

Mental Health Counseling Program – M.S.

Department of Educational Psychology and Counseling
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M.S. in Counseling with a Concentration in Mental Health Counseling Mission Statement and Overview

The focus of the Mental Health Counseling Program is the preparation of excellent counselor practitioners and scholars to serve in agencies that provide counseling to adults, adolescents, children, and families (such as outpatient and inpatient mental health treatment centers, programs serving troubled youth and families, hospitals, counseling and related service programs in colleges and universities, drug and alcohol treatment programs, and private practices). Our graduates are self-aware counselors and scholars whose life long learning continually informs their service, practice, and development. Many also choose to continue their graduate studies at the doctoral level.

The Mental Health Counseling Program at the University of Tennessee is a 60-credit hour program, accredited by the Counsel for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). The program of study includes at least 1000 hours of closely supervised practicum and internship counseling experiences in clinical settings. Each student's program is customized to support individual goals as well as to provide a common core of counselor preparation. Graduates of the program will have completed the educational and graduate clinical preparation requirements qualifying them to apply for the National Counselors Exam (this is the exam for National Counselor Certification and for licensure in Tennessee and many other states). Graduates of the program will also have completed the educational and graduate clinical preparation requirements for licensure as a professional counselor with mental health service provider designation (LPC-MHSP) in Tennessee. Our CACREP accreditation helps ensure the portability of the degree. For example, the counselor licensure requirements of many states match the CACREP standards for Mental Health Counseling Programs.

The faculty provides rigorous, experiential, practical education, aimed at maximizing the professional and personal-development of our graduates. It is important that our graduate students learn and develop in a challenging and supportive learning community.

Goals

The goal of the Mental Health Counseling Program is the preparation of future counselors as:

- Strong, effective, self-aware counselors
- Persons ready to develop deeply healing therapeutic relationships
- Professionals well-skilled in the full range of task areas needed from mental health counselors
- Scholars with a solid background of understanding and a personal and professional curiosity to guide their ongoing, life-long study of counseling, mental health, and human development
- Persons and professionals ready to thrive in and embrace the increasingly diverse world in which we all live and work.

Objectives

After completion of the Mental Health Counseling Program, graduates will:

1. Score higher than the national average on the National Counselor Exam (NCE) in each of the eight content areas: helping/counseling relationships, human growth and development, social and cultural foundations, group work, career and life style development, appraisal, research and program evaluation, professional orientation and ethics.
2. Score higher than the national average on the NCE in each of the five work behavior areas: fundamentals of counseling, assessment and career counseling, group counseling, programmatic and clinical interventions, professional practice issues.
3. Obtain and maintain placement/employment in an appropriate mental health counseling agency or practice, or succeed in doctoral graduate education.
4. Practice effective and efficient counseling.
5. Provide necessary and effective accountability and advocacy for counseling services.
6. Consistently provide counseling services within the laws and ethics governing the counseling profession.
7. Effectively advocate for and consult on behalf of clients, and be effective agents of social changes that positively impact the lives of potential clients.
8. Qualify for certification by the National Board of Certified Counselors.
9. Qualify for mental health counselor license eligibility with mental health service provider status.
10. Qualify for membership on necessary managed care panels that provide insurance for mental health counseling by licensed professional counselors.

Atmosphere, Advisement and Mentoring

The faculty believes in group process, human connections and person to person interactions. These qualities are reflected in our courses and our communications and interactions between the faculty and students. Our methods of advisement are based on our understanding of these concepts, and our chapter of the Chi Sigma Iota Honor Society, an international professional counseling organization, supports these qualities.

We provide group and individual advisement. Mental Health Counseling Masters students meet each semester to discuss issues of advisement including registration, course offerings, thesis and elective options, other advisement issues, as well as time-, self-, and life-management while thriving in a rigorous graduate program. This helps our students get to know each other and receive answers to their advisement related questions from faculty, other students, and peers. Each student also has an individual advisor with whom he/she meets to establish and maintain an individualized course of study and to address additional advisement questions.

