

COUNSELING

What can I do with this graduate degree?

AREAS

EMPLOYERS

STRATEGIES

MENTAL HEALTH

Individual and Group Counseling
Case Management
Medication Monitoring
Crisis Intervention
Program Planning
Administration

Residential treatment facilities
In/Outpatient psychiatric care units
Mobile crisis units
Hospitals
Behavioral health programs
Social service agencies
Non-profit organizations
Religious and pastoral organizations
Hospices
Child guidance clinics
Family planning centers
Adult service programs
Group homes
Public and private schools
Local, state, and federal government agencies including:
Armed Forces
Department of Child and Family Services
Department of Corrections
Department of Human Services
Department of Mental Health
Department of Justice
Department of Veterans Affairs
Private or group practices
Employee Assistance Programs (EAP)

Gain practical experience with children, families, and individuals with mental health issues.
Become familiar with government and community resources available for those in need.
Volunteer with a local social service or non-profit organization to test interests.
Conduct informational interviews or shadow professionals in a variety of fields.
Participate in community events to become familiar with local organizations and community members.
Develop strong communication skills and the desire to help others.
Learn to work well with different types of people.
Cultivate multicultural competence.
Develop ability to work well under pressure and manage stress.
Research government hiring procedures.
Obtain certification as a Mental Health Service Provider (MHSP) and/or a Clinical Mental Health Counselor (CCMHC).
Consult the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC) for state licensure requirements.

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY

Pre-marital Counseling
Couples' Counseling
Conflict Resolution
Divorce Mediation
Sexual Counseling
Child/Spousal Abuse Counseling

Private or group practice
Local, state, and federal government agencies
Social service agencies
Religious and pastoral organizations
Hospitals

Gain practical experience with children and families.
Acquire knowledge of group dynamics and stressors unique to families.
Develop skills in conflict mediation.
Cultivate multicultural competence and an understanding of how values may impact practice.
Obtain certification as a Marriage and Family Therapist (MFT).

AREAS

EMPLOYERS

STRATEGIES

SCHOOL COUNSELING/EDUCATION

School Counseling

Elementary
Middle School
High School
College/Career Planning
Student Services

Public and private schools, K-12
Departments of Education

Gain experience through mentoring, tutoring, or volunteering with a school based organization.
Acquire knowledge of stressors unique to children and families.
Plan to collaborate with multidisciplinary teams including teachers, social workers, school administrators, therapists, and others.
Become familiar with various assessments and evaluations utilized in educational settings.
Obtain certification as a school counselor (NCSC).
Consult ASCA for state certification requirements.

Education

Teaching
Administration
Student Support Services
Program Development
Program Evaluation

Colleges and universities:
Academic departments
Student affairs units
Research centers
Counseling centers

Obtain a PhD to teach in post-secondary schools.
Specialize or take additional courses in college student personnel for student affairs positions.
Complete an internship or graduate assistantship in a college setting to be competitive for jobs.
Develop strong communication and writing skills.
Assist faculty members with research projects.
Develop strong background in statistics and research for higher education program development and evaluation.
Join professional associations and attend relevant conferences.

CAREER COUNSELING

Individual and/or Group Counseling
Assessment
Career Planning
Job Searching
Employee Evaluation
Program Development
Out Placement

Large corporations
Colleges and universities
Vocational schools
Government agencies including:
Armed forces
One Stop Career Centers
Employment offices
Career development centers
Employee Assistance Programs (EAP)
Private practice

Obtain practical experience through part-time or summer jobs, internships, assistantships, or volunteering in a career center or employment agency.
Learn to work well with different types of people.
Develop strong communication skills.
Acquire knowledge of effective interviewing and resume writing skills.
Investigate a wide variety of careers, areas of study, and related assessment tools.
Become familiar with government and community resources available for those in need.

AREAS

EMPLOYERS

STRATEGIES

CAREER COUNSELING CONTINUED

Seek certification on various assessments.
Become familiar with government hiring procedures.
Join the National Career Development Association
and apply for Master Career Counselor (MCC)
status.

