

South

UNIVERSITYSM
ESTABLISHED 1899

MASTER OF ARTS CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING

Campus: Richmond, VA

Annual Report

South University – Richmond

Clinical Mental Health Counseling

Mission Statement

The South University Master of Arts degree program in Clinical Mental Health Counseling is intended to meet the local and regional need for qualified counselors. The Masters of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling is designed to provide advanced and broad training for South University graduate students regarding theories, principles, and dynamic applications in the field. Students develop the skills necessary to engage in effective assessment and treatment practices, achieve competence for ethical, legal, and professional issues, and understand the significance and utility of research to the field. Faculty members are dedicated to maintaining high teaching standards, developing intellectual curiosity, advancing critical thinking, and engaging in service to the University, community, and profession.

Clinical Mental Health Program Objectives

- Students will demonstrate knowledge, comprehension, synthesis, and application of the major theories comprising the foundation of counseling from a historical and contemporary perspective.
- Students will demonstrate an awareness and comprehension of the normal and abnormal mechanisms of change within individuals across the lifespan.
- Graduates will demonstrate an ability to properly identify, assess, conceptualize, diagnose, and treat mental disorders in the context of the accepted diagnostic nomenclature.
- Students will gain an understanding and appreciation of the contributions of quantitative and qualitative research and the synergy among the theoretical, clinical and scientific components of the field.
- Students will explore and understand the impact of their personal view as it relates to their world view and the multidimensional nature of cultural influences as a counselor.
- Students will develop effective verbal and written communication skills necessary to interface with various constituents including clients, treatment teams, and public entities.

- Students will demonstrate an appropriate level of professional development as evidenced by the knowledge and understanding of pertinent ethical and legal principles in the profession, in addition to current/emerging issues in the field. Students will achieve an appreciation and level of proficiency concerning the knowledge, skills, and competencies deemed appropriate for use in the profession as identified by the ongoing need for education and training beyond graduation.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

- Quality of the Program (as reflected in achieved national accreditation or national peer comparisons)
- Productivity of the Program (as reflected in enrollments and degree completions)
- Course-level Student Success (as reflected in quality control, withdrawal/failure rates, student ratings)

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Year January 1, 2020 – December 31, 2020

Program Statistics	
Total Number of Students Enrolled	27
Persistence Rate for students enrolled	82%
Number of Graduates	6
Number of Graduates Currently Employed in Mental Health Field	4
Number of Withdrawn Students	2
Number of Students Dismissed from Program	1
Number of Students Admitted into Program	8
Practicum/Internship Statistics	
Number of Students in Practicum/Internship	13
Number of Practicum/Internship Placements Available to Students	11
Comprehensive Exam Statistics	
Clinical Evaluation	
Total Number of Students Sitting for Clinical Evaluation, CNS 8201	6
Number of Students who Passed Clinical Evaluation in Fall 2020	2/6=33% $\mu = 64.88$ median score = 65.5
Didactic Evaluation	
Total Number of Students Sitting for Didactic Evaluation, CNS 8202	5
Number of Students who Passed Didactic Evaluation (1 st attempt) – exam administered February, 2020	2/2 = 100% $\mu = 97.5$ median score = 97.5

Number of Students who Passed Didactic Evaluation (2 nd attempt) – exam administered February, 2020	2/2 = 100% μ = 74 median score = 74
Number of Students who Passed Didactic Evaluation (3 rd attempt) – exam administered February, 2020	1/1 = 100% μ = 68 median score = 68
Preliminary Clinical Evaluation	
Total Number of Students who enrolled in Preliminary Clinical Evaluation, CNS 8100	0
Number of Students who Passed Preliminary Clinical Evaluation (1 st attempt)	0

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION OUTCOME DATA

To graduate from the program, students are required to pass a twelve hour comprehensive exit examination. The examination consists of a multiple choice component and a written component, both of which must be passed in order for a student to successfully pass the comprehensive examination. The multiple choice component is the CPCE, a 4 hour, 160-item instrument that assesses student knowledge in 8 core content areas: Human Growth and Development (C1), Social and Cultural Foundations (C2), Helping Relationships (C3), Group Work (C4), Career and Lifestyle Development (C5), Appraisal (C6), Research and Program Evaluation (C7), and Professional Orientation and Ethics (C8). The written component is an 8 hour examination that consists of 2 case studies. Students must pass both the didactic and the clinical examination to pass their comprehensive exam.

