

# Counselor

## Background –

Those working in mental health counseling work with individuals or groups to promote optimum levels of mental health within a prevention framework. Licensed Counselors have the ability to focus their efforts on career counseling, agency or community counseling, clinical mental health counseling, or substance abuse counseling. Daily activities of a Counselor may include collecting information about clients, assessing patients and encouraging patients to discuss what is happening in their lives, and maintaining confidentiality on the patients with which they work. A master's degree and license is required to practice as a mental health Counselor.

**What can I expect to make in this career field?** \$42, 840\*

**What classes at GVSU may help me in this 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. **COM 301** – Interpersonal Communication
2. **COM 303** – Small Group Communication
3. **PSY 301** – Child Development
4. **PSY 303** – Psychopathology
5. **PSY 310** – Behavior Modification
6. **PSY 326** – Intellectual/Development Disabilities
7. **PSY 452** – Counseling Theories and Applications

**What additional education is required to become a licensed counselor?** A master's degree or higher with a major study in counseling from regionally accredited university (48 semester hours) of graduate level credits is required to practice as a licensed Counselor. Field work and hours of supervision is often required as well.

1. More information on Michigan's licensing of Counselors - [http://www.michigan.gov/lara/0,4601,7-154-72600\\_72603\\_27529\\_27536---,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/lara/0,4601,7-154-72600_72603_27529_27536---,00.html)

**What experiences outside of my classes could I explore to prepare myself for this career?**

1. Look for possible internships - Pine Rest Internship – A 4 month commitment; provide psychological assessment and consultation through the Consultation Center at Pine Rest. Interns will be supervised by Licensed Psychologists. Junior or Senior standing in Psychology to apply. More information <https://www.pinerest.org/professional-education/intern-opportunities/>
2. Look for possible part-time work – LakerJobs - <http://www.gvsu.edu/careers/lakerjobs-18.htm>

\*Bls.gov (2016) mean annual wage for “mental health counselor”

**What skills are applicable to working as a professional counselor?** Understanding of psychological disorders, ability to work in groups, excellent communication and listening skills, ability to work with diverse groups, compassion and understanding, and analytical, problem solving skills are all important skills for a Counselor to have.