

Job description of school counselors

[Business](#), [Career](#)



According to the U. S. Department of Labor's Occupational Outlook Handbook, in the broadest sense, counselors assist people with personal, family, educational, mental health, and career decisions and problems. Their duties depend on the individuals they serve and on the settings in which they work.

In school settings—elementary through post secondary these professionals are normally called school counselors. Their role is to work with students, including those considered to be at risk and with special needs. They advocate for students and work with other individuals and organizations to promote the academic, career, and personal and social development of children and youths. School counselors help children and youth understand and deal with social, behavioral, and personal problems (U. S. Dept. Labor, 2005).

Vocational counselors, also called employment or career counselors, primarily provide career counseling. These individuals are located both within and external to the school setting. Their main focus is supporting individuals of all ages and backgrounds with their occupational decisions. Vocational counselors explore and evaluate the client's education, training, employment history, interests, talents, and personality traits, and arrange for aptitude and achievement tests to assist in making career decisions (U. S. Dept. Labor, 2005).

Marriage and family counselors are trained to support individuals, significant partners, family groups, couples, or organizations to resolve emotional and psychological conflicts. They work toward altering people's perceptions and

behaviors, enhancing communication and understanding among all family members, and helping to prevent family and individual crises.

Depending on their specific concerns, individuals who have mental or physical disabilities may see any of these counselors for support or else respectively mental health and rehabilitation counselors. Mental health counselors work with individuals, families, and groups to analyze, address and treat mental and emotional disorders and to promote optimal mental health. They are trained in a variety of therapeutic techniques required to address a broad range of concerns such as depression, addiction and substance abuse, suicidal thoughts, stress management, self-esteem issues, ageism, occupational problems, educational decisions, and relationship problems. Mental health counselors often work closely with other mental health specialists, such as psychiatrists, psychologists, clinical social workers, psychiatric nurses, and school counselors (U. S. Dept. of Labor, 2005).

Rehabilitation counselors support people who must cope with the personal, social, and vocational effects of disabilities. They counsel disabled individuals who are coping with birth defects, illness or disease, accidents, or daily stress. They evaluate the strengths and challenges of these individuals, offer specialized and vocational counseling, and arrange for medical care, training, and job placement.

Rehabilitation counselors meet both with disabled individuals as well as their families, evaluate school and medical reports and make suggestions, and confer and plan with physicians, psychologists, educators, occupational

therapists, and employers to determine the capabilities and skills of the individual. Conferring with the client, they develop a rehabilitation program that frequently consists of training to help the person develop job skills. Rehabilitation counselors also work toward increasing the client's capacity to live independently (U. S. Dept. of Labor, 2005).

The article " Vocational attainment of adults with CF: success in the face of adversity" (Burker, 2005, 22) discusses the unique needs of those suffering from Cystic Fibrosis (CF), a fatal inherited disease found in industrialized nations that affects multiple body systems but has the greatest impact on the lungs and pancreas. The article reports that despite the fact that there has been an increase in the number of working-age individuals with CF in the past two decades, research on career choice, work status and work disability of individuals with this disease has received very little attention. Information about the vocational potential for individuals with CF indicates limited expectation for vocational success.

The researchers, who studied the vocational status of 183 adults with CF, provided information about this group's vocational potential. Important findings were:

(1) the majority of participants were either working or in school; (2) those employed were working in professional, technical, managerial, clerical and sales occupations; (3) the jobs held varied in physical demands and strength ratings, and; (4) patients with skilled jobs were more likely to have maintained their positions than those with unskilled jobs. The researchers concluded that:

these numbers are impressive given that the majority of these individuals were sick enough to be evaluated for their candidacy for lung transplant. These data suggest that, as with most people, vocation is an important part of life, and many individuals with CF go to school and achieve in careers and work despite their declining health. Rehabilitation counselors should consider people with CF as viable candidates for successful job placement.

In other words, the differences between the CF and non-CF candidates in regards to vocational counseling needs may not be as different as expected. There is a greater overlap in their counseling needs.

Each generation, depending on the present society and its issues, will have varying concerns. Due to the war in Iraq, increasing numbers of men and women are seeking help from counselors due to post traumatic stress syndrome. The journal report, " The prediction of levels of post traumatic stress levels by depression among veterans with disabilities" (Martz, 2005, 56), found a high correlation between this syndrome and depression. The researchers thus concluded that if a veteran with a disability shows some form of depression, then mental health professionals should also seriously consider the possibility of the simultaneous existence of post traumatic stress symptoms.

Such knowledge, as found in this above study, can provide counselors with more information and understanding about their patient's psychological status. Rehabilitation counselors can utilize this information to aid in a more effective recovery. Such findings also demonstrate the importance of increased communication among various forms of counselors and the need

for counselors to expand their knowledge about the changing psychological and emotional support of their patients.