

**Student Handbook
Master of Arts
Mental Health Counseling**

Marriage, Couples, and Family Counseling Track

2025-2026

**Belmont University
College of Pharmacy & Health Sciences
Mental Health Counseling Program
Nashville, TN 37212**

Introduction

Welcome to the School of Mental Health Counseling at Belmont University. This *Mental Health Counseling Student Handbook for Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling* contains information intended to answer questions about the program and describe program procedures. When seeking information, students should also refer to the [Bruin Guide](#), [Belmont University Graduate Admissions](#), and [Belmont University Graduate Catalog](#) in addition to this *Handbook*. Links containing additional information can be found at the end of this page.

While students are expected to adhere to policies in this handbook, [Bruin Guide](#), and [Belmont University Graduate Catalog](#), know that graduate procedures, course requirements, prerequisites, and other information is subject to change and this handbook does not replace policies found in the [Belmont University Graduate Catalog](#). Faculty and advisors are available to assist should you have questions but this is not substitute for knowledge of Belmont University policies. It is the student's primary responsibility to understand and follow all policies and procedures.

<http://www.belmont.edu/prospectivestudents/index.html>

Graduate Admissions

Belmont University
College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences
615-460-6405

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Program Details

The School of Mental Health Counseling, located in the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, prepares professional counselors in four master's level tracks; 1.) Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling; 2.) Clinical Mental Health Counseling; 3.) Clinical Pastoral Therapy; and 4) School Counseling. The Marriage, Couples, and Family Counseling track, and the Clinical Mental Health Counseling track, have been accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). Accreditation will also be sought from the College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy for appropriate specialties. The school counseling track is preparing to submit documents for CACREP accreditation in 2023

Purpose

The Master of Arts in Mental Health Counseling degree through the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences at Belmont University is unique among contemporary counseling programs in that it embodies Christian and pastoral theological understanding of the care of human beings in addressing the depth and complexity of human suffering. This degree is intended as a process of formation, the formation of a professional self. The program seeks to guide the forming of professionals who will act with integrity in the world as agents of the ministries of healing and transformation serving individuals, couples, families or larger groups. The program seeks to accomplish this goal through the integration of the wisdom, insight and values of the Church's care of souls tradition with the knowledge, skills and resources of contemporary scientific psychotherapy. This integration is woven into the design of every course of the program. In pursuing this goal, the degree is congruent with the mission and vision of Belmont University as "a Christ-centered student focused community developing diverse leaders of purpose, character, wisdom and transformational mindset, eager and equipped to make the world a better place."

Prerequisites

The Master of Arts in Mental Health Counseling (MAMHC) requires the completion of a Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university. Applicants should have a strong academic record with a GPA of at least a 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale).

Mission

The School of Mental Health Counseling seeks to train professional counselors who will act ethically as agents of the ministries of healing and transformation through efficacious counseling theory, techniques, skills, and respect for diversity.

Program Design

The Master of Arts in Mental Health Counseling degree is a 60-semester credit hour program designed to prepare men and women to serve as counselors in professional mental health settings ranging from community mental health centers to psychiatric hospitals, to faith-based counseling centers, and to private practice. The program satisfies the educational requirement for licensure as a Professional Counselor—Mental Health Service Provider in the State of Tennessee, Marital and Family Therapist in the State of Tennessee, or Clinical Pastoral Therapist in the State of Tennessee.

Prospective students should be aware that educational requirements for Professional Counselor licensure and Marital and Family Therapist licensure vary from state to state and should check

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their state's requirements prior to applying to the MAMHC degree. Prospective students interested in the Clinical Pastoral Counseling track should be aware that not all states license or certify pastoral therapists and that the educational requirements for those states that do may vary from state to state. Prospective students should check with their respective state's licensure requirements prior to applying to the MAMHC program. State licensure boards have the ability to change policies, laws, reviewing procedures and protocols, and requirements without notice. Applying early and with faculty assistance is recommended." The university cannot guarantee licensure if board changes are made after you graduate

The MAMHC program is a cohort program that requires six consecutive semesters (including summers). Students are required to complete a practicum and internship consisting of 700 clock hours of counseling and counseling related activities in an approved site or agency as a part of the program. Students are required to secure their own placement for the practicum and internship in consultation with the program director. Normally, students will complete 24 semester hours of course work prior to beginning their practicum experience. Students may have to pass a background check at some field experience sites and all must show proof of approved professional liability insurance prior to beginning the clinical experience component of the program.

The mental health counseling program will accept up to 21 hours of transfer credits from accredited universities. Students wishing to have courses transferred must contact the chair and submit syllabi for those courses under consideration. Transferred courses must meet CACREP accreditation standards as evidenced by course syllabi and be determined to directly replace a course on the Belmont Mental Health Counseling Program degree plan. Courses not meeting CACREP standards will not be accepted into the professional counseling or marriage and family counseling track.

