  - Usually, graduating from an “accredited” program keeps your license portable
  - Washington Department of Health
    - <http://www.doh.wa.gov/>



- Psychologist
- Clinical Mental Health Counselor
- Marriage and Family Therapist
- (Licensed Clinical Social Worker)
- **(Psychiatrist)**

# Psychiatry

- Psychiatrists are medical doctors, and are first trained as physicians
  - Complete medical school
  - Complete a rotating internship
  - Complete a residency in psychiatry
- Psychiatrists have prescription privileges and many focus on medication management.

- Psychologist
- Clinical Mental Health Counselor
- Marriage and Family Therapist
- **(Licensed Clinical Social Worker)**
- ~~■ (Psychiatrist)~~

# Licensed Clinical Social Work

- This is not a specialty I know much about
- Most states require a Masters degree in Social Work.
- While many Licensed Clinical Social Workers engage in individual treatment, they also enact change through public policy and interacting with clients' environments.



- Psychologist
- Clinical Mental Health Counselor
- Marriage and Family Therapist
- ~~(Licensed Clinical Social Worker)~~
- ~~(Psychiatrist)~~

# Clinical Mental Health Counselors

- **Education:** Masters in Counseling or related field.
  - Licensed at the Masters level (though you can get a doctorate in Counseling Education)
- **Accrediting Body:** Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP); <http://www.cacrep.org/directory/>
- **Program Length:** 2 years of graduate school, typically followed by a year of supervised experience.

# Clinical Mental Health Counselors

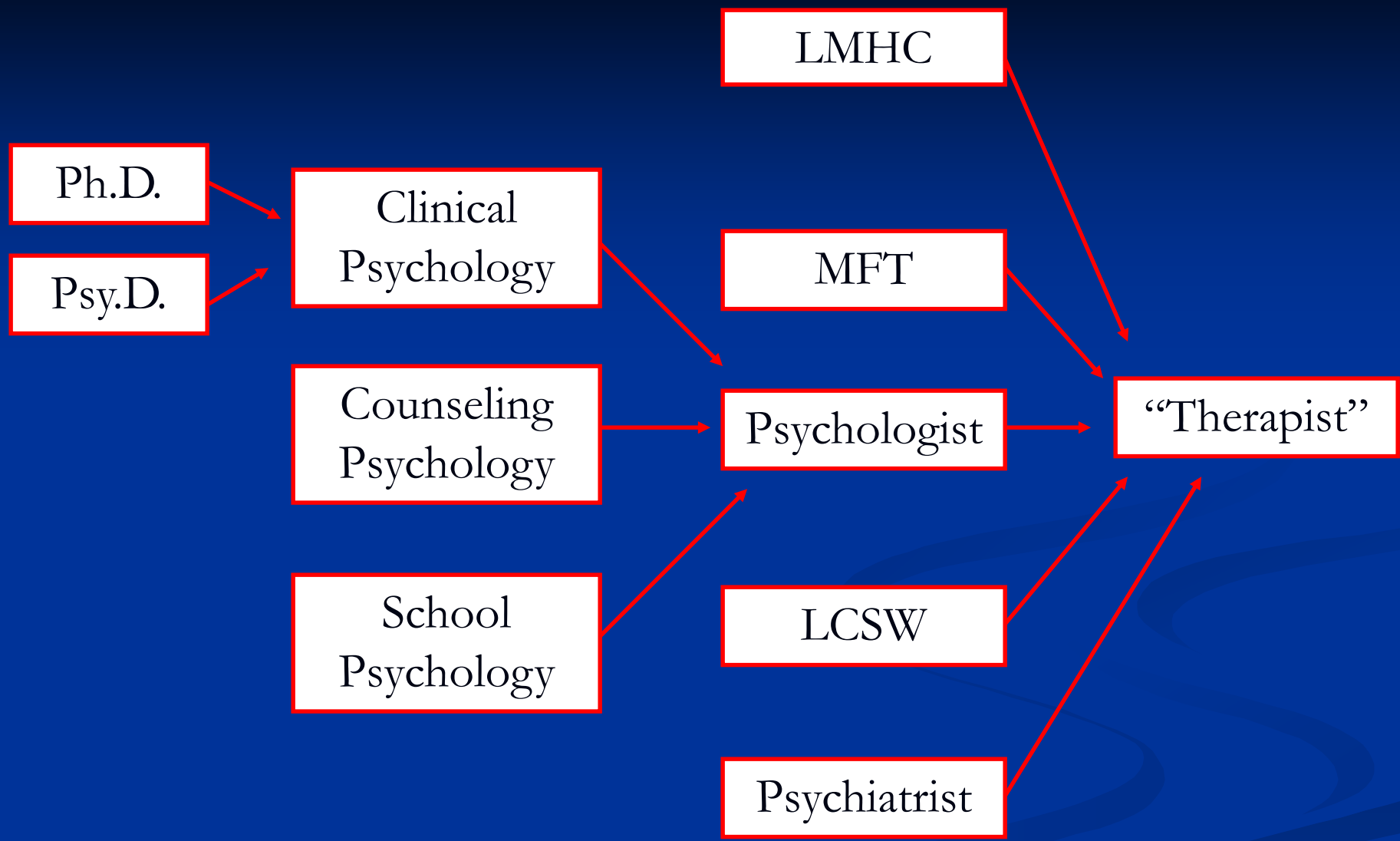
- Scope of practice includes:
  - Provide mental health services to children, individuals, couples, families, and groups.
  - While some testing is within the scope of counseling, formal psychological assessment is generally not