We have an active chapter of Chi Sigma Iota, the honor and service society for Counselor Education programs. Along with service events, our chapter provides social gatherings each semester and a mentoring program that offers each new student a mentor who is an advanced graduate student.

Program Length and Pacing Graduate Study

The 60-credit hour Mental Health Counseling Program can be completed in 2.5 years. While we are careful to help students meet this time frame, we also want you to know that rigorous graduate studies in mental health counseling should be a critically important, significantly life-enhancing addition to your professional and personal development. Therefore we encourage each student to get the full value of all courses and experiences, and to study at the pace that maximizes her or his individual learning and development experience. We recommend quality of study and development over quickness of pace. The maximum time restriction is that courses used toward the master's degree must have been taken within six years of graduation.

Required Courses

COUN 431 Personality and Mental Health	[3-credit hours]
COUN 480 Interviewing and Counseling Techniques	[3-credit hours]
COUN 525 Formal Measurement in Education and Counseling	[3-credit hours]
COUN 551 Theory and Practice of Counseling	[3-credit hours]
COUN 554 Group Dynamics and Methods	[3-credit hours]
COUN 555 Practicum in Counseling	[3-credit hours]
COUN 556 Orientation to Mental Health Counseling	[3-credit hours]
COUN 521 Mental Health Consultation	[3-credit hours]
COUN 535 Ethical, Legal, and Professional Issues in Counseling	[3-credit hours]
COUN 552 Career Development	[3-credit hours]
COUN 559 Internship in Mental Health Counseling	[9-credit hours]
COUN 570 Cross-Cultural Counseling	[3-credit hours]
Psychology 512 Life Span Development	
Or	
Educational Psychology 510 Psychological Theories of Human Development Applied to Education	[select one 3-credit hour course from this set]
Psychology 573 Descriptive and Theoretical Psychopathology	
Or	
Social Work 524 Psychopathology and Social Deviance	[select one 3-credit hour course from this set]

Educational Psychology 550 Statistics and Research Design [3-credit hours]

Electives or Thesis by advisement (please see [Thesis Option](#) and [Elective & Specialization Possibilities](#) below) [9-credit hours]

Practicum and Internship

Mental Health Counseling Program students complete a one semester, 3-credit hour practicum in a setting providing mental health counseling. This work is closely supervised. Site supervisors carefully assign and monitor practicum student work with clients. Practicum students receive extensive group and individual supervision from university faculty and advanced doctoral students in Counselor Education. Students complete a minimum of 100 total hours in this practicum with at least 40 of those hours being direct service to clients.

After practicum, Mental Health Counseling Program students complete a 9-credit hour, two semester internship. While careful supervision continues from university faculty, advanced doctoral students, and site supervisors, interns are expected to increase their levels of responsibility for client care and related services to that of an excellent entry level professional counselor during this 2-semester internship. Interns complete a minimum of 900 total hours in this internship with at least 360 of those hours being direct service to clients.

Practicum and internship sites are selected in cooperation and communication with the Mental Health Counseling Program Practicum & Internship Placement Coordinator, as well as advisors and instructors. Students are welcome to suggest sites and areas of interest as well as to ask for guidance and suggestions. Students are required to please have all sites approved by the Mental Health Counseling Program Practicum & Internship Coordinator before engaging in significant communication with persons at the site regarding a practicum or internship at the site.

Thesis Option

Students have the option to complete a thesis as a significant area of specialized study instead of completing electives. Students using this option will devote nine credit hours to this work and may opt out of comprehensive exams. Therefore, the time expenditure of the thesis should be expected to be beyond that of three 3-credit hour courses. This option can be particularly beneficial to students hoping to maximally prepare themselves for doctoral study. It can be an excellent way to develop strong research skills (e.g., program evaluation, needs assessment) and to pursue highly individualized interests.

