

# COUNSELING

## What can I do with this graduate degree?

### AREAS

#### MENTAL HEALTH

Individual and Group Counseling

Case Management

Medication Monitoring

Crisis Intervention

Program Planning

Administration

Counseling Therapy and Speciality Areas Include:

Eating Disorders

Grief

Hypnotherapy

Animal-assisted

Equine

Expressive Arts:

Music

Art

Dance

Play

See other areas on the following pages

### EMPLOYERS

Residential treatment facilities

In/Outpatient psychiatric care units

Mobile crisis units

Hospitals

Behavioral health programs

Social service agencies

Nonprofit 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 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

Correctional facilities

Private or group practices

Employee Assistance Programs (EAP)

### STRATEGIES

Obtain a master's degree in mental health counseling or related area.

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 organization to test interest in working with different populations or presenting problems.

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, listening, and organizational skills, along with a sense of empathy.

Learn to work well with different types of people.

Cultivate multicultural and diversity competence.

Develop the ability to work well under pressure and manage stress.

Join professional organizations such as Chi Sigma Iota (CSI) or American Counseling Association (ACA) to learn about current issues in the field.

Research government hiring procedures and state licensure regulations.

Obtain national certification as a Mental Health Service Provider (MHSP) through the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC) and/or state dependent certification.

Many professional associations offer training and certification in specialty areas. Research your area of interest for opportunities.

## 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

Earn a master's degree in school counseling.  
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 National Certified School Counselor (NCSC) through the National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC).

Join professional organizations such as American School Counselor Association (ASCA) to learn more about the field.

#### 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 development for student affairs positions.  
Complete an internship or graduate assistantship in a college setting to be competitive for jobs.  
Acquire an educational specialist (EdS) degree beyond a master's for further training within the field of education.

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 such as Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) or ASCA and attend relevant conferences.

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### CAREER COUNSELING

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

Colleges and universities  
Vocational schools  
Local, state, and federal government including:  
Armed forces  
One Stop Career Centers  
Employment offices  
Correctional facilities

Obtain practical experience through part-time or summer jobs, internships, assistantships, or volunteer work in a career center or employment agency.  
Learn to work well with different types of people.  
Develop strong communication skills.

**AREAS**

**EMPLOYERS**

**STRATEGIES**

**CAREER COUNSELING CONTINUED**

Probation services  
Career development centers  
Large corporations  
Employee Assistance Programs (EAP)  
Private practice

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.  
Seek certification on various assessments.  
Obtain a master's degree with a special emphasis in career counseling to increase marketability (not required but preferred).  
Become familiar with government hiring procedures.  
Join the National Career Development Association (NCDA) and apply for Master Career Counselor (MCC) or Master Career Development Professional (MCDP) status.

**MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY**

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

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

Obtain a master's degree in marriage and family therapy or related graduate degree.  
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).  
Join professional organizations such as American Counseling Association (ACA) and/or American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) to learn more about the field.  
Consult the Association of Marital and Family Therapy Regulatory Board (AMFTRB) for more information on state licensure regulations.

## AREAS

## EMPLOYERS

## STRATEGIES

### REHABILITATION

Individual and Group Counseling  
Vocational Counseling  
Assessment  
Program Development  
Program Evaluation  
Advocacy/Intervention  
Administration

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

Gain practical experience working with people who have physical disabilities, the elderly, veterans, adolescents, 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.  
Obtain a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling to increase marketability.  
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 Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC).

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### SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Addictions Counseling  
Behavioral Disorders Counseling  
Individual and Group Counseling  
Case Management  
Program Development  
Program Evaluation  
Assessment

Hospitals  
Residential treatment facilities  
Drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs  
Outpatient facilities  
Employee Assistance Programs (EAP)  
Local, state, and federal government including:  
    Department of Social Services  
    Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies  
    Department of Veterans Affairs  
    Correctional facilities  
    Juvenile detention facilities  
    Probation services  
Group homes  
Community mental health organizations  
Private or group practices

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 Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) or Narcotics Anonymous (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) through the National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC).

## AREAS

## EMPLOYERS

## STRATEGIES

### SOCIAL SERVICES

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

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  
Local, state, and federal 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

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.

### 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.
- 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. Since licensure is state specific, most counselors choose to also pursue licensure as a National Certified Counselor (NCC) through the National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC).
- 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 NBCC or NCDA (for career counseling) 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.