

2016 Western North Carolina Mental Health & Substance Abuse Agency Report



WCU Counseling Program

Fall 2016

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Thanks to the students in the WCU COUN 623: Introduction to Clinical Mental Health Counseling class for meeting with representatives at each of these agencies and collecting this important information.

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Sites Visited

1. Access Family Services
 2. Analenisgi Behavioral Health Services for Cherokee Children, Adults, and Families
 3. Appalachian Community Services
 4. The Asheville Center for Contemplative Psychotherapy
 5. Balsam Center
 6. Black Mountain Academy
 7. Blue Ridge Art Therapy and Counseling
 8. Blue Ridge Treks
 9. Carolina Partners of Central Asheville
 10. Children's Hope Alliance
 11. Cooper Riis Healing Community
 12. EBCI Justice Center
 13. Eliada Homes
 14. Family Preservation Services
 15. Henderson County Department of Public Health
 16. Horse Sense of the Carolinas
 17. Julian F. Keith Alcohol and Drug Abuse Treatment Center - ADACT
 18. Laura Torres Holistic Therapy
 19. Mountain Child Advocacy Center
 20. October Rd Inc.
 21. Open Hearts Art Center
 22. Our Voice
 23. Phoenix Outdoor
 24. Red Oak Recovery Center
 25. Solstice East
 26. St. Luke's Hospital
 27. SUWS
 28. The Caring Clinic
 29. The SPARC Foundation
 30. UNCA Health /Counseling Center
 31. VA Medical Center
 32. Willow Place
 33. WNCCHS
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Employment/Intern Data

Starting Salary Range

Agencies reported the following starting pay for LPCAs:

< \$25,000:	<u>0</u>
\$25,000 – \$30,000:	<u>0</u>
\$30,001 - \$35,000:	<u>3</u>
\$35,001 – 40,000:	<u>6</u>
> \$40,00:	<u>14</u>

Hiring Counselors

- Agencies not anticipate hiring counselor/s within the next 6 months: 10
- Agencies anticipating hiring counselors within the next 6 months: 17
- Agencies who were uncertain about hiring counselor/s within the next 6 months, or said it “depended”: 6

LPCA to LPC

- Agencies that do provide, or pay for, supervision so employees can work toward licensure: 20

Internship

- Agencies who host interns : **26**
 - Agencies that pay interns: **4**
- Agencies who do not host interns: **6**
- Agencies who *sometimes* host: **0**

Western Carolina University Graduates

- Agencies that currently employ WCU graduates: **11**

Student University-related debt 2015 (N=20)

Total graduate & undergraduate debt:	\$495,391.00
Mean:	\$12,384.78
Median:	\$7,650.00
SD:	\$17,539.28

Student University-related debt 2016 (N=18)

Total graduate & undergraduate debt:	\$377,200.00
Mean:	\$20,955.56
Median:	\$16,500.00
SD:	\$18,539.95

Trends in WNC Mental Health & Substance Abuse

Each agency was asked what Western Carolina University Counseling students most needed to learn before starting their careers.

I. Professional Practice

- 1) “CBT in all forms, training in evidence based practice.”
- 2) “Documentation is important—the skills to appropriately document a session and document a diagnostic assessment. It is important to get experience in, knowledge in, and feedback on documentation while in practicum and internship.”
- 3) “The ability to sit with a person and recognize them first and foremost as a human—a human with skills, resiliency, and strengths, as well as struggles and problems. This ability supersedes skills and techniques.”
- 4) “Also if you know you want to go into private practice still do your practicum and internship at a community setting. You form strong networks when you do this.”
- 5) “It is also helpful to take a business class. This was something she was not prepared with when she started her own private practice, and she wish she had.”
- 6) “The difference between traditional type settings and wilderness or adventure based settings. Knowing the variety of modalities so that you can work with just about anything with anybody. In case one client doesn’t respond to one you can try another. With wilderness, there’s so much more metaphor. The ability to speak to metaphor and use it is important when your setting is not in an office.”
- 7) “Substance abuse counseling; a solid grounding in attachment theory and family systems theory; Acceptance and commitment therapy”
- 8) “time management, and good listening skills”

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- 9) “They need to learn documentation and how to effectively do it. Also goals setting for clients and treatment planning”
 - 10) “Solid clinical foundation/knowledge. Organization and paperwork. Self-awareness. Collaborative documentation is allowed and encouraged.”
 - 11) “Direct client care
 - 12) “They need to learn how to listen and be present with people, it is crucial.”