Elective & Specialization Possibilities

Electives are selected with input from advisors, mentors and others, and must be approved by advisors. Course descriptions and additional course information is made available to students in the program through a binder of information related to common elective courses, as well as through other sources, such as advisor experience, mentoring students experience, and the Graduate Catalog. A list of common specialization areas and possible elective courses follows.

Children and Adolescents

Counselor Education 504/604 – Special Topics
Counselor Education 566 – Approaches to Family Intervention and Counseling
Child and Family Studies 510 – Survey of Research in Child Development
Child and Family Studies 515 – Children in Contemporary Society
Child and Family Studies 522 – Naturalistic Interventions for Parents and Teachers
Child and Family Studies 525 – Seminar on Play
Child and Family Studies 530 – Families of Children with Disabilities
Child and Family Studies 540 – Parent-Child Relations (p)
Child and Family Studies 552 – Diversity in Children and Families (p)
Child and Family Studies 562 – Families and Children Coping with Stress (p)
Child and Family Studies 570 – Research Methods in Child and Family Studies (p)
Cultural Studies 592 – Social Justice and Education
Special Education 470 – Psychology of the Exceptional Child
Health 430 – Suicide and Crisis Intervention
Nutrition 517 – Childhood and Adolescent Nutrition
Psychology 475 – Adolescent Psychology
Recreation and Leisure Studies 520 – Program Design and Evaluation in Therapeutic Recreation
Recreation and Leisure Studies 521 – Facilitation Techniques in Therapeutic Recreation
Recreation and Leisure Studies 522 – Clinical Aspects in Therapeutic Recreation
Social Work 534 – Social Work Interventions with Children and Adolescents
Sociology 551 – Juvenile Delinquency and the Social Structure
Sports Studies 535 – Health and Exercise Psychology

Marriage and Family

Counselor Education 504/604 – Special Topics
Counselor Education 566 – Approaches to Family Intervention and Counseling
Child and Family Studies 522 – Naturalistic Interventions for Parents and Teachers
Child and Family Studies 530 – Families of Children with Disabilities
Child and Family Studies 540 – Parent-Child Relations (p)
Child and Family Studies 550 – Theory and Research in Family Studies
Child and Family Studies 552 – Diversity in Children and Families (p)
Child and Family Studies 562 – Families and Children Coping with Stress (p)
Child and Family Studies 563 – Family Life Education Programs
Child and Family Studies 567 – Family Violence
Child and Family Studies 570 – Research Methods in Child and Family Studies (p)
Educational Psychology 522 – Adult Development
Health 430 – Suicide and Crisis Intervention
Health 406 – Death, Dying, and Bereavement
Nutrition 516 – Maternal and Child Nutrition
Psychology 550 – Social Psychology
Social Work 532 – Short-term Interventions
Social Work 534 – Social Work Interventions with Children and Adolescents

Women's Issues

Counselor Education 504/604 – Special Topics
Counselor Education 566 – Approaches to Family Intervention and Counseling
Educational Psychology 520 – Survey of Adult Education
Educational Psychology 522 – Adult Development
Women's Studies 434 – Psychology of Gender
Women's Studies 425 – Women's Health
Health 430 – Suicide and Crisis Intervention
Nutrition 516 – Maternal and Child Nutrition

Health and Wellness

Counselor Education 504/604 – Special Topics
Counselor Education 566 – Approaches to Family Intervention and Counseling
Educational Psychology 460 – Self Management in the Helping Professions
Educational Psychology 522 – Adult Development
Public Health 555 – Health and Society
Health 430 – Suicide and Crisis Intervention
Health 406 – Death, Dying, Bereavement
Health 465 – Aging and Health
Public Health 552 – Community Health Problem Solving
Nutrition 516 – Maternal and Child Nutrition
Nutrition 517 – Childhood and Adolescent Nutrition
Nutrition 518 – Nutrition and Aging
Sport Studies 535 – Health and Exercise Psychology
Psychology 430 – Health Psychology
Recreation and Leisure Studies 520 – Program Design and Evaluation in Therapeutic Recreation
Recreation and Leisure Studies 521 – Facilitation Techniques in Therapeutic Recreation
Recreation and Leisure Studies 522 – Clinical Aspects in Therapeutic Recreation