Graduate Faculty

Professor Name:	Title:	Research Interests:
Dr. Janet Hicks	Department Chair and Professor	Child and Adolescent Counseling, School Counseling, Family Counseling, Career Counseling, Aggression
Dr. Tom Knowles-Bagwell,	Professor and Director of Doctoral Studies and Spiritual Integration	Pastoral Theological Method, Psychoanalytic Theory and Therapy, Clinical Supervision, Nature and Treatment of Addictions
Dr. Stephan Berry	Associate Professor	School Crisis Management, Trauma-Informed Schools, Creative Counseling Techniques
Dr. Layla Bonner	Associate Professor	African American mental health, Relationships, Family Wellness, Racial Trauma, Implicit Bias, Grief, Counselor Education
Dr. Amanda Grieme-Bradley	Associate Professor	Healthy Family Functioning. The Person of the Therapist, Therapeutic Presence
Dr. Olivia Bentley	Assistant Professor	Women, under-researched groups, substance use, co-occurring disorders, trauma-informed care, counselor education

Dr. Jenel Cassidy	Assistant Professor	Childhood Behavioral Problems & Trauma, Social Support & Post-Traumatic Growth
Dr. Mason Hale	Assistant Professor	Attachment to God, disaster response counseling, suicide prevention and intervention, thanatology, counselor education and supervision
Dr. Terri Tilford	Assistant Professor	Integration of AI and Mental Health, Wellness & Selfcare, Type 1 Diabetes, their Caregivers, and Mental Well-Being, College Student Mental Health and the Impact on Student Retention and Student Success
Dr. Mitchell Waters	Assistant Professor	The Intersection of Spirituality and Traumatic Stress, Spiritual and Religious Diversity in Counseling
Dr. Jon McKinnon	Lecturer	Intellectual Disabilities, Spiritual Formation and Integration in Counseling, Recovery for Experiences in Homelessness

Program Objectives

All mental health counseling students must achieve mastery in the eight CACREP counseling areas. Mastery is assessed through coursework, experiential activities, field experience rating forms, observation, examinations, case studies, as well as on the Master's Comprehensive Examination. Following is a list of objectives completed by students in the Mental Health Counseling Program.

Program Objectives for Counseling

The Mental Health Counseling faculty have identified the following program objectives for students:

- identify and resolve ethical issues with couples and families using current codes of ethics
- become knowledgeable and apply multicultural, cross-cultural, and cross-generational counseling skills and current competencies
- utilize culturally relevant strategies based on human growth and development
- integrate vocational counseling knowledge into holistic counseling strategies
- select and utilize efficacious family counseling theories, skills, and techniques
- facilitate care throughout the lifespan using Christian and pastoral theological perspectives of human suffering;
- demonstrate appropriate screening practices and leadership of groups
- select and utilize appropriate and ethical assessment instruments and techniques
- select and utilize appropriate and ethical research methods for the improvement of counseling services
- apply the Competencies for Addressing Spiritual and Religious Issues with couples and families in counseling;
- be committed to serve as Christian advocates for couples and families and their communities;

Overview of Mental Health Counseling Program

The Mental Health Counseling program offers a 60-credit hour Master of Arts degree in Mental Health Counseling (MAMHC) with three separate specialty areas including: Clinical Mental Health Counseling, Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling, and Clinical Pastoral Therapy. The Mental Health Counseling program includes academic coursework that satisfies the academic course requirements for Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) and Licensed Professional Counselor with the Mental Health Service Provider credential (LPC-MHSP) in Tennessee. Those specializing in Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling may apply for the Marital and Family Therapist licensure in the State of Tennessee. Prospective students should be aware that educational requirements for Professional Counselor licensure and Marital and Family Therapist (LMFT) licensure vary from state to state and should check their state's requirements prior to applying to the MAMHC degree. For students specializing in the Clinical Pastoral Counseling track, the MAMHC satisfies the educational requirements for licensure as a Clinical Pastoral Therapist in the State of Tennessee. Prospective students should be aware that not all states license or certify pastoral therapists and that the educational requirements for those states that do may vary from state to state. Prospective students should check with their respective state's licensure requirements prior to applying to the MAMHC program.

Clinical Mental Health Counseling. Graduates from the 60-hour Clinical Mental Health Counseling track are trained to work in settings such as: clinical mental health counseling facilities, non-profit agencies, addiction treatment centers, career counseling centers in both college and business settings, adult probation offices, hospital counseling centers, and to establish private counseling practices. The 60-hour Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program satisfies the academic coursework requirements for Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) and Licensed Professional Counselor with the Mental Health Service Provider Designation (LPC-MHSP) in Tennessee. Students must pass all state required licensing examinations and requirements for licensure.

Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling. Graduates from the 60-hour Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling track are trained to work with couples and families in a variety of family counseling settings. Graduates of this track are qualified to apply for licensure as Marital and Family Therapists (LMFT) in Tennessee. Students must pass all state required licensing examinations and requirements for licensure.

Clinical Pastoral Therapy. Graduates from the 60-hour Clinical Pastoral Therapy track are trained to work in settings including: clinical mental health counseling facilities, counseling centers, addiction treatment centers, faith-based counseling centers, psychiatric hospitals and private practice. This track satisfies the academic requirements for licensure in the State of Tennessee as a Clinical Pastoral Therapist. Students must pass all state required licensing examinations and requirements for licensure.

Details of Graduate Study at Belmont University

College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences

The College of Pharmacy & Health Sciences Office is housed in the McWhorter Building on the second floor. The Dean of the college, Dr. Sharell Pinto, is responsible for administering policies and rules relating to graduate degree programs in the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences. For more information, the college phone number is 615-460-5552.