Students in the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program take their comprehensive examination across four quarters. Students take their Preliminary Clinical Evaluation in the 3rd Quarter and take their Preliminary Didactic Evaluation in the 5th Quarter. Students then take their Clinical Evaluation in the 6th Quarter and, should they fail the Preliminary Didactic Evaluation, take their Didactic Evaluation in the 7th Quarter.

Didactic Evaluation:

Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Examination (CPCE)

Overall SURI Exit Exam CPCE Mean for 2020 = 82.2 ($n=5$). SURI comparison with mean National CPCE Exit Exam score by quarter:

Content Area	National Average	02/2020 SURI Average
	100120	
	N= 603	N=5

	Mean = 83.9 Standard Deviation = 13.6	Mean = 82.2 Standard Deviation = 14.5
Human Growth and Development	10.6	9
Social and Cultural Foundations	10.1	9.2
Helping Relationships	11.4	11.4
Group Work	10.4	10.0
Career and Lifestyle Development	10.5	11.4
Appraisal	10.2	10.8
Research and Program Evaluation	9.0	8.4
Professional Orientation and Ethics	11.8	12.0

CPCE - Tested areas were; Human Growth and Development (C1), Social and Cultural Foundations (C2), Helping Relationships (C3), Group Work (C4), Career and Lifestyle Development (C5), Appraisal (C6), Research and Program Evaluation (C7), and Professional Orientation and Ethics (C8).

2013-2020 CPCE Averages

Year	CPCE Average	Number of Students
2013	75	9
2014	74.05	22
2015	73.26	23
2016	65.75	16
2017	67.0	11
2018	76.97	33
2019	73.8	10
2020	82.2	5

The 2020 testing year saw a significant increase in the overall university mean from the previous year. Program faculty continue to work to assist students individually and collectively with preparing for the exam. Study modules have been put online to help students develop familiarity with an online testing format. In addition, faculty continue to incorporate CPCE content into their classes and offer regular review sessions to help students prepare for the exam.

Case Conceptualization

In the second part of the comprehensive exam, students are given two clinical case studies and have 8 hours to provide the following:

I. Evaluation and Assessment

1. Identify precipitating problems or symptoms.
2. Conduct a comprehensive biopsychosocial assessment/history.
3. Identify individual and relationship functioning.

II. Diagnosis and Treatment Planning

1. Integrate client assessment and observational data to form a conceptualization.
2. Utilizing clinical judgment, formulate a differential diagnosis
3. Develop a treatment plan.

III. Clinical Practice

1. Determine and identify other services that could meet the client's needs.
2. Identify and discuss applicable ethical and legal issues.
3. Discuss the scope of practice parameters and any foreseen limitations.

Criteria used to evaluate student responses include accuracy, comprehensiveness, critical thinking, individualized, and mechanics of the case conceptualization report. Faculty use a rubric to quantify the aforementioned criteria. Each section of the case conceptualization integrates relevant course content. **Evaluation and Assessment** correlates directly to the successful application of the following core classes: CNS6535 Clinical Mental Health Appraisal I, CNS6161 Counseling Techniques, and CNS8100 Preliminary Clinical Evaluation. **Diagnosis and Treatment Planning** correlates to the successful application of CNS 6051 Diagnostics of Psychopathology and Treatment and CNS 6161 Counseling Techniques. **Clinical Practice** is reflective of the effective application of CNS6313 Professional Orientation and Ethics and CNS6425 Clinical Mental Health Counseling.

