

2023 SOU Clinical Mental Health Counseling
Assessment Report
September 2023

Cody Christopherson, CMHC Assessment Coordinator (2022-2023)



This report is a brief summary and overview of our ongoing program evaluation efforts and is intended for current students, alumni, site supervisors, employers of alumni and other relevant stakeholders. Each group that has provided essential feedback helps the CMHC faculty to better understand our successes and areas needing improvement. We thank you for your candid responses and many suggestions. We hope that this report will also be useful to applicants, faculty, staff, administrators, and the general public.

The CMHC Faculty

The Assessment Process

According to our CMHC Assessment Plan, each year the CMHC program gathers and analyzes a wide spectrum of focused assessment data to continually inform our program evaluation and improvement efforts. Each year, we survey New Students, Graduating Students, Alumni, Site Supervisors, and Employers of our graduates. We analyze characteristics of applicants, students, and the annual results of the exit exam, the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Exam (CPCE) which allows for comparison with national data. We also assess Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) embedded across the curriculum that measure essential counseling competencies for entry-level clinical mental health counselors, covering knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Each fall, CMHC Faculty review these program assessment data to determine what we are doing well and where there are opportunities for improvement. We identify changes to make with curriculum, staffing, policy, and procedures and establish a timeline for the changes.

Important Actions Implemented in 2022-23

- Conducted a nationwide search for replacement tenure-track position. Following a failed search in 2022, we successfully hired Dr. Lindsey Warwick in Winter 2023. She will begin in Fall 2023.
- Explored alternative exit exams and options for a final, cumulative evaluation of near graduates
- Provided in-depth ratings & feedback to all supervisors, from 502, 504, 506, & 510 in response to supervisor requests for additional feedback

Applicants: In 2022, our applicant pool slightly decreased from 69 completed applications to 68, with 19% (compared to 19% the previous year) of applicants identifying as members of a racial or ethnic minority. Of applicants accepted into and enrolled in the program’s incoming 2023 cohort and identifying their race/ethnicity, 33% identify as being of a racial/ethnic minority, compared to 34% from last year. Of the incoming class, 14 identify as female, 7 as male, and 2 did not respond. Average age at start of program: 30.4 years. The GRE requirement continues to be waived.

	2021-2022 Applicants	2021-2022 Admitted cohort (2022)	2022-2023 Applicants	2022-2023 Admitted cohort (2023)
Number	69	22	68	24
% minority (to the extent reported)	19	34	19	33

Program Outcomes and Key Performance Indicators:

The chart below summarizes the key components of our extensive data collection and program evaluation. It includes the program outcome and corresponding CACREP subject area, the associated key performance indicator(s) (KPI) and whether the KPI is assessing primarily knowledge, skills or dispositions. The third column illustrates the robust nature of the CMHC evaluation process by documenting the practice of “multiple measures over multiple times”. By gathering multiple inputs and demonstrating varying methods of measurement, we are assured of a holistic and comprehensive assessment of student learning outcomes and ultimately, program performance. Balanced with a diversity of measures, it is important to incorporate systematic, consistent and uniform measures of learning and progress and thus, in the measurement of clinical performance and skill development, we rely upon the Counseling Competencies Scale-Revised (CCS-R), which is introduced in the first term of the program and utilized throughout the practicum training sequence and continued through the last term of the program (in the final term of internship). The consistent use of this well-validated tool provides robust and understandable data to students, supervisors, and faculty alike.

KPI Data Collection Results

The KPI Data Collection is discussed in the following sections. While in the past several KPI parameters were met by all students in the program, there was a slight decline in the number. Most of this decline can be attributed to 1 or 2 students being unable to meet the KPI requirement. For example, for COUN 549 (M-05-2) 18 of the 22 students in the program successfully met the requirement. The instructor met with the other four students offered extensive feedback and discussed the outcomes. For detailed KPI scores, please review the excel sheet here:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/16K8Lh4toTNw4G0hiy0ogy4TiGeN8XfIV6bZ5EV9nLCk/edit#gid=606124406>

Subject Area Program Outcome	KPI # KPI/Domain	Multiple Measures: Measure #, course & term
Professional Counseling Orientation and Ethical Practice: Students develop strong professional identities as mental health counselors and learn to think and act ethically, demonstrating professional accountability for their knowledge and application of ethical principles, codes, and decision-making processes.	1. Students will grasp the importance of ethical standards that apply to each of the counselor's professional role responsibilities. (knowledge)	1. Exam in COUN 581 - Y1 Winter 2. Ethics Case Study in COUN 510 - Y2 Winter 3. CPCE score in core area - Y2 Spring
Professional Counseling Orientation and Ethical Practice: Students develop strong professional identities as mental health counselors and learn to think and act ethically, demonstrating professional accountability for their knowledge and application of ethical principles, codes, and decision-making processes.	2. Students will demonstrate ability to apply counseling skills and facilitate therapeutic conditions. (skills)	1. CCS-R (part 1) in COUN 504 - Y1 Winter 2. CCS-R (part 1) in COUN 506 - Y1 Winter 3. CCS-R (part 1) in COUN 510 - Y2 Spring
Social and Cultural Diversity: Students learn to be sensitive to the diversity in ethnicity and life situations of their clients and are able to adapt their counseling practice to the individual needs of diverse clients.	3. Students will demonstrate knowledge of social and cultural diversity understanding through theories of multicultural counseling and the promotion of diversity amongst different communities and mental health settings. (knowledge)	1. Cultural Awareness Research Paper in COUN 586 - Y2 Fall 2. Multicultural Case Study in COUN 510 - Y2 Spring 3. CPCE score in core area - Y2 Spring
Human Growth and Development: Students will be able to apply various theories of human development to their counseling process, so they are effective at integrating a developmental approach to counseling in their work with clients.	4. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the nature and needs of persons at all developmental levels and in multicultural contexts. (knowledge)	1. Theory into Practice Paper in COUN 570 - Y1 Fall 2. Culminating Activity in COUN 570 - Y1 Fall 3. CPCE score in core area - Y2 Spring
Career Development: Students understand career development across the lifespan for diverse clients, how to integrate career concerns with mental health concerns, and demonstrate ethical and culturally competent career counseling strategies.	5. Students will demonstrate an understanding of career development and related life factors, including theories, assessments, career resources, and the interrelationship between career and other life roles. (knowledge)	1. Research Paper/Project in COUN 549 - Y2 Winter 2. Final Exam in COUN 549 - Y2 Winter 3. CPCE score in core area - Y2 Spring