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Mental Health Counseling Program

The graduate Mental Health Counseling program is housed in the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences. The Mental Health Counseling Program is directed by Dr. Janet Hicks (Professor and Chair) and Dr. Tom Knowles-Bagwell (Professor and Director of Doctoral Studies and Spiritual Integration) who report to the College Dean. Faculty in the School of Mental Health Counseling develop policies and procedures used within the program.

Expectations of Students

Students are expected to act professionally at all times and strive to improve scores on professional dispositions described later in this Handbook. Further, students must follow the ACA Code of ethics, AAMFT Code of Ethics, IAMFC Code of Ethics, AAPC Code of ethics and other relevant professional codes as well as the Belmont University Code of Conduct. Class attendance, respect of others' cultures, religions, gender, race, and ethnicity is required.

Probation, Suspension, and Dismissal

During faculty meetings throughout the year, counseling faculty discuss and rate student ethical/professional fitness to practice and academic performance. These discussions and ratings include student dispositions such as professionalism, adherence to ethical codes, and academic achievement. If students fail to maintain a grade point average of 3.0 (on a 4.0 scales), earn a "C" in a required course, or exhibit unsatisfactory academic integrity, professionalism, or ethical behavior, the faculty may suggest probation, suspension, dismissal, or remediation per conditions in this handbook as well as the [Belmont Bruin Guide](#).

It is the counselor or counselor-in-training's responsibility to be aware of signs of impairment, seek assistance for their problems, and notify program supervisors that they cannot provide acceptable services to clients. Counselors and counselors-in-training should seek appropriate professional services to remediate the problem(s) interfering with their ability to provide services.

It is the policy of the School of Mental Health Counseling that if a student has a physical, mental or emotional problem that could potentially harm clients or others, that student will be prohibited from seeing clients until the student has completed a remediation plan. For example, it is the policy of the Mental Health Counseling program that if a student has a documented relapse or a self-reported relapse, she/he will not see clients until a remediation plan is completed and the student can provide verified documentation of at least one year of "clean" time. While the student is in treatment, the student's therapist must report on the student's progress at specified times.

Fitness to Practice

Admission to the program does not guarantee fitness to remain in the program. Only those students who meet program standards will be allowed to continue in the program. Students pursuing a Master of Arts in Mental Health Counseling (MAMHC) must meet fitness to practice standards that are assessed by faculty throughout the program. These standards include demonstration of emotional and mental fitness in their interaction with others as well as conformance with codes of professional counseling associations and of the state of Tennessee. Students who fail to demonstrate fitness or conformance to appropriate codes may be asked to enter into a remediation plan in order to remain in the program. If a remediation plan is developed, students must demonstrate satisfactory remediation prior to being allowed to proceed toward graduation. In rare cases, a student's

ability to practice may exceed remediation and a recommendation for dismissal from the program is possible.

Causes for Dismissal

Achievement in the School of Mental Health Counseling requires academic success as well as ethical behavior. Counseling requires adherence to codes of ethics, professional attitudes, and work habits. The following list details actions or behaviors considered just cause for immediate dismissal from the School of Mental Health Counseling:

1. Violation of Belmont University's Title IX policies.
2. Cheating, plagiarism, giving false information, or altering official records
3. Abuse or disrespect for clients, peers, or faculty
4. Breaches of the rules or codes in the *ACA Code of Ethics*, *AAPC Code of Ethics*, and *Belmont University Student Code of Conduct*
5. Earning a failing grade in Field Experience Courses
6. Willful conduct that may cause injury
7. Harassment, discrimination, non-sexual harassment, or sexual misconduct as defined in the [Belmont Bruin Guide](#).

Academic Performance Evaluation

Because students are expected to maintain a 3.0 average at all times, students earning a grade below C in a course must schedule and attend a meeting with their faculty advisor. The aforementioned faculty advisor then informs remaining Mental Health Counseling Faculty about content of the meeting. Next, Mental Health Counseling faculty review and make recommendations concerning the student's status in the program. Students earning a failing grade in a field experience course will be dismissed from the program. Students terminated may file an appeal by following the [Belmont University Grade Appeals Procedures](#). In addition, students failing CACREP standards and/or demonstrating failing performance on CACREP assessments should meet with the course instructor and discuss methods for improvement.

Non-Academic Performance Evaluation

Should a student exhibit unsatisfactory non-academic performance as listed in the "Causes for Dismissal" in this handbook, the faculty may decide on remediation, reprimand, probation, or dismissal from the program. Students disagreeing with the decision may appeal the decision by following the Student Appeals/Grievance Procedures located in the [Complaint and Grievance Procedures](#) on the Belmont University Graduate Catalog.

Faculty discuss student non-academic performance throughout the program and administer the *Student Disposition/Professionalism Rubric* as found at the end of this handbook three times (MHC 5011 Foundations of Clinical Practice, MHC 5020 or MHC 5012 Theories, and MHC 6110 Internship in Mental Health Counseling II) during the program. Performance on this rubric is shared with students. Should low ratings be attained, faculty discuss ways students can improve performance and may place students on a remedial plan if needed. More information on this process can be found as follows in the next sections of this handbook.

