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To validate why college counseling services are available on campuses across the country, an understanding of the issues that college students confront during their collegiate years is essential.

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College counselors have a great responsibility to the welfare of a college campus. Therefore, professional credentials serve as a safeguard for the students that we serve. College counselors are trained professionals with specific knowledge about the issues and concerns of the college student population. Professional credentials hold college counselors to a level of competency and conduct. This section will explain the various forms of college counselor training and credentials found in most college counseling services facilities.

The Name Game..... 6

College campuses have many different professionals called "counselors." However, professional counselors are much different in training and credentials than most other types of counselors found on college campuses. This section aims to highlight the training, credentials, required education level, and job responsibilities and duties of professional counselors.

Cultural Diversity 6

Cultural Diversity is an important dynamic on a college campus. College counselors are committed to promoting the importance of multicultural learning and understanding. The Diversity Statement of ACCA is included in this section.

Myths about Counseling

To those individuals not working in the counseling field, counseling and therapy can seem ambiguous and mysterious. College students are often uncertain about the expectations of the counseling process and its results. This section will provide valuable information about the realistic expectations and possible benefits of the counseling process.

Research 7

Research into college student dynamics and the need for counseling services provides support for maintaining and enhancing the work of college counselors on campuses. This section will provide citations of research that explore college student dynamics and the importance of college counselors to the overall well-being of campus life.



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Why Are Counselors Important on Campus?

College is a very unique time in a person's life. Some students are very young and away from home for the first time. Other students may be going back to school with the responsibility of a family to start a new career. No matter their reason for being in college, the lessons learned and obstacles overcome during their college years can provide a wonderful opportunity for emotional growth and maturity. However, these lessons and obstacles can also result in negative consequences such as overwhelming stress, psychological problems, and academic difficulties that affect the performance of the student.

Counseling services are designed to assist students with addressing the difficulties that they encounter during these years and to promote greater overall wellness within the student population.



What is Counseling?

Counseling is a psychotherapeutic service whereby "normal" everyday people receive help with "normal" everyday problems. The basic premise of counseling is that the person seeking help possesses within himself or herself the resources to solve the problem. By utilizing their skills and creating a special nonjudgmental atmosphere, the counselor is able to facilitate this process.

Counseling is:

Psychoeducational. The counseling process involves learning about self, origins of maladaptive behavior, options for changing behavior, interpersonal and intrapersonal competencies and options for change.

Confidential. The content of counseling sessions as well as information about clients who seek counseling are kept strictly confidential. The only limits to confidentiality are an immediate and severe threat to the life of oneself or others.



Solution-focused. Rather than focusing on the past, counseling concentrates on present behavior and the facilitation of adaptive processes. The goals for the process are concrete and measurable.

Brief. Unlike psychotherapy, most counseling processes involve between one and ten sessions with the counselor.

Psychotherapy

Some college counselors provide psychotherapy to students with moderate to severe mental illness who are attending classes and being managed with psychotropic medications. These students are often referred to counselors after a hospitalization or being seen by another counseling professional. Psychotherapy is usually longer in duration than counseling and may involve more in depth psychological work.

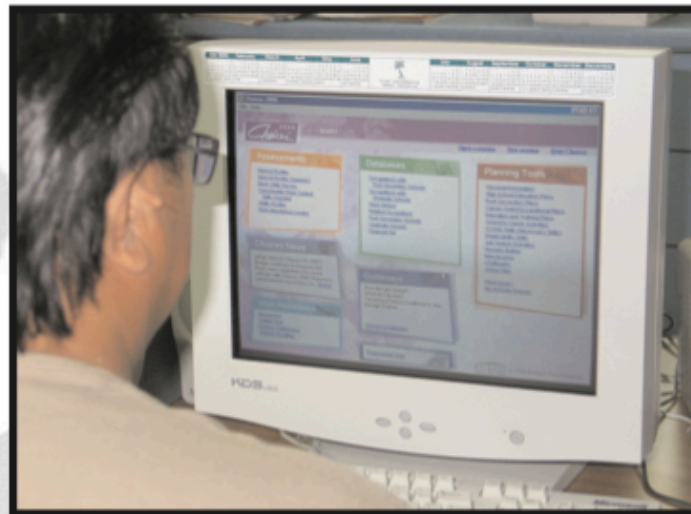


Reasons for Referring Students to the Counseling Center

- o Change in appetite or sleep patterns
- o Sudden weight loss or gain
- o Unusual problems with concentration
- o Sudden lack of motivation
- o Unusual mood swings
- o Irrational fits of anger
- o Unexplained bouts of crying
- o Lack of interest in usual pursuits
- o Increased usage of alcohol and other drugs to cope with problems

Common Issues in the College Student Population

- o Depression
- o Eating disorders such as Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia Nervosa
- o Homesickness
- o Anxiety and Stress
- o Confusion about Career Issues and Direction
- o Substance Abuse
- o Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- o Academic Concerns such as Time Management and Study Skills Development
- o Stress and Anger Management
- o Cultural Issues
- o Feelings of Isolation and Loneliness
- o Confronting discrimination and prejudice
- o Counseling services provided on college campuses are designed to assist students with addressing these issues in a professional and confidential atmosphere.



