

# 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

#### **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

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.

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.