Gerontology and Older Adults

Counselor Education 504/604 – Special Topics
Counselor Education 566 – Approaches to Family Intervention and Counseling
Educational Psychology 522 – Adult Development
Educational Psychology 528 – Psychology of Aging
Educational Psychology 585 – Seminar in Gerontology
Nursing 400 – Aging and Society
Health 465 – Aging and Health
Health 430 – Suicide and Crisis Intervention
Health 406 – Death, Dying, and Bereavement
Nutrition 518 – Nutrition and Aging
Recreation and Leisure Studies 520 – Program Design and Evaluation in Therapeutic Recreation
Recreation and Leisure Studies 521 – Facilitation Techniques in Therapeutic Recreation
Recreation and Leisure Studies 522 – Clinical Aspects in Therapeutic Recreation

Social Work 566 – Social Gerontology

Career and Employment Counseling

Counselor Education 504/604 – Special Topics

Educational Psychology 520 – Survey of Adult Education

Psychology 440 – Organizational Psychology

Rehabilitation Counseling 530 – Orientation to Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation Counseling 532 – Caseload Management in Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation Counseling 533 – Job Analysis, Development, and Placement

Rehabilitation Counseling 537 – Vocational Evaluation: Clinical Methods

Rehabilitation Counseling 541 – Psychosocial Aspects of Disability

Rehabilitation Counseling 543 – Medical Aspects of Disability

Substance Abuse Counseling

Counselor Education 504/604 – Special Topics

Counselor Education 566 – Approaches to Family Intervention and Counseling

Health 435 – Substance Use and Abuse

Health 430 – Suicide and Crisis Intervention

Social Work 534 – Social Work Interventions with Children and Adolescents

Social Work 564 – Substance Abuse

Sports Studies 535 – Health and Exercise Psychology

College Counseling

Counselor Education 504/604 – Special Topics

Educational Psychology 520 – Survey of Adult Education

Educational Psychology 522 – Adult Development

Higher Education Administration 543 – America Higher Education in Transition

Higher Education Administration 542 – The College Student and the Court

Higher Education Administration 572 – Student Development Theory and Practice in Higher Education

Higher Education Administration 574 – The College Student

Health 430 – Suicide and Crisis Intervention

Recreation and Leisure Studies 520 – Program Design and Evaluation in Therapeutic Recreation

Recreation and Leisure Studies 521 – Facilitation Techniques in Therapeutic Recreation

Recreation and Leisure Studies 522 – Clinical Aspects in Therapeutic Recreation

Probation and Correctional and Offender Counseling

Counselor Education 504/604 – Special Topics

Law 834– Antitrust

Law 854 – Investigatory Criminal Procedure

Law 855 – Adjudicatory Criminal Procedure

Health 430 – Suicide and Crisis Intervention

Social Work 532 – Psychopathology and Deviance

Sociology 451 – Criminal Justice

Sociology 452 – Minorities, Crime, and Criminal Justice

Sociology 453 – Gender and Crime
Sociology 455 – Society and Law
Sociology 459 – White-Collar Crime
Sociology 505 – Foundations of Criminology
Sociology 551 – Juvenile Delinquency and the Social Structure

