

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES FOR SCHOOL COUNSELORS

Career information and job search preparation including:

- Information about school counseling certification and licensure
- Professional development events, conferences, and career fairs to attend
- Tips for job seekers
- Resumes and interview tips
- Potential Interview questions for school counselors

School Counselors work with students to help them develop academically, personally and socially and to assist in career development through individual and group counseling, as well as classroom guidance sessions. School counselors consult with parents, teachers, administrators and other professionals to provide students with the resources and services to help them to be the best possible learners. In addition, they serve as a liaison between school, community agencies and post-secondary opportunities.

School counselors have working knowledge of appropriate counseling interventions in a school setting, with special emphasis on the study of interpersonal relationships, facilitative skills, brief counseling, group dynamics and group learning activities, of family systems, peer helper programs, multi-cultural and cross-cultural helping approaches, crisis intervention techniques and educational and community sources for special school populations. Working knowledge of the concepts, principles and methodologies of instruction. Working knowledge of academic curriculum and methodologies of instruction. Demonstrated ability to communicate with others effectively, both orally and in writing. Demonstrated ability in crisis intervention, decision making, problem analysis, conflict resolution, interpersonal relationships, planning and multi-tasking and other related abilities and skills.

Licensure, Certification and Continuing Education Requirements

Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (LCPC) or Licensed Professional Counselors (LPC) are professional titles used in various states to differentiate a more extensive educational or professional experience level. Licensed counselors provide mental health and substance abuse care and are trained to work with individuals, families, and groups in treating mental, behavioral, and emotional problems and disorders. Licensed counselors make up a large percentage of the workforce employed in community mental health centers, schools, agencies, and organizations.

State licensure requirements for professional counselors vary but typically include: a master's or doctoral degree in counseling including an internship and coursework along with completion of post-master's degree supervised clinical experience. To get started, go to the state board directory and click on the state in which you are seeking licensure.

<https://www.nbcc.org/search/stateboarddirectory>.

The state of Maryland has its own unique requirements for those seeking licensure as a Mental Health Counselor. Maryland has two levels of licensure the **Licensed Graduate Professional Counselor (LGPC)** and the full level of licensure known as the **Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor**. More about Maryland's laws and regulations on licensure can be found at the Maryland Board of Professional Counselors website: <https://health.maryland.gov/bopc/Pages/profcounselor.aspx>

School Counseling Certification

Maryland State Department of Education

Information about School Counseling certification in the State of Maryland

<http://marylandpublicschools.org/about/pages/dsfss/sssp/school-counseling.aspx>

There are various options for school counseling certification which can be found here:

<http://www.dsd.state.md.us/comar/comarhtml/13a/13a.12.03.02.htm>

Associations and Professional Development Resources

American School Counselor Association (ASCA)

<http://www.schoolcounselor.org/>

SchoolMentalHealth.org

www.schoolmentalhealth.org

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP)

<http://www.aacap.org/>

Maryland Public Schools/MSDE

http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/studentschoolsvcs/student_services_alt/school_counseling/

Association of Independent Maryland Schools

<http://www.aimsmddc.org/> (Click on Teachers and Career Opportunities)

Associations and Professional Development Resources

LGBT in Higher Education

<http://lgbtinhighered.com/>

Southern Teachers Agency

<http://www.southernteachers.com/>

Career Fairs and Networking Events

MERC (Maryland Education Recruitment Consortium)

<http://merc.maspamd.org/about/>

Maryland Career Consortium Career Fair

<http://marylandcareerconsortium.org/node/10>

Idealist Grad School & Career Fair

<http://www.idealist.org/info/GradFairs/Outreach/WashingtonDC>

Sheppard Pratt Lecture Series

<http://www.sheppardpratt.org/education-training/wednesdays-sheppard-pratt/>

Tips for the Counseling Job Search

1) Reflect on and document your internship experience. It is vital that you take time to think about what you have learned about yourself, your clients and your field, and how it impacts your philosophy of mental health and counseling. Make sure you do this on a regular basis as this will help you to:

- Improve your counseling practice and elicit helpful feedback from your practicum supervisors.
- Prepare more thoroughly for interviews and career fairs.

