

# **So you Want to be a Counselor, Huh?**

**Training, Licensure, Certification,  
& Professional Memberships**

# Our Agenda

Professional Identity

Accreditation

Natl. Certification

State Licensure

Prof. Association





# Group activity:

- Why did you choose to be a counselor?
- Why did you choose a master's degree program in Clinical Mental Health Counseling or Marriage, Couples & Family Therapy (over other types of degree programs, like social work or psychology)?

# Professional Identity

- What do counselors do?
  - ACA: “...[apply] mental health, psychological or human developmental principles, through cognitive, affective, behavioral or systemic interventions, [by implementing] strategies that address wellness, personal growth, career development, [&] pathology.”
  - Intakes, assessments, psychological testing, counseling, personality testing, teaching, treatment plans, referrals, coordinate services, case-management, client-family-community education, documentation, professional/ethical responsibilities, & advocacy



# Professional Identity

How do counselors do what they do?

## Treatment Modalities

individual counseling  
couples counseling  
family counseling  
group counseling




## Scope of Practice

addictions counseling  
career counseling  
child/adolescent counseling  
faith-based counseling  
gerontological counseling  
mental health counseling  
rehabilitation counseling  
school counseling



# Counseling compared to other helping professions:

- **Psychiatrists:** MD; diagnosis & medical treatment of mental disorders
  - **Psychologists:** Doctorate; a heavier emphasis on assessment, diagnosis, and treatment
  - **Social workers;** Masters, link clients to community resources, diagnosis and treatment
  - **Mental health counselors;** Masters, diagnosis and treatment
  - **Marriage & family therapists;** Masters, diagnosis and treatment, marriage and family therapy
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# Professional Identity

## Where do professional counselors work?

Elementary, Middle, and High schools

Private agencies

Community agencies

University Counseling Centers

Non-profits / for-profits

Mental Health Agencies-outpatient (nonprofit)

Hospital Psychiatric Units/floors-inpatient

Hospital ERs- Crisis Counselors

State Psychiatric Hospitals

Correctional Institutions

Recovery Centers for CD

Social services

Corporations

Research institutions

Government agencies

Private practice

Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (BVR)

Faith-Based Organizations (churches, temples)

Consultation Services

Private Practice: Career Counseling

Wilderness Programs

Home-Based Counseling Services

Crisis & Trauma Centers

On-Line Counseling Services

Alcohol & Drug Prevention Agencies

Grant-Funded Programs

Health Dept: Alcohol & Drug Counselors

Residential Programs

Homeless Shelters

Domestic Violence Shelters & Centers

EAP's: Employee Assistant Programs

HMO's: Health Management Organizations



# Professional Identity

## What Sets Professional Counselors Apart?

*“A unique belief system about the best way to help people resolve emotional & personal issues & problems” (Remley & Herlihy, 2001)*

- A developmental approach to helping clients.



# Professional Identity

## The Wellness Model vs. Medical Model

### The Medical Model

- Goal: return patient to the level of functioning prior to illness
- Developed by physicians to treat physical illness
- The helper diagnoses & “cures” illness
  - Patient is diminished in some way
- Success: patient goes on about life
- If another illness negatively affects patient, s/he returns to be cured again
- Employed by psychiatrists, SW, & psychologists as a whole

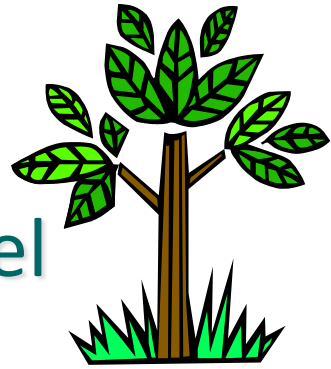


*Primary difference: attitude of helper*



# Professional Identity

## The Wellness Model vs. Medical Model




### The Wellness Model

- Goal: positive mental health possible for everyone (wellness vs. cure illness)
- Mental health continuum (*very mentally healthy - dysfunctional/mentally ill*)
- Most problems are developmental in nature, are normal, are natural
- When prevention is possible, counselors strive toward early intervention (vs. redemption) via education/training & involvement early in the process
- Implementation:
  - Holistically assess mental & emotional functioning in: relationships, career, spirituality, leisure, physical health, living environment, financial status, sexuality
  - Determine which factors are interfering with reaching maximum potential
  - GOAL: CLIENT EMPOWERMENT



# Perspectives on Competence

- Codes of ethics on competence have common themes:
  - Counselors practice only within the boundaries of competence, based on:
    - Education (master's +, CACREP)
    - Training (post-masters, e.g., NBCC)
    - Supervised experience (during and post-degree)
    - State and national professional credentials
    - Appropriate professional experience
  - A lack of competence = refer!
- 