Community Counseling/Nonspecific Populations

Counseling Education 504/604 – Special Topics
Counselor Education 566 – Approaches to Family Intervention and Counseling
Child and Family Studies 522 – Naturalistic Interventions for Parents and Teachers
Child and Family Studies 525 – Seminar on Play
Child and Family Studies 530 – Families of Children with Disabilities
Child and Family Studies 562 – Families and Children Coping with Stress (p)
Child and Family Studies 563 – Family Life Education Programs
Child and Family Studies 567 – Family Violence
Educational Psychology 520 – Survey of Adult Education
Educational Psychology 522 – Adult Development
Public Health 555 – Health and Society
Public Health 552 – Community Health Problem Solving
Health 430 – Suicide and Crisis Intervention
Health 406 – Death, Dying, and Bereavement
Psychology 431 – Psychology of Adjustment
Psychology 550 – Social Psychology
Recreation and Leisure Studies 520 – Program Design and Evaluation in Therapeutic Recreation
Recreation and Leisure Studies 521 – Facilitation Techniques in Therapeutic Recreation
Recreation and Leisure Studies 522 – Clinical Aspects in Therapeutic Recreation
Social Work 532 – Short-Term Interventions

Evaluation and Retention of Students

In agreement with the ethical guidelines of the American Counseling Association, the Counselor Education faculty has developed the following student evaluation and retention procedures. Respecting these guidelines, the faculty considers not only academic abilities and skill performance when making retention decisions about students, but also such aspects as whether the student has appropriate levels of maturity, judgment, emotional stability, sensitivity to others, and self awareness.

Evaluation and Retention Procedures

Prior to the end of each academic year, faculty members review progress evaluation forms and meet in order to evaluate each student's progress in academic work, teaching, supervision and counseling skills, and intrapersonal/interpersonal effectiveness. Those students assessed as having difficulty will receive written and oral feedback concerning their progress from their advisor. All written feedback is placed in the student's central file, including student responses to feedback received. Students who are identified as having deficiencies in one or more of the three areas evaluated are provided the following assistance in order to improve their performance:

1. Problem Identification Meeting

The advisor meets with the student and gives specific examples of the difficulties, which have been identified by the faculty. The student and the advisor then discuss minimal change expectations and procedures. A decision is made at this time as to the seriousness of the problem, and if it is recurring. Steps for resolution are recommended and both parties agree upon a time frame for remediation. A contract is written at this time and is signed by the students and the advisor, with the understanding that the faculty at their next meeting will review the student's progress.

2. Recurring or Critical Problems

If the situation is a continuing one, or is critical, a team of faculty members may be appointed by the program coordinator to meet with the student. The concerns are delineated in writing and given to the student prior to this meeting. During this meeting, the student is given specific information about the particular problem, the steps needed for solution, and the time frame allowed prior to determining if further action must be considered. A contract clearly stating areas which need to be improved, and the methods and time frame needed for improvement, is written and signed by the student and the involved faculty members. A copy of this agreement is given to the student and the original is placed in the student's central file.

3. Insufficient Progress, Withdrawal, Advising

If the student does not make expeditious progress toward resolution of the identified problem(s), and if the faculty agrees that the student will not be able to successfully achieve the academic, teaching, supervision, counseling, and/or intrapersonal/interpersonal effectiveness objectives of the program, then recommendation for withdrawal of the student from the program is considered. If this decision is made by vote of the counselor education faculty, it is then forwarded to the department head. Academic and vocational advising will be offered to the student.

4. Due Process Procedures

Unless the problem involves a major disciplinary action, all of the preceding steps are handled by the Counselor Education faculty. The University and the program policies are written to assure students that their rights are respected and due process is followed. If a student wishes to challenge a decision of the program regarding retention in the program, the student has the right to an appeal process, as detailed in the student handbook, *Hilltopics*. The Counselor Education

Program faculty believe that the stated procedures are in accord with the accepted educational practices and guidelines of the American Counseling Association Ethical Standards. Faculty members, through continual student evaluation and appraisal, must be aware of the personal limitations of the learner that might impede future performance. Faculty members must not only assist the learner in securing remedial assistance but also screen from the program those individuals who are unable to provide competent services.