

Mental Health Counseling

Background -

Counselors work with individuals or small groups to promote optimum levels of mental health within a prevention framework. For example, options exist to focus on career counseling, agency or community counseling, clinical mental health counseling and substance abuse or addictions counseling.

What is the average salary of a Mental Health Counselor? \$46, 000*

National Board for Certification of Counselors: Master's degree or higher with a major study in counseling from regionally accredited university (48 semester hours) of graduate level credits. Counseling is also possible with a Masters in Social Work or with some Clinical or Counseling Psychology degrees.

1. **Coursework & Field Work**
 - a. Professional orientation to counseling
 - b. Research & program evaluation
 - c. Assessment in counseling
 - d. Career counseling & lifestyle development
 - e. Group counseling theories & processes
 - f. Helping relationships in Counseling
 - g. Social and cultural foundations in counseling
 - h. Human growth & development theories in Counseling
2. **Board Certification vs. State License:** Licensure is different from state to state; titles include - LPC (licensed professional counselor), LMHC (licensed mental health counselor), LCPC (licensed clinical professional counselor), LLP (limited licensed psychologist)
3. Licensure is required for someone to use the title of counselor or practice counseling in particular states

What classes at GVSU may help me in my career? Discuss with your advisor which courses among those on this list, along with other courses not listed here, would best serve your career goals.

1. **PSY 303** – Psychopathology
2. **PSY 452** – Counseling Theories and Applications
3. **PSY 310** – Behavior Modification
4. **PSY 301** – Child Development
5. **PSY 324** – Developmental Psychopathology
6. **PSY 326** – Intellectual/Development Disabilities

*Salary from bls.gov (2016)

What Minors could I explore depending on my interests?

1. **Minor in Criminal Justice**
 - a. CJ 101, CJ 201, CJ 305 + 12 additional credits
2. **Minor in Juvenile Justice (CJ)**
 - a. CJ 101, CJ 201, CJ 355, CJ 420 + 6 additional credits

What experiences outside of my classes could I explore?

1. Inside Out Program – through the Grand Valley Criminal Justice Department
 - a. Must hold at least a criminal justice minor
 - b. 15 GVSU students will attend classes at the Michigan Reformatory in Ionia with 15 inmates
 - c. The topics of criminology theory, prison culture and victimization are discussed
2. Psychological Consultation Center Internship – Pine Rest
 - a. Provide psychological assessment and consultation through the Consultation Center at Pine Rest. Interns will be supervised by Licensed Psychologists.
 - b. 4 month commitment for 8-12 weeks
 - c. Junior or Senior standing in Psychology to apply
3. Pella Clinic – Consultation Center Internship – Pine Rest
 - a. Similar to above

What skills do Mental Health Counselors typically have? Great understanding of psychological disorders, the ability to work within groups, excellent communication and listening skills, the ability to work with diverse groups, compassion and understanding, critical thinking, social perceptiveness and terrific analytical skills are all important. (onetonline.org)