Retention Policies and Student Appeals/Grievance Procedures

The School of Mental Health Counseling offers students the right to a fair hearing. Should students wish to file an appeal, students are responsible for providing the burden of proof. Following are the steps students follow to resolve concerns:

- 1) Student appeals/grievances starting in the School of Mental Health Counseling are first considered informally by program faculty.
- 2) If unresolved, students may file an appeal through the Chair of the School of Mental Health Counseling.
- 3) Formal appeals are allowed only when prejudice, arbitrary, or capricious actions are involved.

Academic Related Appeals

The School of Mental Health Counseling follows the University policy regarding academic related appeals as follows:

Students have the right to appeal grades directly to the instructor if they believe that an incorrect grade has been assigned for the course. If a grade issue is not resolved after contact with the instructor, the student may appeal in writing to the Chair of the School of Mental Health Counseling. This must occur within two months of the start of the next semester. In the written appeal, the student must be prepared to demonstrate and document an unusual circumstance that warrants a review of the grade and evidence of the grade they believe should have been given by the instructor. All written appeals will be reviewed within one month of receipt by the chair and, if needed, by a committee of graduate faculty and graduate students, and responded to in writing either confirming or changing the posted final grade. A copy of this response will go to the Registrar's Office for the student's record.

Any appeal must be in writing and include appropriate documentation to support the student's position that a grade change is warranted.

The final grade referred to in the process is the instructor's posted grade, which may be viewed in the student's grade report on-line at the close of the term or part-of-term. It is solely the responsibility of the student to check that grades are posted for all courses taken during a semester and note the grade given for each class. All grade appeals must be requested within two months of the start of the next semester. Unless an active appeal is under review, after two months into the next semester, neither instructors nor the university will consider a grade change.

Once a final grade has been posted, the student may not petition the instructor to do additional work or extra credit to raise the grade awarded. Any grade change as a result of such action will be disallowed.

Low ratings on *Core Assessments* and *Specialty Area Assessments* are handled as follows.

Plan to Address Low Scores on Core Assessments or Specialty Area Assessments

As mentioned in the student handbooks, faculty follow the procedures below.

Informal Procedures

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1. The program faculty initiate an informal meeting with the student to discuss performance issues (i.e. core assessment or specialty assessment score).
2. A remediation plan is developed by the faculty during a program meeting above to address concerns and the plan is shared with the student as part of the meeting. The faculty member teaching the course monitors student progress toward the remediation plan and meets regularly with the student to ensure plan compliance. \
3. The faculty member(s) shares the student's performance issues and seeks consultation from other program faculty during a scheduled program meeting.
4. If the remediation plan is not successfully completed, the student will be asked to attend a formal meeting scheduled with program faculty and formal procedures are implemented as follows.

Formal Procedures

Formal Procedures are used when informal procedures fail to improve concerns or by student request. Following are steps taken when formal procedures are utilized:

1. The faculty member with concerns notifies the student about specific concerns and schedules a meeting with all mental health counseling program faculty, including the chair, to discuss concerns. The student, faculty member, program faculty, and other relevant parties are invited to attend the meeting. Students must be given 2 weeks' notice prior to the scheduled meeting. No party may be represented by an attorney at this meeting.
2. Mental Health Counseling faculty listen to issues from the faculty member and student.
3. After the meeting and within 7 days, faculty determine a plan of action. This plan may involve probation, suspension, dismissal, a remediation plan, or no action. A written remediation plan will be given to students needing this action and compliance is monitored by the concerned faculty member.
4. Follow-up meetings and/or reports will be shared by the concerned faculty member with program faculty at scheduled faculty meetings to ensure student compliance. If students do not comply with program faculty requirements or remediation, they will be dismissed from the program.

Students may file additional appeals regarding final grades as described in the section above.

Non-Academic Appeals and Retention Procedures

The Mental Health Counseling faculty adhere to the Ethical Standards of the American Counseling Association, International Association of Marriage and Family Therapists, and AAPC when rating students' nonacademic performance. Ratings on the Student Disposition/Professionalism Rubric are also considered. Low ratings on this form or other issues as discussed in this handbook are handled utilizing the following steps as follows:

Informal Procedures

5. The faculty member(s) initiates a meeting with the student to discuss performance issues.
6. A remediation plan is developed by the faculty member during the meeting above to address concerns and the plan is shared with the student as part of the meeting. The faculty member monitors student progress toward the remediation plan and meets regularly with the student to ensure plan compliance.

7. The faculty member(s) shares the student's performance issues and seeks consultation from other program faculty during a scheduled program meeting.
8. If the remediation plan is not successfully completed, the student will be asked to attend a meeting scheduled with program faculty and formal procedures are implemented as follows.

Formal Procedures

Formal Procedures are used when informal procedures fail to improve concerns or by student request. Following are steps taken when formal procedures are utilized:

1. The faculty member with concerns notifies the student about specific concerns and schedules a meeting with all mental health counseling program faculty to discuss concerns. The student, faculty member, program faculty, and other relevant parties are invited to attend the meeting. Students must be given 2 weeks notice prior to the scheduled meeting. No party may be represented by an attorney at this meeting.
2. Mental Health Counseling faculty listen to issues from the faculty member and student.
3. After the meeting and within 7 days, faculty determine a plan of action. This plan may involve probation, suspension, dismissal, a remediation plan, or no action. A written remediation plan will be given to students needing this action and compliance is monitored by the concerned faculty member.
4. Follow-up meetings and/or reports will be shared by the concerned faculty member with program faculty at scheduled faculty meetings to ensure student compliance. If students do not comply with program faculty requirements or remediation, they will be dismissed from the program.

