

Counseling and Human Development

C o n c e p t u a l F r a m e w o r k

Knowledge of Theory & Practice
**Recognition of Historical, Cultural
and Social Contexts**
Integration of Bio-Psycho-Social Development
Commitment to Healthy Development
Counselors as Agents of Change
Appreciation for Diversity

At the Warner School, we prepare counselors who will empower their clients and students to create more rewarding and meaningful lives and relationships; to become more self-reflective, caring and compassionate persons; and, to contribute to the reform of the systems in which their lives are embedded. This mission is based on a contextual and ecological perspective of professional counseling that acknowledges the importance of personal development, but also recognizes that individual lives are embedded in a variety of personal and extended relationships and social systems. Our programs for preparing counselors are characterized by the following elements:

KNOWLEDGE OF THEORY & PRACTICE

Effective counselors need to develop a good understanding of the knowledge base for the profession related to: professional identity; social and cultural diversity; human growth and development; career development; helping relationships; group work; assessment; research; and, program evaluation. Our candidates learn how to put this knowledge into practice and develop their own integrative models of counseling and clinical supervision through exposure to well-researched approaches.

RECOGNITION OF HISTORICAL, CULTURAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXTS

Human development does not occur in the vacuum of biological growth only. Rather, development, counseling and education all entail processes that occur in historical, cultural and social contexts, and that form contexts for each other. Educational experiences with teachers, counselors, or others, are part of these contexts. As a result, our candidates understand that human development only happens in social contexts and that they are themselves constituted by broader contexts and social processes.

INTEGRATION OF BIO-PSYCHO-SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

An adequate understanding of human development requires a recognition of the interdependence of the broader context, the educating professions, and developmental opportunities. Our program strives for an integrated bio-psycho-social perspective on counseling and development which argues that counselors must analyze the multivariate space within which human growth occurs in order to understand and explain human action.

COMMITMENT TO HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT

Counselors need to understand human development as a life-long process and one that is influenced to proceed along healthy or unhealthy directions based on educational, economic, social and cultural contexts and experiences. Our counseling program also has a particular concern for those who live in difficult situations and for optimizing human potential regardless of 'abilities.' As a result, our candidates learn to understand the development needs and potentialities of people of all ages in order to better serve them as clients or to involve them as resources in the families and communities that support their growth.

COUNSELORS AS AGENTS OF CHANGE

Sometimes counselors can better help clients by focusing beyond individual counseling to connect them to other community resources, advocate on their behalf, work collectively for social justice, or work to improve the school to foster healthier development of all students. Our candidates develop an awareness of, and expertise in, helping students and clients understand and respond to the broader problems and issues that are often the genesis of individual problems.

APPRECIATION FOR DIVERSITY

Multicultural awareness is essential to the aims of social justice, and the efficacy of our commitment to community service cannot be maximized in the absence of multicultural competency. The counseling program devotes considerable focus to the study of multi-cultural issues as they pertain to both the theory and practice of counseling. In addition, all of our coursework is presented in the context of race, ethnicity, class, gender, age, ability and sexual preference.