Who are College Counselors?

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College counselors are trained professionals who work with college students to promote emotional health and wellness during their college years. Although credentials, training, and education can differ among professionals, college counselors have one main objective:

To Help the Students Whom They Serve

Common Professional Credentials Found at University Counseling Centers:

LPC (Licensed Professional Counselor), LPCC (Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor)

This credential is awarded through the state where the professional resides. Although the requirements to obtain an LPC or LPCC differ from state to state, most licensure boards require a specified number of direct and indirect client contact hours and supervision hours. In order to begin earning an LPC or LPCC, one must have earned an advanced degree in counseling or counseling psychology.

NCC, National Certified Counselor

The National Board of Certified Counselors, an affiliate of the American Counseling Association, awards this credential. This is a national certification that is awarded after the counselor meets specified requirements and passes the National Counselor Exam (NCE). Counselors must also provide proof of counseling hours completed during the counseling internship.

Common Educational Credentials Found at University Counseling Centers:

M.A., M. Ed., M.S. (Master degrees in Counseling), Ed. S. (Education Specialist)

Individuals who have graduated with a masters degree in counseling will earn one of these credentials depending on the university that they attended. In order to enter a counseling program, one must have earned a bachelor degree with an emphasis in the behavioral sciences (psychology, sociology, social work, etc.). Most counseling programs require an internship of one or two semesters. During this internship, students meet with clients under the supervision of a counseling advisor or LPC. Some counseling programs are accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs. CACREP standards are implemented to insure the highest quality in counselor education and preparation. The Education Specialist degree (Ed. S.) is awarded after the completion of the master degree and requires advanced training and coursework in the field.

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Social Workers, M.S.W.

Some college counseling centers employ social workers. These professionals generally have a Master degree in social work and have done an internship before earning their M.S.W. in a college counseling environment.

Ph.D. (Doctorate of Philosophy) ,
Ed. D. (Doctorate of Education),
Psy. D. (Doctor of Psychology)

This credential is often seen with licensed counseling psychologists, professional counselors, and in some cases, clinical psychologists. A doctorate degree requires the completion of a dissertation. Both psychology and professional counseling doctoral students are required to complete an internship in order to earn their degree. This internship occurs in a university or college counseling center in order to gain more practical knowledge about the college student population and the general operations of a counseling center. As with professional counselors, psychologists are often required to be licensed in their state of employment; however, they can work if they are supervised by another licensed psychologist during their employment if they are not licensed. Supervision for licensure of psychologists lasts for a duration of 1-2 years after the earning of their doctorate degree. The Psy. D. is a practitioner's psychology doctorate degree. Psy. D. programs emphasize more training in counseling skills and assessment and less on conducting research.



Training

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As part of earning a master or doctorate degree in counseling or psychology, an internship is required. Most college counselors have had internships in a university or college counseling center, in a career planning or placement center, with academic skills training programs, or when disciplinary action mandates that a student attend counseling. Many counseling centers are accredited by the International Association of Counseling Services. This organization has specific standards that counseling centers and services must meet for accreditation.

College counselors are held by standards of ethical behavior. The contents of counseling sessions and the level of student involvement in counseling are kept strictly confidential. The general limits to confidentiality are:

- o When a student expresses intent to harm him/her self or someone else
- o There is a reasonable suspicion of abuse/neglect against a minor child, elderly person (65 or older), or a dependent adult
- o When a subpoena or other court order is received directing the disclosure of information.
- o When a consent to release information is signed by the student.

Counselors in training are supervised by a licensed counselor who monitors the counselor's progress by reviewing videotapes of sessions (after receiving written permission from the student to record or videotape), monitoring record keeping, and discussing issues confronted during the internship process. As a result, counselors are expected to expand their knowledge of counseling ethics, counseling techniques, and college student development issues.

Training usually consists of one or two semesters. Counselors are also encouraged to become affiliated with professional organizations during their training in order to promote involvement in the profession.



Common Job Requirements

- o Conduct counseling intake interviews
- o Provide individual, couples, and family counseling and psychotherapy
- o Provide career counseling and guidance
- o Provide group counseling and therapy
- o Conduct training seminars
- o Develop and present psychoeducational workshops for students, faculty, and staff
- o Provide consultation
- o Administer and interpret personality assessments, interest inventories, career assessments, and psychological testing
- o Provide emergency coverage and crisis counseling
- o Facilitates or instructs academic courses such as Career Planning, Academic Skills, Personal Development, etc.