Students may file appeals as described in this handbook.

Mental Health Counseling Program Requirements

Admission and Program information follows.

Application Review

Students should submit applications to the Office of Student Admissions as early in the year as possible. Failure to submit all of the admissions materials to the Mental Health Counseling program early may result in the student being delayed for admission up to a year.

Master of Arts in Mental Health Counseling Degree (MAMHC in MCFC) Program and Course Matriculation Requirements

The first two semesters are intended to prepare students with theoretical information necessary to begin engaging in actual clinical practice during the practicum. This information includes (1) understandings of normal human functioning, (2) understandings of ethics and (3) general theory of clinical practice. In the first semester students take Theories of Personality, Christian Perspectives on Human Suffering and Psychopathology, and Foundations of Clinical Practice. During the second semester students build on these with Spirituality and Human Development, Diversity and Social Justice, Professional Ethics in the Clinical Encounter, and Techniques of Counseling. These courses provide students with the essential knowledge necessary to begin actually seeing clients in a clinical setting. In addition to these courses, students are allowed to begin shaping their individual program design with additional courses of a foundational nature.

The Practicum, taken during the third semester, is designed to be an experience of limited exposure to clinical practice under close supervision. The practicum is taken in conjunction with the diagnosis course (required of all students) so that students are able to have an in-depth understanding of client concerns.

During the fourth semester, students are required to take their comprehensive exam. The fourth, fifth and sixth semesters students will take courses designed to satisfy the more specific requirements of the licensure they are seeking as well as complete the clinical internship. These courses are advanced courses in modalities of therapy, special populations, or professional formation. A student seeking the MFT license would take courses like Aging in the Family and Society, Family Therapy: Skills and Practice, Therapy with Children and Adolescents, Psychological and Theological Perspectives on Human Sexuality, History and Theology of Marriage, the vocational course, Family Systems Theory, and the group counseling course specifically designed for marriage, couple, and family track students.

During the final semester, students complete the Psychological and Theological Perspectives on Human Sexuality course and take the Therapy with Children and Adolescents course.

M.A. in Mental Health Counseling curriculum completion by academic focus	Credit Hours	
Courses Required for Marriage Couple and Family Counseling Track		51
MHC 5011: Foundations of Clinical Practice	3	
MHC 5013: Christian Perspectives on Psychopathology & Human Suffering	3	
MHC 5014: Diagnosis & Treatment of Mental Disorders	3	
MHC 5015: Spirituality & Theories of Human Development	3	
MHC 5016: Diversity & Social Justice in the Clinical Encounter	3	
MHC 5017: Professional Ethics in the Clinical Encounter	3	
MHC 5018: Theories & Methods of Psychotherapy Research	3	
MHC 5019: Techniques of Counseling and Psychotherapy	3	
MHC 5012: Theories of Personality	3	
MHC 5110: Aging in the Family & Society	3	
MHC 5130: Family Therapy Skills and Practice	3	
MHC 5140: History & Theology of Marriage and the Family	3	
MHC 5160: Psychological & Theological Perspectives on Human Sexuality	3	
MHC 5220: Therapy with Children & Adolescents	3	
MHC 5410: Family Systems Theory	3	
MHC 5170: Vocational Discernment & Counseling	3	
MHC 5210: Group Dynamics & Therapy	3	
Field Experience Courses Required of All Specialty Tracks		9
MHC 6010: Practicum in Mental Health Counseling	3	
MHC 6110: Internship in Mental Health Counseling I	3	

MHC 6210: Internship in Mental Health Counseling II	3	
Total Credit Hours		60

60hr Plan of Study

Fall Year One

MHC 5013 - Christian Perspectives on Human Suffering

MHC 5012 – Theories of Personality

MHC 5011 - Foundations of Clinical Practice

MHC 5170 - Vocational Discernment **OR** MHC 5140 - History & Theology of Marriage & the Family

**both MHC 5170 and MHC 5140 are required to be taken in order to graduate*

Spring Year One

MHC 5017 - Professional Ethics in the Clinical Encounter

MHC 5019 – Techniques of Counseling

MHC 5015 - Spirituality & Theories of Human Development

MHC 5016 - Diversity & Social Justice in the Clinical Encounter

Summer Year One

MHC 5014 - Diagnosis & Treatment of Mental Disorders

MHC 6010 - Practicum in Mental Health Counseling

*Students complete supervised counseling practicum experiences that total a minimum of 100 clock hours including 40 direct hours over a minimum of 10 weeks.

Fall Year Two

Either MHC 5210 - Group Dynamics & Therapy (MCFC Section)

MHC 6110 - Internship in Mental Health Counseling I

*Students complete a minimum of 240 direct clock hours and a total of 600 clock hours over the course of two semesters.

MHC 5140 - History & Theology of Marriage and the Family **OR** MHC - 5170 Vocational Discernment

**both MHC 5170 and MHC 5140 are required to be taken in order to graduate*

MHC 5018 - Theories & Methods of Psychotherapy Research

Spring Year Two

MHC 5110 - Aging in the Family and Society

MHC 6210 - Internship in Mental Health Counseling II

*Students complete a minimum of 240 direct clock hours and a total of 600 clock hours over the course of two semesters.

