Credentials Needed/Sought & Plan

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 Becoming a professional counselor takes hard work, dedication, specific training, and other things that allow one to be fully equipped to be successful in this profession. To obtain licensure as a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC), one must apply to a graduate program that specializes in counseling and includes the appropriate curriculum. Most counseling graduate programs include completing 60 course credit hours that cover a wide variety of material such as multiculturalism, ethics, diagnosis and treatment, research methods, and many more specialized topics. Much of the course work includes applying the skills and information that we learn through papers, interactive activities, and other types of assignments. I’ve found that during this program, I learn and retain the information best when the material is presented in a way that requires us to apply it. Another credentialing requirement includes completing 100 hours of a practicum as well as 600 hours of an internship (University, 2022). I want to work in trauma-informed care so I’m hoping to pursue a future internship that will allow me to gain experience in this specialty area. The practicum and internship help to obtain the required supervision hours that are necessary for applying for licensure. Longwood University’s Counselor Education program is designed to prepare its students with the academic requirements for licensure as an LPC in both tracks, School Counseling and Mental Health Counseling. I’m on the Mental Health Counseling track so I will have the fundamental requirements to apply for licensure once I’ve completed my graduate degree. To begin the licensure process, you have to apply and complete the LPC licensure exam provided by the Virginia Board of Counseling. There are other exams, such as the QMHP, that can allow an individual to become licensed in other specialty areas, but they are not equivalent to obtaining an LPC licensure (Virginia Board of Counseling, 2020). Gaining experience and applying for other qualifications can help to strengthen one’s career and professional development. Although I’m determined that I want to work in trauma-informed care, I’m hoping to gain experience in other specialty areas so that I can find my passion and what interests me most. Another way to strengthen and support one’s professional development is by becoming involved in professional organizations. Some of the professional organizations that we discussed in class include the American Counseling Association (ACA), National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC), Chi Sigma Iota, American College Counseling Association, and many others. Much of these organizations allow developing professional counselors to build connections, further their education beyond the work setting or classroom, provide support for advocacy in the profession, and many more opportunities. After learning about some of these organizations, I’ve contemplated joining an organization either now or in the future to further my professional development.

References

University, L. (2022, August 8). *Counselor Education, M.S.* Longwood University. Retrieved December 1, 2022, from http://www.longwood.edu/gradcounseling/#panel5

Virginia Board of Counseling, Online Application Handbook (2020).

https://www.dhp.virginia.gov/counseling/counseling\_forms.htm