# Marriage and Family Therapists

- **Education:** Masters or doctorate in Marriage and Family Therapy
  - Licensed at the Masters level
- **Accrediting Body:** Commission on Accreditation of Marriage and Family Therapy Education - COAMFTE  
[http://coamfte.org/iMIS15/COAMFTE/Directory\\_of\\_Accredited\\_Programs/MFT\\_Training\\_Programs.aspx](http://coamfte.org/iMIS15/COAMFTE/Directory_of_Accredited_Programs/MFT_Training_Programs.aspx)
- **Program Length:** 2 years of graduate school, typically followed by a year of supervised experience.

# Marriage and Family Therapists

- Scope of practice includes:
  - More involved training in family and couple's therapy
  - Can still provide mental health services to children, individuals, and groups.
  - While some testing is within the scope of MFT, formal psychological assessment is generally not



# Psychologist

- **Education:** Doctorate (Ph.D., Psy.D., or Ed.D.) in Clinical Psychology, Counseling Psychology, or School Psychology
  - Licensed at the Doctoral level
- **Accrediting Body:** American Psychological Association (APA); <http://www.apa.org/ed/accreditation/programs/index.aspx>
- **Program Length:** 6 or more years of graduate school (including a full time internship), typically followed by a year of supervised experience.

# Psychologists

- Scope of practice includes:
  - Provide mental health services to children, individuals, couples, families, and groups.
  - Administering and interpreting psychological tests (personality, IQ, achievement, etc.)
  - In some states, limited prescription privileges are available with additional training



# Types of Degrees for Psychologists

- Clinical vs. Counseling Psychology
- Ph.D. vs. Psy.D.

## Clinical Psychology

- Traditionally:
  - Based on the medical model
  - Treats the seriously mentally ill
- Often
  - Accept a higher % of folks with Bachelor degrees
  - Housed in Psychology Departments

## Counseling Psychology

- Traditionally:
  - Based on the developmental model
  - Treats phase-of-life and adjustment disorders
- Often
  - Accepts a higher % of folks with Masters degrees
  - Housed in Education Departments