MHC 5410 - Family Systems Theory

MHC 5130 - Family Therapy: Skills & Practice

Summer Year Two

MHC 5220 - Therapy with Children & Adolescents

MHC 5160 - Psychological & Theological Perspectives on Human Sexuality

Please note all courses are subject to change and availability. See your advisor to ensure accuracy. All courses listed above must be taken in order to receive M.A. degree for Mental Health Counseling from Belmont University.

Experiential (9 sem. hrs.): Students are required to complete a practicum and an internship as a part of the MMHC program. The practicum is normally taken during the first summer of the program and consists of 100 clock hours of counseling and counseling related activities in an approved setting. The internship, normally completed over the course of two consecutive semesters, consists of 600 clock hours of counseling and counseling related activities in an approved setting. Students must pass a background check and give proof of approved professional liability insurance prior to approval for the practicum or internship.

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MHC 6010 Practicum in Mental Health Counseling	(3 sem. hrs.)
MHC 6110 Internship in Mental Health Counseling I	(3 sem. hrs.)
MHC 6210 Internship in Mental Health Counseling II	(3 sem. hrs.)

Advising and Degree Plan

Upon enrollment in the Mental Health Counseling Program students are assigned a faculty advisor. The student is responsible for initiating meetings with the advisor prior to registration each semester. Each student is personally responsible for completing all academic requirements established by the University and submitting the degree plan.

Technology Resources and Competence Needed to Complete Program

Students must be able to create and use email, Internet searches, Microsoft Word, and other Belmont University Platforms to complete the program. While our program is primarily face-to-face, grades may be viewed through an online platform, registration occurs online, and assignments may require use of Microsoft Word or other platforms.

Credentialing/Endorsement

Several types of credentialing are available after graduating with a master's degree (MAMHC). Students must attain internship or full licensure before practicing in the field. Only students who have completed all course requirements in the program, graduated with a master's degree in mental health counseling, and were previously admitted into the School of Mental Health Counseling will be eligible for licensure endorsement. Faculty will only credential students for licensure or certification in areas for which the student is trained and meets requirements.

Certification credentialing is also available through the National Board for Certified Counselors, the American Association for Marriage & Family Therapists, or the College of Pastoral Supervision & Psychotherapy. Certification does not equal licensure and does not grant a person permission to engage in clinical practice within the state. More information about certification is available through NBCC, AAMFT, IAMFC, CPSP, or from the mental health counseling faculty.

Types of Licensure

By state law, all persons practicing as professional counselors, marriage and family therapists, clinical pastoral therapists, and/or who practice counseling independently must be licensed. Those earning a Master's Degree in Mental Health Counseling from Belmont University have met the first of many steps needed to attain this state licensure. It is important to note that state licensure is a separate process from that of attaining your master's degree and requires additional criteria. For example, Tennessee also requires that additional examinations be taken and that post master's level supervision be attained through a state qualified supervisor. Since state licensure is handled through the state and not through Belmont University, students are advised to seek licensure information through the Tennessee Department of Health's Counseling Licensure Board. State licensure boards have the ability to change policies, laws, reviewing procedures and protocols, and requirements without notice. Applying early and with faculty assistance is recommended. The university cannot guarantee licensure if board changes are made after you graduate.

Registration

The Schedule of Classes for the semester can be located on [ClassFinder](#). Following a review of the classes listed in Classfinder, students should schedule an appointment with their faculty advisor

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if help is needed in determining which courses to take for the next semester. After advising, students may log into the MyBelmont portal when Graduate Registration opens and register for their classes.

Although advisors are knowledgeable about registration, it is the student's responsibility to become informed and adhere to registration as well as other graduate policies and procedures. A student's registration will be cancelled if payment of fees is not made by university designated deadlines. It is important that the student carefully follows registration payment procedures.

Change of Registration

The [Belmont University Office of the Registrar](#) website offers information to help students understand drop/add procedures and deadlines.

Practicum and Internship Registration

Students may not enroll in field experience courses without first meeting all prerequisite requirements. Students should meet with their faculty advisor prior to registration. Prior to enrollment in practicum, and internship classes, students must purchase professional liability insurance. Some counseling associations offer insurance with student memberships. Insurance is also available through Health Providers Service Organization (HPSO) at 800-982-9491 or ACA at 1-800-347-6647 x284. Student insurance is also available through other professional associations. Be sure to clarify with program faculty what does/does not meet requirements for insurance before making a purchase.

Practicum and internship sites for direct and indirect hours must be in Nashville or the Nashville area. Students may not complete field experience hours at their place of employment.

Students are encouraged to consult the Field Experience Manual for the process of securing a Practicum and/or Internship site. Students are *strongly discouraged* from reaching out directly to any of the sites, but to instead complete the "Field Experience Placement Form" located within the Field Experience Manual before meeting with the Field Experience Coordinator, [Cory Bishop](#).

Commitment to Civility

Belmont University values integrity, collaboration and humility. Faculty, staff and students are committed to promoting a caring, Christian environment that supports transformational learning, academic integrity, open communication and personal and professional growth among the diverse members of our academic community. We respect the civil expression of divergent perspectives. Civility is the art of treating others, as well as ourselves, with respect, dignity and care. Civility is apparent when we are sensitive to the impact that our communications, practices and behaviors have on others, and when we acknowledge each person's self-worth and unique contributions to the community as a whole.