# Accreditation – CACREP

- Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs
- Mission: “...to promote the advancement of quality educational program offerings”
- Specialized accreditation – Counselor Education Programs
- UCF is CACREP accredited





# Why is Accreditation Important?

- **Quality** – meets the highest standards set by and for the profession.
  - Students will obtain the necessary knowledge and skills to be proficient in the counseling field.
  - Clients will benefit from the appropriate training of the counselor
- **Certification & Licensure** – the application process is streamlined.
- **Transportability** – lessens the stress of transporting your education and license/ certification
- **Beyond the Master's Degree** – the advantage of a CACREP accredited master's degree



# More on CACREP

- Master's Degree Programs
    - Addiction Counseling
    - Career Counseling
    - Clinical Mental Health Counseling
    - College Counseling and Student Development
    - Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling
    - School Counseling
    - Rehabilitation Counseling
  - Doctoral Degree Programs
    - Counselor Education and Supervision
- 
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# Licensure and Certification

- **Licensure**

- governs professional practice
- highlights uniqueness of an occupation
- restricts both use of title and practice of occupation

- **Certification**

- voluntary attempt by a group to promote professional identity
- attempts to verify qualifications
- sets minimum standards
- does not assure quality practice





# Licensure – The Florida Board

- Clinical Social Work, Marriage & Family Therapy & Mental Health Counseling
  - LMHC – Licensed Mental Health Counselor
  - LMFT – Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist
- Can diagnose & treat, as well as receive 3rd party reimbursement
- Your license is endorsed by the **governor of Florida** (who also appoints members to the Board)


**Clinical Social Work  
Marriage & Family Therapy  
& Mental Health Counseling**






# Group Activity

Google these words together (not in quotes):

- Florida licensed mental health counselor
  - <http://floridasmentalhealthprofessions.gov/licensing/licensed-marriage-and-family-therapist/>
  - Florida licensed marriage and family therapist
  - <http://floridasmentalhealthprofessions.gov/licensing/licensed-mental-health-counselor/>
  - Select the first link on the list.
  - What are the Florida licensure requirements? Include:
    1. Educational requirements
    2. Post-master's degree requirements
- 



# More on LMHC

- Requirements
    - Masters in counseling or related (CACREP bonus!)
    - 60 hours of coursework
    - 1,000 hours of university-sponsored supervised clinical practicum, internship, or field experience (600 if CACREP)
    - 1500 hours of post-master's supervised exp (2 yrs post MS)
    - 100 hours of face-to-face supervision
    - NCMHC exam (NCMHCE)
    - Laws and Rules Course (8 hours)
    - HIV Course (3 hours)
    - Domestic Violence Courses (2 hours)
    - 25 hours of CEUs biannually to renew license
- 



# More on LMFT

- Requirements
  - Masters in counseling, focus on marriage and family (no CACREP bonus)
  - 36 hours of coursework
  - 180 hour (direct contact) supervised clinical practicum, internship, or field experience
  - 1500 hours of post-master's supervised exp (2 yrs post MS)
  - 100 hours of face-to-face supervision
  - National examination (Association of Marital and Family Therapy Regulatory Boards – AMFTRB)
  - Laws and Rules Course (8 hours)
  - HIV Course (3 hours)
  - Domestic Violence Courses (2 hours)



# Before the license – Registering as an Intern

- Register as an intern after you graduate and during your 2 year post-masters experience
  - Requires supervision by a qualified supervisor
  - The registered intern status is valid for 5 years
- With this provisional license, you can work with clients and get **PAID**
  - Some insurance companies reimburse registered interns, some do not.
  - It is unethical for your supervisor to bill insurance for your counseling sessions under his or her license.

# Since we're talking about the Benjamins...

- Counselors' earnings can range from \$32,000-\$80,000 annually
- Here are the current mean salaries in US:
  - School & career counselors: \$53,610
  - Marriage and family therapists: \$43,210
  - Mental health counselors: \$43,990
  - Substance abuse counselors: \$38,520

*Bureau of Labor Statistics*



# More about the Benjamins

- Salaries vary depending on a variety of factors
  - Location
    - New York-New Jersey      Newark-Union, NJ
    - Los Angeles-Long Beach      Boston-Cambridge, MA
    - Philadelphia, PA      Chicago, IL
    - Pittsburgh, PA      Baltimore, MD
  - Years of experience: seek a variety of experiences
  - Type of practice
    - Non-profits, community mental health clinics, schools, hospitals, private practices
- It's all about your niche and network



# Group Activity

- Dr. Adult is a licensed mental health counselor who has a Ph.D. in counselor education and attended a graduate program accredited by CACREP. His practice has consisted of working exclusively with adults. His internship was at a geriatric residence and he has worked for the VA hospital for the last several years. He now wishes to begin seeing children in his practice. Dr. Adult buys the latest and most widely used textbooks for counseling children and begins to read them. He starts to add children to his caseload and uses techniques based on his readings.
- What is the ethical issue in this case?
- Is Dr. Adult qualified to see kids? Why or why not?
- What would you do in his situation?

