

Career Profile

A weekly series devoted to providing information on career exploration

Do You Like

- Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times?
- Being aware of others' reactions and understanding why they react as they do?
- Actively looking for ways to help people?
- Using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions or approaches to problems?
- Understanding the implications of new information for both current and future problem-solving and decision-making?

Then This Could Be The Career For You!

The Type of Work

- Counsel individuals to help them understand and overcome personal, social, or behavioral problems affecting their educational or vocational situations.
- Provide crisis intervention to students when difficult situations occur at schools.
- Confer with parents or guardians, teachers, administrators, and other professionals to discuss children's progress, resolve behavioral, academic, and other problems, and to determine priorities for students and their resource needs.
- Maintain accurate and complete student records as required by laws, district policies, and administrative regulations.
- Prepare students for later educational experiences by encouraging them to explore learning opportunities and to persevere with challenging tasks.
- Evaluate students' or individuals' abilities, interests, and personality characteristics using tests, records, interviews, or professional sources.
- Identify cases of domestic abuse or other family problems and encourage students or parents to seek additional assistance from mental health professionals.
- Counsel students regarding educational issues, such as course and program selection, class scheduling and registration, school adjustment, truancy, study habits, and career planning.
- Provide special services such as alcohol and drug prevention programs and classes that teach students to handle conflicts without resorting to violence.
- Conduct follow-up interviews with counselees to determine if their needs have been met.

Pathways to Success

Education and training requirements for

counselors are often very detailed and vary by State and specialty, but a master's degree usually is required to become a licensed counselor. Prospective counselors should check with State and local governments, prospective employers, and national voluntary certification organizations to determine which requirements apply.

Counselor education programs in colleges and universities often are found in departments of education, psychology, or human services. Fields of study may include college student affairs, elementary or secondary school counseling, education, gerontological counseling, marriage and family therapy, substance abuse or addictions counseling, rehabilitation counseling, agency or community counseling, clinical mental health counseling, career counseling, and related fields. Courses frequently are grouped into core areas, including human growth and development, social and cultural diversity, relationships, group work, career development, counseling techniques, assessment, research and program evaluation, and professional ethics and identity. In an accredited master's degree program, 48 to 60 semester hours of graduate study, including a period of supervised clinical experience in counseling, typically are required.

What Employers Look For

Individuals who possess knowledge in:

- Psychology - human behavior and performance; individual differences in ability, personality, and interests; learning and motivation; psychological research methods; and the assessment and treatment of behavioral and affective disorders.
- Therapy and Counseling - principles, methods, and procedures for diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation of physical and mental dysfunctions, and for career counseling and guidance.
- Education and Training - principles and methods for curriculum and training design, teaching and instruction for individuals and groups, and the measurement of training effects.
- Sociology and Anthropology - group behavior and dynamics, societal trends and influences, human migrations, ethnicity, cultures and their history and origins.
- Administration and Management - business and management principles involved in strategic planning, resource allocation, human resources modeling, leadership technique, production methods, and coordination of people and resources.
- Clerical - administrative and clerical procedures and systems such as word processing, managing files and records, stenography and transcription, designing forms, and other office procedures and terminology.
- Computers and Electronics - circuit boards, processors, chips, electronic equipment, and computer hardware and software, including applications and programming.

Job Outlook

Educational, vocational, and school counselors held roughly 275,800 jobs in 2008. Overall employment of counselors is expected to increase by 18 percent between 2008 and 2018, which is faster than the average for all occupations. However, growth is expected to vary by specialty.

Demand for vocational or career counselors should grow as multiple job and career changes become common and as workers become increasingly aware of counseling services. States require elementary schools to employ counselors. Expansion of the responsibilities of school counselors also is likely to lead to increases in their employment. For example, counselors are becoming more involved in crisis and preventive counseling, helping students deal with issues ranging from drug and alcohol abuse to death and suicide. Although schools and governments realize the value of counselors in helping their students to achieve academic success, budget constraints at every school level will dampen the job growth of school counselors. Federal grants and subsidies may help to offset tight budgets and allow the reduction in student-to-counselor ratios to continue.

EDUCATIONAL, VOCATIONAL, AND SCHOOL COUNSELORS

DEFINITION:

Counsel individuals and provide group educational and vocational guidance services.

Name: Mrs. Lisa Simpson

Job Title: Middle School Counselor

Company: Midview Local Schools

LOCATION: Grafton, Ohio



Q. How did you become interested in your particular field?

A. I wanted to help kids who needed that extra boost of support in their lives.

Q. Who or what influenced your decision the most and why?

A. While teaching in Vermilion I taught a relationship course and really enjoyed the discussions and content of helping students make positive decisions with their lives. I hoped that I could achieve this through becoming a school counselor.

Q. What is your educational background?

A. Orrville High School, Bachelors in Vocational Education from Ashland University, Masters of Education in School Counseling.

Q. How did you get to where you are today? What path did your employment journey take?

A. In 1991-92, I taught Middle School Home Economics at Fremont Middle School. From 1992-99, I taught Family and Consumer Sciences at Vermilion High School. From 1999-2010, I was an Elementary School Counselor with Midview Schools; and 2010-present, I am a Middle School Counselor with Midview Schools.

Q. What skills or certifications do you think are needed to be successful in this field?

A. Being a good listener and communicator is a must. Knowledge of different emotional or mental disorders is critical in this position. It is also helpful to have some detective skills! Ha!

Q. What is the best part of your job?

A. Talking to the kids and seeing them make better choices in their lives. Also, the freedom to be able to create programs and groups to help students cope with the troubles in their lives.

Q. Do you have any words of advice for someone considering a career in your field?

A. You can't take it home with you – you need to be able to detach yourself from situations. Some of the problems I deal with are so sad and horrific, it could eat you up inside. You must find the positives though – it is very fulfilling to know you have made a positive influence in a young person's life.



Lisa Simpson, Middle School Counselor for Midview Schools, talks with some students.

Earnings Potential

Location	Year	Pay Period	Low	Median	High
United States	2009	Yearly	\$31,100	\$52,600	\$84,100
Ohio	2009	Yearly	\$33,800	\$57,900	\$82,000
Cleveland Elyria-Mentor, OH MSA	2009	Yearly	\$34,900	\$63,100	\$88,900

0*Net Online, <http://online.onetcenter.org>.

Sources: Occupational Information Network, O*Net Online, <http://online.onetcenter.org>; *U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Outlook Handbook, <http://stats.bls.gov/oco>