As members of the Mental Health Counseling program, we are committed to learning and practicing in ways that allow every individual to develop their full potential in order to lead lives of meaning and purpose. The following are examples of how we create and sustain civility.

Support the autonomy and just treatment of self and others by facilitating an open, respectful and caring environment.

- Accept responsibility and accountability for one's own behavior when interacting with students, faculty and staff.
- Respect and protect the rights and property of others.
- Speak and behave in a manner that does not disrupt or interfere with the learning or work of others.

- Model personal and academic integrity and expect it from others.
- Demonstrate respect for others by actively discouraging prejudice, bias, bigotry, violence, coercion or intimidation against any member of the academic community.
- Demonstrate a willingness to listen and to hear the perspectives of others.
- Explore controversial issues through open dialogue and respectful deliberation.
- Respect freedom of expression while recognizing that such tolerance does not require agreement with expressed ideas.
- Engage institutional resources and persons to resolve conflict when necessary.

We will not tolerate disrespectful or abusive speech or language in any form of communication including electronic, oral, verbal or non-verbal. Each community member has the responsibility to foster a safe and supportive learning and work environment. This responsibility can include asking others to stop disrespectful or abusive speech and/or disruptive behavior. Collectively, faculty, staff and students in the School of Mental Health Counseling are responsible for ensuring a safe and supportive learning and work environment.

Professional Associations

Students are encouraged to seek membership in the professional association corresponding to their specialty track.

American Counseling Association: www.counseling.org

International Association of Marriage & Family Counselors <http://www.iamfconline.org/>

American Association of Pastoral Counselors: www.aapc.org/

State Associations

Tennessee Counseling Association <http://www.tncounselors.org/>

Diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility policies

The Mental Health Counseling Program in conjunction with the Welcome Home Diversity Council, Belmont's interdisciplinary council, is devoted to diversity and inclusion efforts across campus and is focused on enhancing and embedding a culture of inclusive excellence, meeting community members where they are. To facilitate this important work, the Council landed on a new, overarching tagline, the ***Belmont State of Mind: Initiative for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion***. This tagline houses all of the Council's diversity and inclusion initiatives, while featuring other on campus events that are focused on similar outcomes (i.e. diversity and inclusion).

The Belmont State of Mind is inclusive, it's celebratory, it's open-minded and welcoming, it's transparent and honors differences, it challenges ideals and encourages dialogue—these major tenets of the Belmont community have always been in place, the Council is eager to bring them to the forefront. The WHDC is excited to devote its time, effort and resources to recognizing, publicizing and celebrating the Belmont State of Mind throughout campus and encouraging all members of the Belmont community to do the same.

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Belmont's definition of diversity is as follows:

"We are all created in the image of God, living as Christ's body on earth with respect to differences that include, but are not limited to, ethnicity, gender identity, race and sexual orientation. The institutional definition of diversity at Belmont is consistent with our mission to engage and transform the world with disciplined intelligence, courage and faith. Our words and actions toward everyone must be embodied with respect, dignity and compassion."

Affirmative Action

A copy of Belmont University's [Affirmative Action](#) policy is available from the Affirmative Action Office at the Office of Human Resources. These policies are upheld within the Mental Health Counseling Program.

Americans with Disabilities Act

In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, The Office of Accessibility Services coordinates reasonable accommodations for all students needing assistance at Belmont University. If you need to request an accommodation based on the impact of a disability you should contact your faculty privately to discuss your specific needs and contact the Office of Accessibility Services in Student Affairs at 615-460-6407. Their office is located in the Beaman Student Life Center, Suite 200.

Graduation

Students completing all university and program requirements in the Mental Health Counseling program may apply for graduation and participate in the campus-wide graduation ceremony held December and May each year. It is the student's responsibility to file graduation forms and pay fees by university designated deadlines. Information regarding graduation is available from the registrar's office and our school. Failure to complete the appropriate requirement or forms within the specified deadlines will result in the student being unable to graduate during that semester.

Personal Counseling Services

Counseling is available to all mental health counseling students. Students may schedule an appointment through their Health Portal on MyBelmont or call 615-460-6856. Walk in emergency services are 8:30 A.M. to 4 P.M. in Gabhart 218.

Credentialing and Employment Recommendations

Occasionally students ask professors to serve as references for future employment and credentialing. These requests must be in writing to avoid FERPA violations. Faculty only recommend candidates for licensure if they meet or exceed all state or credentialing agency requirements.

Master's Comprehensive Examination And Assessment Procedures

Key Performance Indicators

The program requires students to take assessments as part of a comprehensive assessment plan. Program objectives lead to Key Performance Indicators that are assessed through a variety of assessments. Each syllabus will indicate specific core assessments. Know these must be passed

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in order to matriculate in the program. One required core assessment is the comprehensive examination described below.

Master's Comprehensive Examination

At the end of the fourth semester of enrollment, students will be scheduled to take a master's level comprehensive examination. This faculty written examination consists of approximately 100 multiple choice questions and is based on the 8 CACREP areas and the students specialty area including: (a) Human Growth and Development, (b) Social and Cultural Foundations, (c) Helping Relations, (d) Group Work, (e) Career and Lifestyle Development, (f) Appraisal, (g) Research and Program Evaluation, (h) Professional Orientation and Ethics, (i) either Clinical Mental Health or Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling. The examination administration time is four hours.