# National Board for Certified Counselors

- Voluntary and national certification
- National registry of certified counselors
- Promotion of the profession
- Ethical standards
- Requirements:
  - Education: Master's degree in counseling
  - Supervised experience
  - National examination(s)
  - Adherence to code of ethics
  - CEU's (100 every 5 years) and auditing



NATIONAL BOARD FOR  
**CERTIFIED COUNSELORS**





# NBCC Certifications

- National Certified Counselor (NCC)
- School counseling – National Certified School Counselor (NCSC)
- Supervision – Approved Clinical Supervisor (ACS)
- Substance abuse counseling – Master Addictions Counselor (MAC)
- Mental health – Certified Clinical Mental Health Counselor (CCMHC)



# Additional Certifications

- Play therapy
- REBT
- Choice theory
- Rehabilitation counseling
- Pastoral counseling
- Substance abuse counseling
- Sexual health professionals
- Trauma-Focused CBT

# American Counseling Association

- National association for the counseling profession
  - “To enhance the quality of life in society by promoting the development of professional counselors, advancing the counseling profession, and using the profession and practice of counseling to promote respect for human dignity and diversity.”
- Founded in 1952 (3 name changes)
  - American Personnel and Guidance Association (1952-1983)
  - American Association for Counseling and Development (1983-1992)
  - American Counseling Association (1992-present)

# American Counseling Association

- Why join the ACA:
  - Books & videos
  - Liability insurance
  - Career counseling & employment opportunities
  - Networking
  - Professional learning
  - Online courses
  - Home study programs
  - Onsite workshops/training
  - Learning Institutes
  - ACA Annual Convention & Exposition
  - Code of Ethics
  - Public Policy and Legislation
  - Advocacy
  - Government Relations Listserv
  - Legislative Institute
- 56 branches (state and abroad) and 20 divisions
- Publications:
  - *Journal of Counseling and Development* (quarterly)
  - *Counseling Today* (monthly magazine)
  - ACA eNews (bi-monthly electronic news bulletin)
- <http://www.counseling.org>





# More on Divisions

- Mental Health Counseling
- School Counseling
- Career Counseling
- Employment Counseling
- Multicultural Counseling
- Assessment & Research
- Addiction/Offender Counseling
- Marriage and Family Counseling
- Counselor Education & Supervision
- Children & Adolescents
- Adult development/aging
- College Counseling
- Military & Gov't Counselors
- LGBT Issues
- Rehab Counseling
- Spiritual, Ethical, & Religious Values
- Group Counseling
- Humanistic Counseling
- Social Justice
- Creativity in Counseling

Interest networks in: Advances in Therapeutic Humor, Multiracial/Multiethnic Counseling Concerns, Jewish Interests, Sports Counseling, Traumatology, & Women's Issues

# Getting Involved as a Student in ACA

- **Volunteering** at the ACA Annual Convention (reduced registration fee)
- Student representative to Governing Council
- **Student representative** to committees
- *Student Focus* column in *Counseling Today*
- **Ethics competition**
- ACA Foundation graduate student competition
- Ross Trust Scholarship
- Graduate Student Association
- Graduate Student listserv



# Florida Counseling Association

- State association for counselors
- Focuses on state issues
- Promote the profession through:
  - Public awareness
    - Promote high standards
  - Professional development
    - Educational opportunities
    - Workshops and conferences
  - Advocacy
    - Public policy
- <http://www.flacounseling.org/>





# Central Florida Counseling Associations: CFAMFT & MHCCF

- Local associations for counselors
- Focus on **local issues**
- Several goals, to include:
  - Professional Development
  - Networking Opportunities
  - Legislative Advocacy
  - Personal Development



CFAMFT  
Central Florida Association for  
Marriage and Family Therapy

**MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELORS  
OF CENTRAL FLORIDA**





# Group Activity

Plan to develop your profession identity:

- What is your degree program?
- Which professional organizations will you join?
- Which licensure will you seek post-graduation?
- Which certification(s) will you seek post-graduation?