

The background features a series of concentric circles in light gray, some solid and some dashed, creating a sense of depth and movement. A large, solid blue oval is positioned in the center, containing the text. A thick, dark gray curved line sweeps across the lower left portion of the blue oval.

Counseling and Human Services

Mental Health Counseling

Individual counseling

Group counseling

Case management

Crisis intervention

Program planning

Administration

Advocacy/Intervention

Religious-based/Pastoral counseling

Counseling therapy and specialty areas:

- Diagnostic specializations (e.g. Eating Disorders, Grief, Trauma)
- Hypnotherapy/EMDR
- Animal-assisted
- Equine Expressive Arts (e.g., Music, Art, Dance, Play, Meditation)

Mental Health Counseling 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

Private or group practices

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

Mental Health Counseling 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.

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.

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

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.

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

Marriage and Family Therapy Employers

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

Marriage and Family Therapy Strategies

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 the 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.

School Counseling

Elementary

Middle school

High school

College/Career planning

Student services

Administration

**School
Counseling
Employers**

Public and private
schools, K-12

Departments of
Education

School Counseling Strategies

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: 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.

Career Counseling

Individual and/or group counseling

Assessment

Career planning

Job searching

Community/Employer relations

Employee evaluation

Program development

Outplacement

Career coaching

Advocacy/Intervention

Research

Grant writing

Career Counseling Employers

Large corporations

Colleges and universities

Vocational schools

Career development centers

Employee Assistance Programs (EAP)

Private practice

Local, state, and federal government:

- Armed forces
- One Stop Career Centers
- Employment offices
- Correctional facilities
- Probation services

Career Counseling Strategies

Obtain practical experience through part-time or summer jobs, internships, assistantships, or volunteer work in a career center or employment agency.

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.

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.

Rehabilitation Counseling

Individual and group counseling

Vocational counseling

Assessment

Program development

Program evaluation

Advocacy/Intervention

Administration

Grant writing

Rehabilitation Counseling Employers

Hospitals

Residential treatment facilities

Drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs

Group homes

Nursing homes

Assisted/independent living facilities

Senior centers

Adult service programs

Therapeutic recreation centers

College/university disabilities offices

Nonprofit organizations

Local, state, and federal government:

- Department of Social Services
- Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies
- Department of Veterans Affairs
- Correctional facilities
- Probation services

Rehabilitation Counseling Strategies

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 (not required but preferred).

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 Counseling

Addictions counseling

Behavioral disorders counseling

Individual and group counseling

Case management

Program development

Program evaluation

Assessment

Substance Abuse Counseling Employers

Hospitals

Residential treatment facilities

Drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs

Outpatient facilities

Group homes

Community mental health organizations

Private or group practices

Employee Assistance Programs (EAP)

Local, state, and federal government:

- Department of Social Services
- Department of Veterans Affairs
- Correctional facilities
- Juvenile detention facilities
- Probation services

Substance Abuse Counseling Strategies

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 at treatment centers, local hospitals, and/or other social service agencies to gain experience and demonstrate interest. Investigate government and community resources available for those in need.

Attend community meetings such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) or Narcotics Anonymous (NA).

Seek knowledge of psychopharmacology and dual diagnosis issues.

Obtain certification as a Master Addictions Counselor (MAC) through the National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC).

Social Services

Case management

Program development

Community education

Administration and planning

Advocacy

Community relations

Mental health services

Volunteer coordination

Research

Grant writing

Social Services Employers

Child guidance clinics

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:

- Department of Child and Family Services
- Department of Corrections
- Department of Human Services
- Department of Justice
- Department of Mental Health
- Department of Veterans Affairs
- Correctional facilities

Social Services Strategies

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 fundraising. Sometimes professionals in nonprofit organizations fill multiple roles in their jobs.

Become familiar with government hiring procedures.

Child Welfare

Case Management

Advocacy

Service Coordination

**Youth Programming and
Mentoring**

Therapeutic Recreation

Child Welfare Employers

Public or private child welfare agencies

Local, state, and federal government:

- Department of Children's Services
- Department of Human Services
- Child Protective Services
- Head Start

Adoption agencies

Foster care organizations

Day care centers

Recreational facilities (e.g., YMCA or YWCA)

Child Welfare Strategies

Child welfare workers strive to ensure the safety and well-being of children through interventions and programming.

Volunteer at day care centers, children's shelters, camps, YMCA/YWCA, Scouts, CASA, or other agencies that aid youth and children.

Take additional courses in child development or early childhood education.

Criminal Justice and Corrections

Counseling/Therapy

Rehabilitation

Probation

Parole

Youth Services

Victim Assistance

Case Management

Criminal Justice and Corrections Employers

Prisons and correctional facilities

Courts

Police departments

Probation and parole offices

Victim services organizations

Private treatment facilities

Transitional living facilities and halfway houses

Criminal Justice and Corrections Strategies

Correctional workers focus on rehabilitating clients and assisting victims.

Obtain experience by volunteering at a corrections facility or a victim services organization such as a sexual assault crisis center or family justice center.

Gain experience as a juvenile probation officer; many states allow reputable citizens to serve as volunteer officers.

Disability Services

Case Management

Advocacy

Program Planning and Evaluation

Policy Development

Rehabilitation

Research

Disability Services Employers

Community residential homes

State and local agencies:

- **Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment programs**
- **One-Stop career centers**

Medical facilities

Mental health organizations

Schools

Colleges and universities

Employment agencies

Disability Services Strategies

Human services workers specializing in this area help people with disabilities to adjust to and lead productive lives.

Volunteer at special needs camps, child care centers, schools, or hospitals to gain experience.

Learn about a variety of disabilities and accommodations.

Obtain specialized training in areas such as sign language or assistive technology for additional opportunities.

Earn a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling to qualify for more positions.

Gerontology

Advocacy

Administration

Counseling

Case Management

Programming

Public Policy

Gerontology Employers

Hospitals

Nursing and retirement homes

Senior centers

Assisted and independent living facilities

Hospice

Home healthcare agencies

Community agencies serving the elderly

Gerontology Strategies

Gerontology involves promoting the well-being of older adults and supporting them and their families.

Become involved with programs or organizations designed for senior citizens.

Join the American Society on Aging.

Supplement curriculum with course work in life span development and aging.

Obtain specialized training and credentials oriented toward gerontology.

Healthcare

Case Management

Counseling

Program Development

Administration

Rehabilitation

Prevention

Education

Research

Hospice Care

Healthcare Employers

Hospitals

Health maintenance organizations (HMOs)

Nursing homes

Hospice programs

Home healthcare agencies

Community health centers

Public health programs

Social service organizations

Outpatient clinics

Transitional housing facilities

Specialized camps/schools

Federal, state, and local government:

- Department of Health and Human Services
- Department of Veterans Affairs

Healthcare Strategies

Human services workers in healthcare facilitate the medical and emotional treatment of patients.

Volunteer in health related settings such as hospitals or the American Red Cross to gain experience.

Supplement curriculum with course work in public health or community health education.

Gain membership in relevant professional associations.

General Counseling and Human Services 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.