

# Top Liability Risks for Psychiatrists

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Sound, heavily documented care is no doubt one of the top methods of protection when facing claims and working with patients. As a psychiatrist, there are two major forms of protection available:

1. Heavily document each case to justify sound clinical treatment
2. Stay protected with the proper professional liability protection plan

Identifying the best defenses is a good strategy to prevent malpractice, but what are the dangers and risks you are protecting against? Mental health patients come with a variety of often overlapping diagnoses, and not all risks are easy to assess. In this post, we'll outline the top risks and claims prevention methods so that you can keep your practice safe as well as your patients.

## **#1 Liability Risk for Psychologists: Psychopharmacology**

The largest verdicts/settlements for psychiatrists typically involve damage and lifelong care to the patient. A top cause for this is lithium toxicity (causing renal failure). For patients with bipolar disorder, swallowing too much of diagnosed lithium over the long term can cause dehydration and chronic toxicity. Over a short period, an overdose can cause acute toxicity resulting in coma, muscle twitches, seizures or kidney failure.

The best defense? Extreme chronicling of paperwork and meetings before diagnosis or prescription.

## **#2 Liability Risk for Psychologists: HIPAA & Information Management**

Breaches of private information, especially electronic records and tele-psychiatry, are extremely grey areas of the medical arena! Failure to protect or store documents properly is a huge liability for your practice. Invest in a HIPAA compliant service or method and do not risk this major shutdown on your practice.

Stay protected! Professional Liability Risks are not all obvious: for mental health professionals, [there are many steps you can take to prevent an unnecessary claim](#) - and we're happy to advise you.