II. Self-Assessment & Self-Care

- 1) “Empathy for clients. The ability to recognize what you can and can’t handle and to seek supervision.”
- 2) “Self-care in all aspects of your life is critical. Students need to develop a positive philosophy about the world, human behavior, and belief in people in general. You constantly have to check in with yourself because what you take out of the workplace is usually what hits close to home. You have to have a systematic way of dealing with everyday stress. Being able to forgive yourself and being kind to yourself is key. Always listen and stay present with people and be yourself; Some people will like you and some will not, that is OK.”
- 3) “Students need to learn useful self-care techniques that work for them.”
- 4) “Self-care; being able to balance work and personal life.”
- 5) “Future counselors need to understand the “why” of what they do- what are their intentions for practice. Counselors are advised to “check out the world” before going into private practice.”
- 6) “Find a community you want to work with, but not just somewhere you want to be but also somewhere where you are needed. Also be ok with constant training especially if you are in a specific area ...like equine.”
- 7) “Self-care and boundary setting.”
- 8) “Balancing self-care and work.”
- 9) “Being able to get an assessment with working diagnosis at the first session. They have a lengthy, broad symptom checklist and counselors need to be able to focus on a specific set of symptoms on the larger checklist to ask clients to lead to a quicker diagnosis.”

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- 10) “You don’t need to know everything, you will make mistakes”
 - 11) “Students need to learn about self-care, being able to detach to a certain extent, and doing the best you can do without expecting 100% effectiveness every time.”
 - 12) “Self-care”
 - 13) “Individual therapy”
 - 14) “Counseling students should go through therapy themselves before they start to practice. There is so much you can learn as a student when you sit on the other side of the chair”
 - 15) “Self-care”

III. Clinical Skills & Cultural Awareness

- 1) “Culture diversity for treating individuals. Healthy communication between counselor and client as well between the rest of the treatment teams. Trends seem to be more violent and aggressive behaviors with PTSD clients. More outwardly expressing feelings. Drug use and sex at a younger age.”
- 2) “-- uses a recovery model, which is really patient-centered and empowerment-focused. When a resident begins at --, they help them develop a ‘dream statement’ which entails dreams, visions, desires for their futures. Then, they develop long and short-term goals, which inform the treatment plan more so than diagnoses. Though it’s important to study abnormal psychology or what different challenges look like when we’re in grad school, it’s also important to have a strengths-based approach that asks ‘who are you?’ and ‘what do you want for your life?’ instead of ‘what’s broken? Let’s fix it.’ Knowing how to intervene for challenges also comes into play.”
- 3) “Crisis management skills are important to know. Also, students need to be able to determine if the situation is a crisis or if it is a serious situation that can be handled on site. For example, be able to tell the difference from superficial self-harm and ER level self-harm.”
- 4) “Video tape sessions to hone in on the “therapy dance.” Watching the non-verbal’s help.”

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- 5) “Trauma training and ability to view consumers through a trauma lens. ACE research.”
 - 6) “How to effectively push clients toward growth.”
 - 7) “Practice meeting and being with people of a wide variety. for exposure to different types of people and clients.”
 - 8) “New hires need a variety of experience—working with families, children, individuals. They need to pick modalities to learn, really understand that modality thoroughly and know how to apply it.”
 - 9) “Skills most needed are mobile crisis skills, de-escalation skills, and self-care. In addition, suicide crisis skills, students need to be prepared to hear someone who says they want to die and know how to manage the call or situation in a calm manner.”

IV. Flexibility & Initiative

- 1) “Be flexible! Every day is different and unpredictable; there is an element of crisis. Be up to speed on evidence based practices and keep up with training. Many places use medical model, so be knowledgeable about medical world and medical diagnoses. Be a team player!”
- 2) “Balance, including having rituals for balance; presence.”
- 3) “Be prepared to be flexible because our clients are not predictable. Also be open to getting creative and willing to work with a client no matter what condition mentally or physically they may be in.”
- 4) “Be willing to try new things”