2) Explore and prioritize opportunities. Consider how you see yourself working with clients.

Population: Are you interested in working with a particular client population?

Function: Do you want your role to primarily involve direct service and therapy or are you looking for some exposure to other roles such as research or program administration? Do you anticipate pursuing your license at some point?

Consider the many possible contexts in which you could work, including:

- *K-12 Schools*
- *Higher Education*
- *Private practice*

Tips for the Counseling Job Search

3) Build your network. Connecting with others in your profession can provide insight into what it's like to work at a particular school as well as how to market yourself effectively in the job search. Informational interviewing is a great way to gather advice and build your network, though it's important to remember that the purpose of this type of meeting is to gather information and advice, not ask for a job or job interview.

4) Tweak your resume and cover letter. SOE Career Services can provide critiques during appointments or Rapid Resume Reviews which are offered during fall and spring semesters.

5) Attend Career Fairs. Career fairs allow you to meet a number of recruiters in one place so that you are able to offer resumes to and obtain contact information from employers of interest.

6) Attend professional development workshops: SOE Career Services offers workshops throughout the semesters on topics including resume/cover letter writing, applying to graduate schools/programs, and job fair preparation.

7) Attend networking events: SOE Career Services offers networking events throughout the year. From professional-related to social, online and in-person, networking events provide a great way to meet new people and make valuable contacts, professionally and personally – you never know who you may meet!

Tips for the Counseling Job Search

8) Prepare for Interviews. The key to successful interviewing is thorough and thoughtful presentation. Reflect on your internship as you prepare answers that illustrate concrete examples of your experience.

- Desire to work at a given organization and knowledge of its mission, values and services.
- Desire to work with a given population and understanding of issues faced by that population.
- Philosophy of clinical practice and approach to counseling/therapy
Highlights/challenges from working with clients
- Strengths/weaknesses
- Best practices

Phone Interview Preparation and Tips

The phone interview helps employers select qualified candidates. Being prepared to answer the most common phone interview questions is crucial for securing the **in-person interview**, so you can be offered the job. Your strategy is to provide facts that support your resume, with some context about your performance.

The following tips may help increase your chances of landing an [in-person interview](#):

- **Prepare:** have a copy of your resume in front of you, also have the following information on-hand for the phone interview:
 - the job description or listing
 - research on the organization – visit their website
 - a list of questions you may have about the job – shows interest
- **First impressions:** are formed via the phone interview - always answer calls with enthusiasm in your voice, stating your first name. For example: "Hello, this is Jane."
- **Smile:** your interviewer might not be able to see you, but a smile can actually be conveyed through the phone and make you sound more relaxed and enthusiastic.
- **Stand up:** walk around the room - this may help you relax but it is also a good technique to make your voice clearer and louder.
- **Be Professional:** Make every effort to sound professional and not personal as this call is not to establish a rapport – that happens during the in-person interview.
- **Listen:** Don't interrupt while the interviewer is asking you questions or giving an explanation– let the caller do most of the talking without interruptions while you focus on listening so that you can respond accordingly.
- **Just the facts:** use numbers and facts to be effective – for example, state the percentage of clients you were responsible for.
- **Airtime:** avoid the simple yes or no answer – silence during a phone conversation is dead airtime.

Phone Interview Preparation and Tips

- **Rephrasing:** use the technique of restating or rephrasing the question – it tells the caller that you listened carefully and it also gives you time to think about your answer without pausing too long.

- **Compensation:** salary or benefit inquiries should come at the end of the interviewing cycle, never at the phone interview stage. If you are asked about your desired salary range, you can truthfully say you don't know enough about the job yet to state a specific figure.
- **Closing:** At the end of the interview, re-affirm your qualifications, express your interest in the job and the organization and tell them that you would appreciate the opportunity to meet with them in person to further discuss the position and why you are an excellent fit.

Potential Interview Questions for School Counselors

What does school counseling mean to you?

What do you see as the main role of a school counselor?

What influenced you to be a school counselor?

What is the counseling theory or approach that you most closely follow?