REHABILITATION

Individual and Group Counseling
Vocational Counseling
Assessment
Program Development
Program Evaluation

Hospitals
Residential treatment facilities
Drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs
Correctional facilities
Probation services
Group homes
Nursing homes
Assisted living facilities
Senior centers
Adult service programs
Therapeutic recreation centers
College/university disabilities offices
State and federal government including:
 Department of Social Services
 Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies
 Veterans Affairs

Gain practical experience working with people who
have physical disabilities, the elderly, children, and
families.
Become familiar with human development and issues
specific to aging and disabilities.
Volunteer with agencies providing services to these
populations such as Meals on Wheels, Project
Live, etc.
Seek knowledge of assessment procedures and
therapeutic recreational activities.
Research government and community resources
available for those in need.
Expect to work on multidisciplinary teams.
Obtain certification as a rehabilitation counselor (CRC)
through the CRCC.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Addictions Counseling
Behavioral Disorders Counseling
Program Development
Program Evaluation
Assessment

Hospitals
Residential treatment facilities
Drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs
Vocational rehabilitation agencies
Correctional facilities
Probation services
Group homes
Community mental health organizations
Local, state, and federal government agencies

Gain practical experience working with people who
have alcohol and drug issues and/or behavioral
disorders.
Become familiar with assessment procedures and
typical interventions.
Volunteer with local hospitals, detox centers, or
residential treatment facilities.
Investigate government and community resources
available for those in need.
Attend community meetings such as AA or NA.
Learn to work well with different types of people.
Develop multicultural competence.
Seek knowledge of psychopharmacology and dual
diagnosis issues.
Obtain certification as a Master Addictions Counselor
(MAC).

AREAS

SOCIAL SERVICES

Case Management
Program Development
Community Education
Administration
Advocacy
Community Relations
Mental Health Services
Volunteer Coordination
Research
Grant Writing

EMPLOYERS

Child guidance clinics
Correctional facilities
Consulting firms
Non-profit and social service organizations
Research organizations
Hospitals: military, psychiatric, VA, or general
Health maintenance organizations
Nursing homes
Assisted living facilities
Federal, state, and local government including:
 Department of Child and Family Services
 Department of Corrections
 Department of Human Services
 Department of Justice
 Department of Mental Health
 Department of Veterans Affairs

STRATEGIES

Some graduates of counseling programs may choose social service roles in which they are not providing clinical counseling but perform other functions.
Volunteer with a local social service or non-profit organization to test interests.
Participate in community events to become familiar with local organizations and community resources.
Learn to work well with different types of people from varying socioeconomic, racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds.
Develop a wide range of skills such as presenting, grant writing, and fund raising. Sometimes professionals in nonprofit organizations fill multiple roles in their jobs.
Become familiar with government hiring procedures.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Many undergraduate majors serve as good preparation to enter counseling professions. Sometimes even seemingly unrelated majors, such as communication studies, can work. If pursuing a graduate degree, some programs require certain undergraduate coursework while other programs are open to any undergraduate degree. Research requirements at schools of interest.
- Graduate entrance exams are required for entry into a master's or PhD program. Though most will require only the Graduate Record Exam (GRE), some may also require the GRE in Psychology.
- Graduate programs should be accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) in order to ensure a smooth transition towards licensure or certification.
- Most counseling PhD programs require a master's degree in counseling or a related field and/or several years of experience for admission. However, many programs accept, if not require, bachelor's level applicants.
- Many counseling positions require credentials as a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) in order to provide services or to go into private or group practice. Licensure can require an additional 2-3 years of supervised experience after graduation depending upon state requirements.
- Additional credentials may be required for specialized fields such as Marriage and Family Therapy, Career Counseling, Substance Abuse Counseling, or School Counseling. Refer to the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC) and state licensure requirements to determine which credentials are needed.
- Employment opportunities are expected to grow in each of the counseling areas due to changing legislation, expansion of services, increasing student enrollment, improved reimbursement from managed care companies, and decreased stigma surrounding seeking professional help.
- It is important to join and utilize professional organizations such as the American Counseling Association throughout your studies, as well as when looking for employment. These organizations often advertise grants, promote networking, advocate for students and professionals, and provide resources and important information regarding professional issues.