2013-2020 Clinical Evaluation Averages

Year	Clinical Evaluation Average	Number of Students
2013	80.07	26
2014	75.36	13
2015	77.02	21
2016	77.93	21
2017	80	17
2018	78.1	9
2019	81.28	7
2020	64.88	6

Students in the program continue to be exposed to diagnostic cases and case conceptualizations throughout the program. Scores decreased this year compared to previous years, likely due to increased time between the preliminary clinical evaluation and the clinical evaluation compared to previous years. Also, students also indicated that they were not given feedback on their preliminary clinical evaluations, so they were unsure about their strengths, weaknesses, and how to improve their clinical writing skills. These gaps were a result of retirements and leadership changes within the department. Continued emphasis will be placed on case conceptualization in the latter quarters, where students are able to apply information from their practicum/internship sites to information that is gained in the educational setting.

Program Highlights and Changes

- After two retirements in 2019, Dr. Barner assumed the role of the Interim Program Director for the remainder of 2019 and first half of 2020.
- SU Richmond conducted a national search for a new Program Director and hired Dr. Aimee Brickner who started in June 2020.
- SU Richmond conducted a national search for a full-time faculty member and hired Dr. Tiffanie Sutherlin in September 2020.

Professional Development Seminars for Students

- Winter 2020: Becoming Polyvagal Theory-Informed (Christine Lucas, APC, NCC, West Palm Beach, FL)
- Spring 2020: Counseling for Military Dependents- (Tom Watson, Ph.D., Savannah, GA)
- Summer 2020: Play Therapy: Theories and Techniques (Aimee Brickner, Ph.D., LPC & Tessa Cramer, LPC, Richmond, VA)
- Fall 2020: Self-Care in the Pandemic (Katherine DeWitt, Ph.D., Columbia, SC)

Continuing Education (CE) Workshops for Students and Community Members

Due to COVID-19, CE workshops were not offered in 2020; however, faculty planned several virtual CE trainings that will take place in 2021.

Faculty Publications (2020)

Brickner, A. R. (2020, May). What is resilience? *Virginia Child Protection Newsletter*, 118, 2-3.

Brickner, A. R. (2020, February). Secondary Traumatic Stress: Causes and outcomes. *Virginia Child Protection Newsletter*, 117, 6-7.

Sutherlin T. & Walker, P. A contextual understanding of the experiences of African American veterans and its impact on their wellbeing [Unpublished manuscript]. College of Health Professions, South University-Richmond.

Sutherlin, T. *African American pastors understanding and experiences providing mental health support.* [Manuscript submitted for publication]. College of Health Professions, South University-Richmond.

Evans, A., Fleitas, K., Thomas, C., Metz, A., & **Sutherlin, T.** (2020). An examination of self-reported white allies: An interpretative qualitative analysis. *The Journal of the Pennsylvania Counseling Association*, 20 (1), 16-26.

Litam, S. D. A., Ford, D. F, Band, M. P., Friday, A. R., **Sutherlin, T.**, & Walker, B. (2020). *Understanding the historical context of traditionally marginalizing biblical passages: Helping LGBTQ clients navigate the intersection of religion and sexual identity.* In K.K. Strunk, *Queering in the deep south: Research on queer studies and LGBTQ lives in the U.S. southeast.* Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

Faculty Professional Presentations

Froehlich, R., McClesky, K., **Brickner, A.**, & Honacker, H. (2020, November). *VCA Ethics Committee—Updates and contemporary ethical considerations.* Presentation at the Virginia Counselors Association Convention, Virtual.

Sutherlin, T. & Attia, M. (2020, February) Ethical issues to consider when examining the intersection of psychopharmacology and psychotherapy. Law and Ethics in Counseling Conference, New Orleans, Louisiana

Invited CE Presentations

Brickner: Ethics & Telehealth in the Age of COVID-19 (VCA Ethics Committee, 1 CE live virtual training, Oct. 19, 2020)

- Invited to speak to the Richmond Area Counselors Association on behalf of the VCA Ethics Committee
- Planned and facilitated a 1-hour workshop for RACA members

Notable Faculty Service

Brickner: Virginia Association for Counselor Educators and Supervisors (VACES), Membership Chair and graduate student conference committee member, Virginia Counselors Association (VCA) Ethics Committee, member

Sutherland: Virginia Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development (VAMCD), President