What is the most creative and innovative counseling technique you have used?

What innovative and new ideas would you like to employ as a school counselor?

How will you evaluate your programs to meet (a) current state standards, (b) standards of best practice for a comprehensive school counseling program; and (c) the ASCA National Model?

How would you handle an upset or irate parent?

How would you handle a passive (perhaps irresponsible) parent?

How would you handle students having attendance problems?

Potential Interview Questions for School Counselors

How do you see yourself fitting in with school counselors who have experience as veteran teachers?

What do you think is the most important characteristic of a school counselor?

What do you know about our school that you would consider a strength? A weakness?

What makes you want to work at this school?

What is it that you like about working with (grade level) school students?

How do you handle criticism and stress?

How would you deal with cultural differences in a school setting?

What technology applications do you see being useful in your work?

What might your professional development plan look like?

What do you think the role of the school counselor is in preventing school violence?

What practical experiences have you had that make you feel capable of being a school counselor?

What experiences have you had in working with special education students?

When considering ethical standards and school policies, how would you handle a conflict between the two?

Describe how you would implement small group counseling/guidance lessons.

What has your experience been in working with minority students and LGBTQ students?

What is your view on collaborative consultation in the schools?

Tell us about a successful (satisfying) case that you have handled. Tell us about one that was not so successful; what would you have done differently?

How do you handle conflict with a colleague, parent, administrator?

How do you feel about writing letters of recommendation?

Would you be interested in heading any extracurricular activities (i.e., club advisor)? – say yes to this, often teachers and staff are asked to take on various roles and “wear a lot of hats” on behalf of their schools.

Are there some things or information that should not be shared with others, such as students, parents or administrators?

What skills do you currently possess that would help you be successful right away as a high school counselor?

What would you do if:

One of your students told you she was pregnant?

You suspected one of your students is being abused?

One of your students tells you he/she is being abused?

A student requests a teacher change because he/she doesn't like the teacher?

A parent ask you to switch his/her child's teacher?

You suspect one of your students is abusing drugs/alcohol?

One of your students admits to being sexually active?

What would you do if:

Your student does not get into his/her number one college choice?

One of your students wants to drop out of high school?

One of your seniors is not going to graduate?

- One of your students continues to fail math (or any subject) each quarter?
- You have a faculty member's child in your caseload?
- One of your students talks to you about wanting to commit suicide?
- One of your students told you he/she is gay?
- If you were going to implement the ASCA National Model here next year, what would you do first?

Counselor Resumes

What do organizations want to see in your resume?

- **Summary Statement:** Provide a few sentences describing your overall related experience, skills and knowledge.
- **Credentials:** If certification or licensure is required, list those credentials next to your name (i.e. M.S., LCPC, PsyD, PhD, etc.) or under your education as subtitles such as 'Certifications and Licenses' or 'Certification' etc.
- **Preferred or recommended qualifications:** skills that may not be required but preferred for the job – if you have any preferred qualifications such as computer skills, make sure you include them too.
- **Preferred experience:** This usually means that the potential employer is open to hearing from you if you do not have the specific qualifications they prefer but perhaps related experience or other employment and transferrable skills (skills that you can transfer from one job or industry to another such as communication, organization, time-management skills).

Brief Resume versus Expanded Resume:

- **One-page resume:** Some employers prefer a brief resume outlining your experience and education with degrees earned, dates of employment with various employers, primary accomplishments, and other experience pertaining to the specific position. Make sure your brief resume is one page.

Counselor Resumes

What to Include and Exclude:

- Unless it is your first job out of school (undergrad), or a paid internship, no need to include your grade point average. Employers want to know you are a bright, hard-working, creative, resourceful individual who will get along with the staff. Grades are not as important as abilities such as interpersonal skills and listing a GPA can make you appear somewhat inexperienced or new to the working world.
- Be careful if you describe your preferable school of thought in counseling. It is possible you are a proponent of Cognitive/Behavioral techniques, and the person interviewing you is Psychodynamic. Don't let a preference exclude you from a job that may provide you with a new or different perspective or one from which you can learn and grow.