Should a student fail the examination, they will be given an opportunity to retake a separate form of the test the following semester (provided they meet with their advisor and develop a plan of study). A student may only take the examination twice unless given special permission to retake the test a third time from the Chair of the School of Mental Health Counseling. Students failing to pass the comprehensive examination three times will not be granted a degree. Examination scores will be given to students via a letter no later than the beginning of the following semester. Since all students must pass the comprehensive examination in order to graduate with their master's degree, students should seek examination advisement through the program faculty. Students are ultimately responsible for ensuring registration for the comprehensive examination.

Professional Dispositions

Students are graded on professional dispositions as described in the rubric below. Students failing dispositions must follow the remediation plans discussed previously in this Handbook.

Student Disposition/Professionalism Rubric

Student Name: _____

Date: _____

Subskill	Unacceptable 1	Poor 2	Adequate 3	Good 4	Excellent 5	Score
<i>Attendance and Punctuality</i>	Often misses class and/or is late to over half of classes	Occasionally misses and/or is late to class 25%-50% of time	Attends almost all classes and/or is late under 25% of time	Rarely misses or is late to class 5% of time or less	Never misses or late to class	
<i>Multicultural Sensitivity</i>	Makes racial, ethnic, religious, or sexual jokes or comments; displays inappropriate prejudice even after correction.	Shows lack of acceptance of others even after correction.	Aware of biases and diligently working on skills to overcome them.	Aware of biases, is implementing skills to overcome biases, and learning about social justice.	Working to help others in society through appropriate social justice advocacy.	
<i>Professional Attentiveness</i>	Usually ignores or disrupts instructor, other professionals, and clients; distracted by outside entities	Often ignores or disrupts instructor, other professionals, and clients; often distracted by outside entities	Usually listens to instructor, other professionals and clients; usually free from outside distractions	Almost always listens responsively to instructor, other professionals, and clients and free of distractions	Always listens very responsively to instructor, other professionals, and clients and free from distractions	
<i>Cooperation</i>	Does not contribute or sabotages team efforts.	Contributes little to team efforts.	Contributes adequately to team efforts.	Contributes to a high degree to team efforts.	Contributions to team efforts are beyond what is expected.	
<i>Respect of others/ Environment</i>	Usually creates negative morale by being negative and may even spread rumors about others	Often creates negative morale by being negative; gossips about others	Usually achieves a balance of being cooperative; demonstrates the courage of one's convictions	Almost always achieves a balance of being cooperative in ways that enhance the class	Always conveys cooperation and leadership that enhances the class; promotes the well-being of others	
<i>Professional Dress</i>	More often than not dress is unprofessional considering the setting.	Often dress is unprofessional considering the setting.	On most occasions, dress is professional considering the setting.	Dress is typically professional considering the setting.	Dress is well-thought out considering the context or setting and always appropriate.	
<i>Ability to Handle Stress</i>	Stress affects levels of professionalism and/or emotional intelligence	Often stress affects levels of professionalism and/or emotional intelligence	Usually handles stress in a professional and emotionally intelligent manner	Typically handles stress in a professional and emotionally intelligent manner	Always handles stress in a professional and emotionally intelligent manner	
<i>Wellness</i>	Unable to manage personal care leading to unethical or unprofessional behaviors	Lack of self-care often affects professionalism and/or emotional intelligence	Usually incorporates wellness such that professionalism and emotional intelligence are present	Typically incorporates wellness such that professionalism and emotional intelligence are present	Always incorporates wellness such that professionalism and emotional intelligence are present	
<i>Ability to Receive Constructive Feedback</i>	Constructive feedback affects levels of professionalism and/or emotional intelligence.	Constructive feedback often affects levels of professionalism and/or emotional intelligence.	Constructive feedback is usually handled with appropriate levels of professionalism and/or emotional intelligence.	Constructive feedback is typically handled with appropriate levels of professionalism and/or emotional intelligence.	Always handles constructive feedback in a professional and emotionally intelligent manner.	
<i>Demonstrates Appropriate Boundaries</i>	Student takes over and tries to solve issues that should be handled by faculty or site supervisors.	Student becomes involved in issues outside the scope of the student role and tries to manage other students or their concerns. The student does not make appointments when needed or does not show up for scheduled appointments or cancel them when needed.	The student reports issues that are appropriate but does not try to solve problems for other students or take on a faculty or site supervisor role. Ethical codes are followed. Appointments are made, attended, or rescheduled/cancelled if needed.	The student acts professionally, consults ethical codes, and resolves issues with faculty and site supervisors. Other student's issues are not taken on.	The student acts professionally, consults ethical codes, and resolves issues with faculty and site supervisors. Other student's issues are not taken on. Students make appointments and adhere to them or notify others if they cannot report as scheduled.	
Mean Score						

Instructor: _____

Course: _____

Student Signature: _____

Instructor Signature: _____

Signature Page

I _____ hereby certify that I have read
(Print name)
and that I understand the information presented in this *Student Handbook for Marriage, Couple,
and Family Counseling*.

(Signature)

(Date)