

Counseling

Nature of the Profession

Counselors assist people with personal, family, mental health, educational, and career decisions and problems. Their duties depend on the individuals they serve and the settings in which they work.

School and college counselors work in elementary, secondary, and postsecondary schools. They help students evaluate their abilities, interests, talents, and personality characteristics to develop realistic academic and career goals. Counselors use interviews, counseling sessions, tests, or other methods when evaluating and advising students. They operate career information centers and career education programs.

Rehabilitation counselors help people deal with the personal, social, and vocational effects of disabilities. They evaluate the strengths and limitations of individuals, provide personal and vocational counseling, and arrange for medical care, vocational training, and job placement.

Mental health counselors emphasize prevention and work with individuals and groups to promote mental health. They help individuals deal with substance abuse, suicide, stress management, self-esteem problems, job and career concerns, educational decisions, and family, parenting, and marital problems. Mental health counselors work closely with other specialists including psychiatrists, psychologists, clinical social workers, psychiatric nurses, and school counselors.

Other counseling specialties include marriage and family, multicultural, vocational, and gerontological counseling.

APTITUDES

- Ability to learn and apply counseling theories and techniques
- Strong verbal abilities for talking with and listening to clients, reading professional literature, and writing reports
- Ability to work with a variety of people and a desire to help others
- Ability to make judgments based on data, observations, and experience
- Good math skills for interpreting test results

EDUCATION

The minimum educational requirement is a master's degree in counseling. This requires a four-year bachelor's degree and a minimum of two years in a master's level program.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS IN NEBRASKA

- Chadron State College – Chadron (M)
- Creighton University – Omaha (M)
- Doane College – Lincoln (M)
- Grace University – Omaha (M)
- University of Nebraska – Kearney (M), Lincoln (M,D), Omaha (M)
- Wayne State College – Wayne (B,M)

LICENSURE/CERTIFICATION

An applicant for a license to practice as a mental health practitioner must have a master's degree, have three thousand (3,000) hours of supervised experience in mental health practice, and have passed the mental health practitioner exam.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

American Counseling Association

Web Address: www.counseling.org

National Board for Certified Counselors

Web Address: www.nbcc.org

Nebraska Counseling Association

Web Address: www.n-c-a.org