

COUNSELING

What can I do with this graduate degree?

AREAS

MENTAL HEALTH

Individual counseling

Group counseling

Case management

Crisis intervention

Program planning

Administration

Advocacy/Intervention

Religious-based/Pastoral counseling

Counseling therapy and speciality areas:

Diagnostic specializations (e.g. Eating Disorders,

Grief, Trauma)

Hypnotherapy/EMDR

Animal-assisted

Equine

Expressive Arts:

Music

Art

Dance

Play

Meditation

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:

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
Administration

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
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.

CAREER COUNSELING

Individual counseling
Group counseling
Assessment
Career planning
Job searching
Employee evaluation
Program development

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

Career coaching
Advocacy/Intervention
Research
Grant writing
Community/Employer relations
outplacement

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
Family counseling
Reunification counseling

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

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 (In TN this role is listed as a Rule 31 Listed Family Mediator in divorce proceedings)
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

AREAS

EMPLOYERS

STRATEGIES

REHABILITATION

Individual counseling
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).

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Addictions counseling
Behavioral disorders counseling
Individual counseling
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/Intervention
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 or theatre, 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.