

COUNSELOR



JOB DESCRIPTION

People seek a counselor's assistance to guide them through issues they encounter throughout various stages of their lives. Using talking therapies to build trust, counselors create a safe place for their clients to help them make choices that lead to positive changes or a new way of thinking. A counselor needs to have a high regard for confidentiality and professional ethics, and may use different counseling styles according to their client's needs.



SALARY

Newly qualified counselor ★★☆☆☆

Experienced counselor ★★★★★

INDUSTRY PROFILE

Employment opportunities in a variety of settings • Growing demand for counseling in workplaces • Some contractor opportunities available • Strong competition for jobs

CAREER PATHS

Counselors require maturity and experience; many take up the job as a new career later in life for this reason. A bachelor's degree in social work or psychology is useful, and a master's degree in counseling is required. There are many forms of counseling and a variety of career paths.

SCHOOL/COLLEGE

COUNSELOR Works with adolescents to help guide them through academic, personal, emotional, and social concerns.



CASE MANAGER

A good first step into the counseling profession, case managers support counselors' clients. These paraprofessionals do not require master's degrees.



GRADUATE To become a counselor, you must study counseling at a master's degree level.



COUNSELOR Once qualified and certified, most counselors choose to specialize in one of a number of areas. Further training and certification may be required for some of these paths.



SKILLS GUIDE



Excellent verbal, written, and listening skills for effective communication with clients.



An ability to work with people in health care and refer clients to further sources of help.



An interest in working with diverse organizations and with different kinds of people.



High levels of empathy, patience, and a non-judgemental attitude towards people in general.



Good organizational skills for managing a large number of clients in a given period.



The ability to help clients resolve their issues and find ways to improve their lives.



MARRIAGE & FAMILY COUNSELOR

Helps couples and families to evaluate relationships with each other, or to resolve specific issues by encouraging communication and reflection.



REHABILITATION COUNSELOR

Helps people with physical or intellectual disabilities overcome obstacles and achieve personal, career, and independent living goals.



ADDICTION COUNSELOR Supports people with drug, alcohol, or gambling dependence to help them to deal with the issues underlying their addiction.

AT A GLANCE



YOUR INTERESTS Psychology • Sociology • Biology • Health care • Helping and supporting people



ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS

An appropriate degree and extensive therapy training is essential, as is accreditation by a professional body.



LIFESTYLE Hours can vary due to clients' schedules. The majority of the work is one-on-one, but it may involve group therapy.



LOCATION Most counselors are based in an office, but they may need to visit clients in the community as part of their work.



THE REALITIES Counselors may hear about distressing situations, so the job can be emotionally demanding. Pay rates vary according to experience.

▼ RELATED CAREERS

- ▶ **PROBATION OFFICER** *see pp. 244–245*
- ▶ **PSYCHOLOGIST** *see pp. 254–255*
- ▶ **SOCIAL WORKER** *see pp. 258–259*
- ▶ **DEBT ADVISOR** Works with charities and publicly funded bodies to provide unbiased and confidential advice about debt and money problems. Debt advisors also help people budget and take a sensible approach to spending.
- ▶ **LIFE COACH** Helps people achieve goals in their lives by determining their aims and discussing ways to achieve desired outcomes. Life coaches need to be good listeners, empathic, and be able to work with many personality types.