The Name Game 9

Counselor is a common title for some student affairs professionals. However, the title "counselor" does not necessarily mean that the individual is a qualified professional who is trained to help students with their personal or career issues.

Here are other types of "counselors" commonly seen on campuses:

Admissions Counselors-

- o Represents college, university, or other institution of higher learning to high school/ community college guidance counselors, students, parents, guardians and community agencies.
- o Disseminates accurate information about employing institution, especially its academic programs, admission procedures, financial aid, scholarships, student life and housing.
- o *Educational requirements:* Bachelor degree essential in psychology, communications, or business preferably. (Masters degree preferred)

Financial Aid Counselors-

- o Determine student eligibility to receive federal, state, and instate funds based on federal regulations, state requirements, institutional policy, and available funds
- o Assists prospective and current students with applying for various financial aid programs
- o Awards financial assistance (loans, scholarships, grants, etc.) to students demonstrating need and /or merit considerations
- o *Educational requirements:* Bachelor degree with one or more years experience with financial advising

Academic Counselors-

- o Provide accurate, current curricular information to students
 - o Assist in the short-term and long-term academic program planning
 - o Disseminate information regarding post secondary education and career options
 - o Provide academic advising and assistance with course selection
 - o Monitor grades and student academic standing
 - o Assist with graduation verification and transfer evaluations
 - o *Educational requirements:* Bachelor degree essential; Master degree in counseling or student personnel usually preferred
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10 Cultural Diversity on Campus

Diversity is an important issue during a student's college years. Many students experience a type of cultural shock when they arrive on campus for their first week of classes. In many cases, this is the first opportunity for students to associate with people from different cultures, areas, and backgrounds than their own.

College counselors work closely with other campus departments and offices to promote multicultural awareness and learning on their campus. By participating in multicultural events and programming, students gain valuable insight into working in a diverse environment where differences are celebrated and explored. Counselors are present in order to provide support and guidance to students through this time of self-exploration and discovery.

Many college counseling centers also provide training and guidance to students in handling cross cultural issues and concerns on campus. Since being in a diverse atmosphere for the first time can be confusing and often scary, counselors also work with students in confronting these multicultural issues and support student exploration of their belief and value systems.

The following Diversity Statement was adopted by ACCA in March 2000 to recognize the responsibilities of college counselors in fostering cultural diversity and confronting discrimination and prejudice on college campuses. ACCA remains steadfast in our commitment to address multicultural issues on our college campuses and with our clients and counselors-in-training.

The members of the American College Counseling Association (ACCA) provide programs and services that adhere to the mission of ACCA and that enhance the learning experience for students through the promotion of social justice, community development, civility, and stewardship. ACCA recognizes that multi-dimensional diversity enriches the campus community and enhances

opportunities for human understanding, both of which contribute to the collegiate experience for all. Therefore, we pledge to provide college counseling services that nurture environments where similarities and differences among people of recognized, respected, and honored.



Research about College Students

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"Over 35% of all students expressed a need for assistance with the fear of failure, feelings of depression, feeling anxious and panicked, being assertive, controlling weight, communicating within a romantic relationship and public speaking anxiety." In a student needs survey at the University of Delaware. (Bishop, J. B., Bauer, K. W., & Becker, E. T., 1998)

"Johnston et al. (1998) found that 41% of college students engage in heavy episodic drinking, which they defined as having at least five or more drinks in a row at least once in the 2 weeks prior to being surveyed." Three other recent national studies have reported similar rates: 42.7% (Wechsler, Dowdall, Maenner, Gledhill-Hoyt, & Lee, 1998), 44% (Wechsler et al., 1994) and 42% (Presley et al.).

"Chandler and Gallagher (1996) asked a sample of 474 college counselors to behaviorally describe the problems of 8,462 clients. The frequency distributions of problems areas among students included relationship difficulties (69%), self esteem issues (59%), depression (45%), anxiety (35%), and stress (29%)."

"Gallagher et al. (1998) found that 86% of counseling centers had to hospitalize a student for psychological reasons and that 27% of surveyed institutions reported a student suicide during the preceding year."

"There is an increase in college student stress nationwide." (Sax, L.J., 1997)

In a recent study, 53% of college students stated they experienced depression since beginning college, with 9% reporting that they had considered committing suicide since beginning college. (Furr, S., Westefeld, J., McConnell, G., & Jenkins, M., 2001).

In a 4-year study of college students who received counseling from CAPS, 91% thought that their academic performance had improved following counseling. 98% of these students recorded that counseling had assisted them to deal more effectively with their problems. (Rickinson, B., 1998).



Notes

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The Guam Community College Counseling Department wishes to express its appreciation to American College Counseling Association (ACCA) President, Mark Freeman, for permission to make modifications to the College Counseling Advocacy Booklet, developed by the Public Awareness and Professional Advocacy Committee of the ACCA. Also, a Visual Communication Practicum Project created by Vanessa Nyla S. Nicdao.

