The Mental Health Assistant—Substance Abuse Counseling Program will provide the student with techniques and strategies for determining the best available treatment options for the drug abuser and others affected by this disease.

MENTAL HEALTH ASSISTANT—SUBSTANCE ABUSE COUNSELING

Degree: Associate in Science
HEGIS Code: 5216
Curriculum Code: 2456.SUB
Campus Location: City-Evening Program
Health Sciences Division
Pre-Admission Recommendations: HS or HSE (High School Equivalency) Diploma
Career Opportunities/Further Education: Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Centers, Mental Health and Human Services Agencies

Program Description

The Mental Health Assistant-Substance Abuse Counseling Program is designed to prepare students for careers as substance abuse counselors as well as provide ongoing training for individuals already employed in the field. This course of study can be pursued on a part-time evening or full-time day and evening sequence.

While in this program, the student will learn individual, group and family counseling techniques. Students pursuing the degree are required to complete two semesters of clinical internship supervised by certified addiction counselors or other qualified health professionals at various public and private facilities. This program will provide the student with techniques and strategies for determining the best available treatment options for the drug abuser and others affected by this disease and the dysfunctional behaviors correlated with it.

The Mental Health-Substance Abuse Counseling Program partially fulfills educational requirements for the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) Credential in Alcohol and Substance Abuse Counseling (CASAC). Completion of the two internship courses as part of the curriculum would be partial fulfillment toward the one year allowance for non-paid experience toward credentialing. Additionally, completion of the degree provides 1,000 hours of experience towards the CASAC Credentialing Examination requirement.

Graduates of the program are qualified for entry-level positions such as substance abuse counselors in detoxification, halfway house, residential and outpatient care facilities.
Graduates of the program will have been introduced to total quality management and continuous quality improvement concepts, principles and practices as they are applied to addictions treatment, inpatient and outpatient care and case management protocols.

Department Notes
• Students must purchase malpractice insurance for clinical internship.
• OASAS credentialing requirements for CASAC requires 350 education/training clock hours in following categories of course work, including: (1) knowledge of alcoholism and substance abuse (85 hours minimum); (2) alcoholism and substance abuse counseling (150 hours minimum); (3) assessment, clinical evaluation, treatment planning, case management and patient/community education (70 hours minimum); and (4) professional and ethical responsibilities in documentation (45 hours minimum).
• Education and Training Provider Certified by the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services.
• Students entering the program are held to a higher standard of expectations given the nature of the degree program. The role of becoming a counselor needs to be taken seriously and the student’s will be looked at as entry level professionals and held to OASAS ethical guidelines. Students entering the program who have an addiction should have at least 2 years of recovery before coming into the MFHA program. Enrollment and continuation in the MFHA program are subject to faculty approval.

In the area of work experience, CASAC applicants will be required to document three years of appropriate full-time work experience in an approved work setting. Such experience may include up to one year of voluntary (non-paid) work experience or clinical internship. Applicants with a bachelor’s or master’s degree in the human service field from an accredited college or institute may substitute their degree for one year of work experience (for bachelor’s) or two years of work experience (for master’s degree).

Academic courses in this degree will fulfill all CASAC education/training clock hour requirements and partial fulfillment toward the one-year allowance for non-paid experience toward credentialing.

Program Competencies

Upon graduation with an Associate in Science degree in Mental Health Assistant—Substance Abuse Counseling, the graduate will be able to:
• understand the disease concept of chemical dependency;
• apply this understanding to working with addicted individuals, families and significant others;
• understand current chemical dependency treatment options and cross agency linkage procedures;
• understand secondary or concurrent psychopathology and the interrelationship with substance abuse treatment and recovery;
• understand the pharmacology of drugs, drug interactions and resulting addictive patterns;
• develop and apply basic human relations counseling skills;
• apply standardized diagnostic, assessment and treatment techniques;
• perform basic individual and group counseling skills;
• write and implement effective recovery treatment plans;
• write appropriate and effective clinical documentation;
• perform clinical interventions;
• understand the roles and identity of being a professional chemical dependency counselor;
• understand and perform according to the guidelines of confidentiality and professional ethical behavior;
• find and use addictions literature for clinical practice; and
• understand 12-Step and other self-help support group norms and philosophies.

SUNY Transfer Path Requirement

Students matriculating in this program are required to fulfill the SUNY Transfer Path Requirement that most closely aligns with the program. Speak to your advisor for details.

CURRICULUM

Total degree credits: 63.0

First Year, Fall Semester
- SA 100 Chemical Dependency Treatment Systems (3 cr)
- SA 102 Behavioral Patterns of Chemical Dependency (3 cr)
- SA 104 Pharmacology I (3 cr)
- EN 110 College Composition (3 cr)
- PS 100 General Psychology (3 cr)

First Year, Spring Semester
- SA 106 Pharmacology II (3 cr)
- SA 110 Counseling Approaches with the Chemical Abuser (3 cr)
- SA 127 Topics in Addiction: Ethics and Confidentiality (3 cr)
- EN 111 Composition and Interpretation of Literature (3 cr)
- SUNY General Education Requirement (3 cr) *

Second Year, Fall Semester
- SA 112 Dysfunction Family Systems (3 cr)
- SA 114 Treatment Population (3 cr)
- AC 215 Alcohol Counseling II (3 cr)
- BI 107 Human Biology (3 cr)
- SO 100 Introduction to Sociology (3 cr)

Second Year, Spring Semester
- SA 116 Clinical Internship I (3 cr)
- SA 128 Group Counseling Approaches in Substance Abuse (3 cr)
- PS 202 Abnormal Psychology (3 cr)
- MT 112 Survey of Mathematics (3 cr)
- SUNY General Education Humanities Elective (3 cr) *

Summer Semester
- SA 117 Clinical Internship II (3 cr)

Note:
*Students must fulfill the SUNY General Education Requirement in order to graduate. The requirement calls for at least seven out of ten of SUNY’s General Education areas to be fulfilled and for at least 30 credits to be taken in General Education. General Education credits can simultaneously fulfill requirements in the major. Most students will need to take at least one sequence of courses during summer terms to complete the full degree program within a two-year time frame.

American History, Western Civilization, Other World Civilizations, or Foreign Language.

NOTE: This is a recommended sequence. Students are strongly advised to seek academic advisement prior to course registration. Students can substitute AC 214 for SA 110, AC 211 for SA 112, and AC courses as special needs course requirements.