Any more, Clinical and Counseling programs are relatively indistinguishable

## Ph.D.

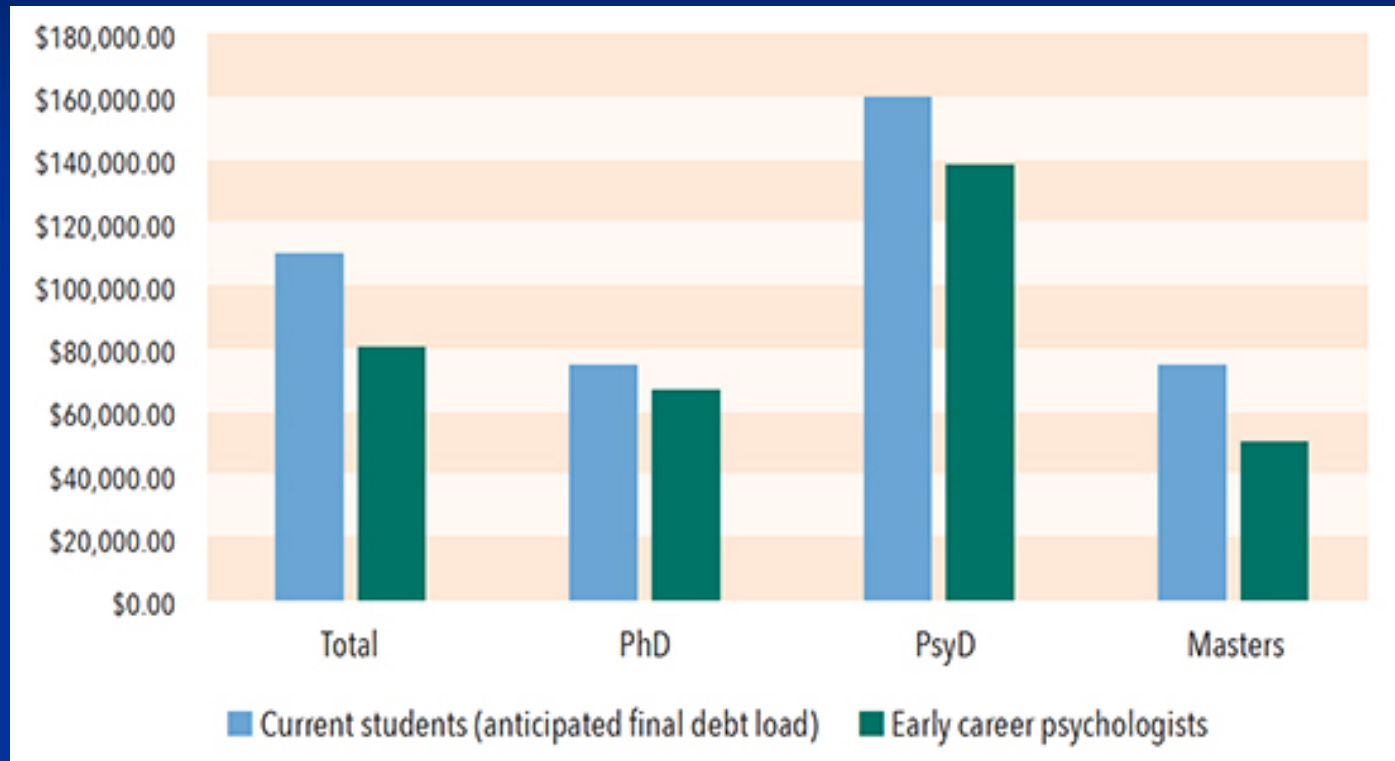
- Boulder Model, Scientist-Practitioner
  - Trains students to be practitioners and **creators** of research
- Often
  - Clinical or Counseling
  - Have small cohort sizes (2 to 12 students)
  - Housed in public and private schools
  - Cheaper, more competitive

## Psy.D.

- Vail Model, Practitioner-Scholar
  - Trains students to be practitioners and **consumers** of research
- Often
  - Clinical Only
  - Have medium to large cohort sizes (8 to 60+)
  - Housed in private and free-standing professional schools
  - More expensive, less competitive

- Good reasons to go for your doctorate:
  - You want to be trained extensively in research
  - You want to become a faculty member at a university
  - In psychology: you want to make formal psychological assessment part of your career
  
- Bad reasons to go for a doctorate:
  - Ego

# Median debt loads for current graduate students and early career psychologists, 2014



Doran, J. M., Kraha, A., Marks, L. R., Ameen, E. J., & El-Ghoroury, N. H. (2016). Graduate debt in psychology: A quantitative analysis. *Training and Education in Professional Psychology, 10*(1), 3-13.

