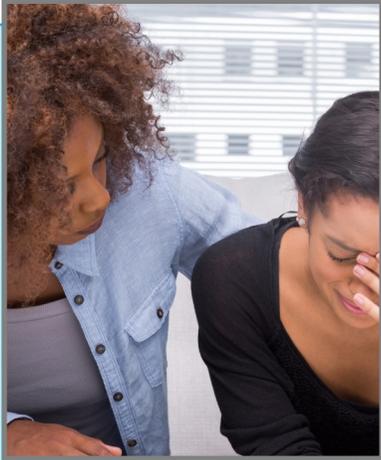


May 2020

HEALTHCARE HIGHLIGHTS

The Rural AHEC Student Newsletter



May's Healthcare Career Focus:

Mental Health Counselor

Mental Health Counselors help individuals and families cope with stress, trauma, and mental health disorders. Small group or individual therapy and/or coaching is used to help clients manage their emotions and psychological responses. Mental health counselors support clients as they set healthy goals for themselves. Counseling may focus on better management of chronic conditions or recovery from childhood trauma or a crisis.

What might I do as a Mental Health Counselor?

Encourage clients to express feelings and examine thought processes through individual, group, or family therapy sessions

Support clients in the development of skills and strategies for working through issues that may include displaced aggression, anger management, depression, suicidal tendencies, stress, and substance misuse

Provide support for clients to develop their own mental health goals and steps to attain them



Refer clients and family to community resources and other professionals

Monitor and record progress, goal attainment, use of medications, and therapy session attendance

Work in a school, clinic, hospital, prison, or rehabilitation facility

Attend events that provide opportunities for professional development and continuous learning



How do I become a Mental Health Counselor?

- Take Psychology or Sociology in High School
- Graduate from a Behavioral Science, Social Science, or Psychology bachelor's degree program
- Earn a master's degree in Mental Health Counseling
- Complete 3000 hours of graduate/post-graduate clinical experience
- Take and pass the National Counselor Examination or other NYS approved exam

Average Salary:
Low end - \$62,000
High end - \$78,000

What is it really like to be a Mental Health Counselor?

Mental Health Counselors have been in high demand, but they are even more so since the COVID-19 pandemic. Many people have experienced high levels of anxiety due to isolation, illness, or job loss. Mental Health Counselors can offer strategies to deal with the anxiety and stress of this uncertain time.

A successful Mental Health Counselor develops the following characteristics:

- Very skilled at problem-solving
- Genuine personality
- Highly skilled communicator and motivator
- Culturally competent
- Compassionate, empathetic
- Personable and motivated to help people

Meet Lisa, a Mental Health Counselor with her own private practice:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=orZ72fHTvtQ>



Meet Amy, a Mental Health Therapist who works in a school setting: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mGCLfn6BNKo>



“... we’re dealing with the mental health challenges that are out there and seeing the pain and disruption of life, but the heartening part is that people are actually reaching out...”

Dr. Amy Cirbus
NYS Licensed Mental Health Counselor

“Dealing with the immediate problem is important, but counselors also strive to help you function not just minimally, but optimally. Enhancing overall well-being by solving problems, improving resilience, encouraging healthy behaviors, and improving relationships is a key component of a counselor’s duties...”

Kendra Cherry
Consultant and Author

Western New York Rural Area Health Education Center

20 Duncan Street, Warsaw, New York 14569

585-786-6275

lgreen@r-ahec.org

www.r-ahec.org

Please contact us if you have questions about healthcare career opportunities or educational pathways to healthcare careers!

Western New York Rural Area Health Education Center (R-AHEC) is one of nine centers in the New York State Area Health Education Center (NYS AHEC) organization. Our mission is to improve health and healthcare through education.

Acknowledgement: The NYSAHEC System is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) under the Award titled Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) Program (U77). The content and information is solely the responsibility of the authors and should not be construed as the official position or policy of, nor should any endorsements be inferred by HRSA, HHS or the U.S. Government.

This organization is an equal opportunity provider and employer