Resume Tips

- Use bullets to list job responsibilities and accomplishments.
- Use present tense for current job and past tense for all past jobs.
- Don't use "I" in your bullet points – list as "Responsible for" instead of "I am responsible for."
- Don't use too many bullets for each job (6-8 max).
- Keep it uniform - all bullets should be consistent, if capping the first word, do so throughout. If using periods, use throughout.
- Bullets are more concise and easier to read for employers who skim.
- Proofread for any errors, typos, inconsistency.

Example of Summary Statement for School Counselor

Dynamic school counselor with knowledge of and experience in administering counseling interventions in a school setting. Effective advocate with strong interpersonal and collaborative skills to consult with parents, teachers and administrators. Passionate about helping students develop academically, personally, and socially.

Sample Bullet Points

- Provide programs, activities and services which focus on helping children experience healthy growth academically, socially and for future success.
- Publicize and coordinate information to students and parents regarding student opportunities such as enrichment programs, scholarships, special programs, etc.

- Serve as an advocate for students and works to promote a healthy school climate and safe learning environment.
- Collaborate/consult with parents, teachers, administrators and community resources concerning student issues.
- Assist with crisis intervention and in identifying and implementing prevention and intervention programs for students.
- Offer guidance sessions on problem-solving decision-making and academic and career planning.
- Assist students with course selection (secondary) relative to their educational pursuits and career goals.
- Coordinate participation in career related activities.
- Demonstrate commitment to improving professional competence.
- Assess student learning on an ongoing basis and alters instruction to meet group/individual needs.
- Use the curriculum of the district to plan daily instructional activities.
- May perform other duties as assigned.

Cover Letters

Why a cover letter?

- To serve as an introduction of who you are, what you have to offer, and why you are contacting them.
- To make an important first impression – potential employers can use the cover letter to assess your communication ability, and interest in the job.
- To showcase specific or relevant education, skills and experience.
- To discuss why you are an ideal match for the position, what you know about them and why you are a good fit for the organization.
- To convey your enthusiasm, interest in the job, helping you to stand out among other candidates – more personable.
- To be more specific about your career objectives or goals.

Cover Letters

Content

- 1st Paragraph *The Introduction*: why you are contacting them, relevant education or experience, a sentence about them - why you want to work there.
- 2nd Paragraph *The Body*: your relevant professional background, skills, experience and achievements that best qualify you for the job.
- 3rd Paragraph *The sell*: why you would be an ideal match for the organization and what you can do for them.
- Closing paragraph: information about attachments "*attached is my resume for your review*" and follow up information, "*I will contact you within a week to follow up on the receipt of my resume. Thank them for their time and sign and print name.*"

Cover letter sample

Date

Contact name, title (HR or principal)

School name

Address

Dear _____,

I am writing to express my interest in the position of School Counselor at (name of school district) which was posted (on your website). I am currently a graduate student in the School Counseling program at the Johns Hopkins University and will graduate in (year). I hold a Bachelor of Science degree in _____ from (name of school grad date).

As a counselor intern this past year, I have gained experience maintaining a caseload of clients, leading various groups in topics including social skills, conflict resolution, anger management, cooperation skills, and risk-identification. Add any other relevant experience here: my related background includes working with diverse populations of (youths, adolescents, students, etc.) ranging from (k – 12, etc) in (public and private school setting). It is my professional goal to obtain a position as a school counselor in a (public/private school setting) where I can work with students to assist them with their goals, social skills, related needs and the daily challenges they face. My academic training and knowledge along with my related experiences make me an ideal candidate as a school counselor in (name of school district). Moreover, I believe that my flexibility and empathy combined with my spirit of equity and my diverse range of counseling skills and behavioral management strategies would benefit your student population.

I am passionate about working with (adolescents, elementary school children and/or youth, etc.) to help improve and support their social, emotional, and academic goals. I am eager to apply my related skills in school counseling to (school name). Attached is a copy of my resume, which details my background and related experience. I will contact you in a week to follow up on the receipt of my resume OR I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
SIGNATURE HERE

Print name

Resume sample for school counselor internship

Jane Smith

Street Address • City, State, Zip
Phone • E-mail address

SUMMARY

Compassionate graduate student counselor seeking internship experience as a school counselor. Related background includes working with children in a variety of settings. Committed to cultivating each child's well-being personally, socially and academically while engaging a strong support system. Ability to maintain discretion and sound judgment. Effective communicator with strong collaboration skills to advocate on behalf of children, young adults and families.

EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Master of Science, School Counseling, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD date

- **Related coursework:** *School Counselor Leadership, Foundations of School Counseling, Play Therapy, Group Counseling, Career Counseling*

Bachelor of Science in Social Work, School name, City, State date

RELATED EXPERIENCE

School Counseling Practicum, School name, City, State dates

- Completed 100 hours of school counseling onsite at (school name).
- Conducted individual student counseling sessions.
- Work with students using counseling interventions including play therapy and CBT.
- Communicate with parents through conferences and informal meetings.

Research Assistant, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD January 2018 - Present

- Assisted professor in analysis of qualitative data.
- Add another bullet of duties/responsibilities
- Add another bullet of duties/responsibilities

Childcare provider, City, State dates

- Collaborated with parents to manage social, emotional, and cognitive welfare of five-year old boy.
- Helped navigate the emotional and social challenges of transitioning from preschool to kindergarten.
- Developed intellectually appropriate, engaging activities based on child's needs and interests.

Preschool Teacher, School name, City, State dates

- Planned creative and educational activities for children, including music, arts and crafts, and games.
- Addressed behavioral and developmental issues in the classroom.
- Promoted positive social interactions and modes of self-expression among children.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American School Counseling Association (ASCA)

Association for Play Therapy (APT)

Maryland School Counseling Association (MSCA)

Resume sample

JOHN SMITH

Street Address | City, State, Zip | Phone | e-mail

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

School counselor (or graduate candidate) with demonstrated experience in working effectively with individuals and groups seeking to provide children and adolescents with academic, social and emotional support in an academic setting. Effective communication and interpersonal skills to collaborate with colleagues, teachers and parents.

EDUCATION

Master of Science in School Counseling, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD (graduation date)

Related coursework includes: *Introduction to Play Therapy, Advanced Play Therapy Interventions, Counseling Adolescents, Introduction to Children and Youth with Exceptionalities*

Bachelors of Arts, Psychology, University, City State (graduation date)

RELATED EXPERIENCE

School Counseling Intern, Elementary School, City State (Aug 2019 - May 2020)

- Conducted classroom guidance lessons about abuse, decision-making, conflict resolution, feelings, prejudice, and other relevant topics in K-5 classrooms
- Counseled children individually and conducted two small groups regarding anger management and attendance for students on a weekly basis
- Consulted with parents, teachers, school social worker, mental health counselor, school psychologist, and community organizations

Practicum, Elementary School, City State (Jan - May 2018)

- Observed site supervisor perform school counseling related activities
- Conducted classroom guidance lessons with K-5 classrooms
- Counseled children individually

Summer Camp Counselor, School, City State (dates)

- Helped organize and run all camp activities
- Led campers through daily activities, interacted and informed parents about their children's activities and behavior
- Supervised fifteen 4 and 5-year old campers

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant, University, City State (dates)

- Assisted the Ph.D. research team in the stress and coping lab for low income urban youth
- Read and researched about accredited mentor programs in journals to search for successful initiatives and patterns
- Helped consolidate a list of mentor activities for the University

OTHER EXPERIENCE

Human Resources Associate, Allstate Insurance Company, Chicago, IL (dates)

- Served as a liaison between candidates and hiring managers with scheduling interviews and providing information about job opportunities
- Used an online recruiting system to record candidate progress throughout the interviewing process
- Attended weekly meetings to discuss recruiting and scheduling strategies

J. Smith, p. 2

AWARDS/HONORS

Student Excellence Award, School of Education, Johns Hopkins University 2018
Chi Sigma Iota Academic and Professional Counseling Association

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American School Counselor Association (ASCA)

Chi Sigma Iota Counseling Association, Lambda Chapter, Johns Hopkins University