# Median Salaries by License

- CMHC: 42k
- MFT: 48k (but fewer jobs available)
- Psychologist in professional service setting: 85k  
(mean 100k, n=60,000)

<https://money.usnews.com/careers/best-jobs/rankings/best-social-services-jobs>

<http://www.apa.org/workforce/publications/2015-salaries/index.aspx?tab=4>

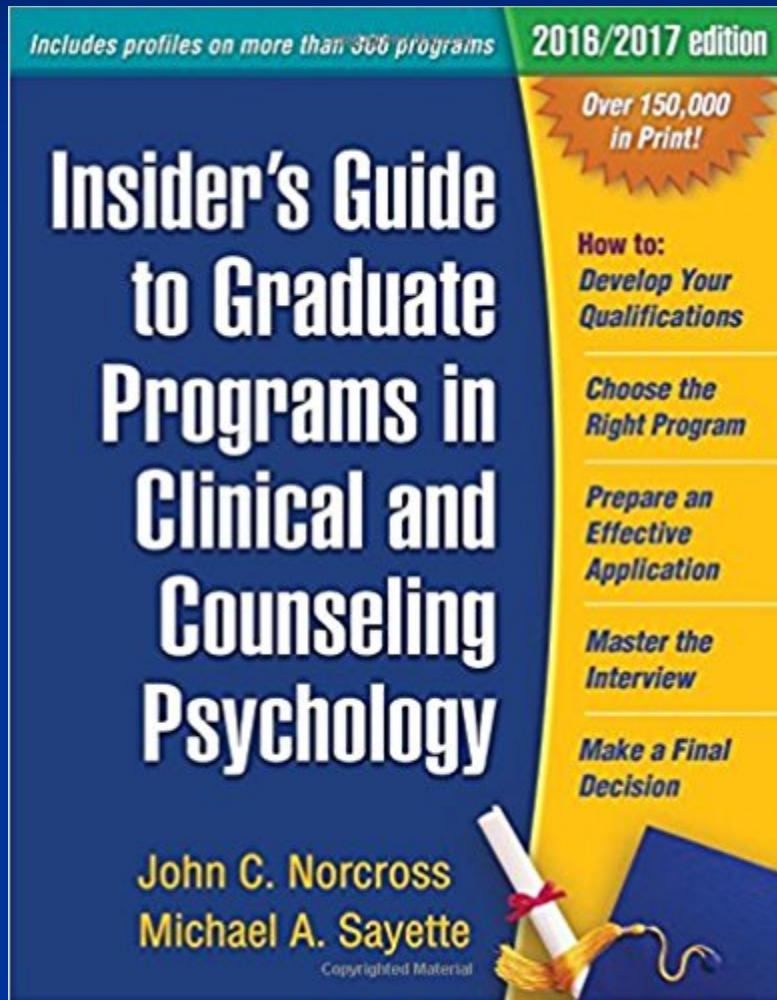
# Still want to be a mental health professional?

- Consider the costs
  - Finances, relocation, disruption of employment
- Consider the benefits
  - Salary, quality of life, specific work
- Remember, priorities change, and the reality of something doesn't always match our expectations
  - 6+ years can be a big commitment
  - If you get a Masters, you can always return for a doctorate later





# Further Information



- For those interested in doctoral programs in Clinical or Counseling Psychology, the best resource is:

<https://www.amazon.com/Insiders-Graduate-Programs-Counseling-Psychology/dp/1462525725>



- “Eye on Psy Chi” has some great articles on issues pertaining to graduate school:  
[http://www.psichi.org/?page=eye\\_main#.Wgt9Y1tSxQQ](http://www.psichi.org/?page=eye_main#.Wgt9Y1tSxQQ)