<p>Counseling and Helping Relationships: Students learn the foundational ingredients of effective counseling and psychotherapy, particularly development of an empathic, collaborative therapeutic alliance and therapeutic skills that foster movement toward clients' goals and potentialities. Students demonstrate basic competence in utilizing psychotherapy skills fundamental to all theoretical approaches, conduct an intake interview with initial assessment and case conceptualization, and facilitate counseling sessions with classmates using role play scenarios under supervision.</p>	<p>6. Students will demonstrate an understanding of counseling theories and models for case conceptualization. (knowledge)</p>	<p>1. Case Conceptualization by Theoretical Model in COUN 571 - Y1 Fall 2. Final Case Conceptualization in COUN 585 - Y1 Summer 3. CPCE score in core area - Y2 Spring</p>
<p>Counseling and Helping Relationships: Students learn the foundational ingredients of effective counseling and psychotherapy, particularly development of an empathic, collaborative therapeutic alliance and therapeutic skills that foster movement toward clients' goals and potentialities. Students demonstrate basic competence in utilizing psychotherapy skills fundamental to all theoretical approaches, conduct an intake interview with initial assessment and case conceptualization, and facilitate counseling sessions with classmates using role play scenarios under supervision.</p>	<p>7. Students will demonstrate the ability to establish and maintain the therapeutic alliance, conceptualize clients' dynamics and provide a focus for treatment, and enter clients' subjective worldview and respond to their feelings with accurate empathy. (skills)</p>	<p>1. Counseling Activity Self-Efficacy Scale (CASES) in COUN 504 - Y1 Winter 2. Counseling Activity Self-Efficacy Scale (CASES) in COUN 573 - Y2 Spring</p>
<p>Group Counseling and Group Work: Students are introduced to the theory and practice of group counseling. Students demonstrate understanding of types of groups related to clients' goals; ethical and professional concerns related to group work; leadership issues and skills; group dynamics; stages of group development; therapeutic factors evoked within groups, application of contemporary theoretical approaches; and standards of practice through completion of a group proposal.</p>	<p>8. Students will demonstrate a theoretical understanding of group purpose, group development (including stages and members roles / behaviors), theories, methods, skills, and approaches. (knowledge)</p>	<p>1. Exam in COUN 574 - Y1 Spring 2. CPCE score in core area - Y2 Spring</p>

<p>Group Counseling and Group Work: Students are introduced to the theory and practice of group counseling. Students demonstrate understanding of types of groups related to clients' goals; ethical and professional concerns related to group work; leadership issues and skills; group dynamics; stages of group development; therapeutic factors evoked within groups, application of contemporary theoretical approaches; and standards of practice through completion of a group proposal.</p>	<p>9. Students will demonstrate the ability to facilitate a small group process over multiple sessions effectively (skills)</p>	<p>1. 1st Case Presentation in COUN 506 - Y1 Spring 2. 2nd Case Presentation in COUN 506 - Y1 Spring</p>
<p>Assessment and Testing: Students will gain knowledge needed to administer, interpret and utilize psychological tests and other sources of assessment data in school, community, clinic and other mental health settings.</p>	<p>10. Students will demonstrate an understanding of standardized approaches to assessment and evaluation including basic concepts of testing, norms, statistical concepts, and psychometric properties. Students will be able to use this knowledge to interpret and utilize assessment information to inform diagnosis and treatment planning. (knowledge)</p>	<p>1. Assessment Battery & Report in COUN 521 - Y2 Fall 2. Final Exam in COUN 521 - Y2 Fall 3. CPCE score in core area - Y2 Spring</p>
<p>Research and Program Evaluation: Students will understand how to apply principles of effective research to evaluating counseling research to inform their counseling practice and to participate in practice-based research at their counseling site.</p>	<p>11. Students will demonstrate an understanding of research methods, statistics, needs assessment, and program evaluation, including social and cultural implications for interpreting and reporting results. (knowledge)</p>	<p>1. Research Paper in COUN 542 - Y2 Winter 2. Article Critique in COUN 542 - Y2 Winter 3. CPCE score in core area - Y2 Spring</p>
<p>Clinical Mental Health Counseling: Students understand the theories and models of clinical mental health counseling and are able to effectively use client case conceptualizations to assess, diagnose, and identify and apply appropriate treatment modalities to a wide range of client situations.</p>	<p>12. Students will demonstrate understanding of salient characteristics of a disorder, prevalence rates, causal and related factors, diagnostic criteria, and differential diagnosis. (knowledge)</p>	<p>1. Group Project in COUN 583 - Y1 Spring 2. Final Case Presentation in COUN 573 - Y2 Spring</p>
<p>Clinical Mental Health Counseling: Students understand the theories and models of clinical mental health counseling and are able to effectively use client case conceptualizations to assess, diagnose, and identify and apply appropriate treatment modalities to a wide range of client situations.</p>	<p>13. Students will demonstrate diagnostic skills with clients while understanding the many different situational circumstances that may be occurring. (skills)</p>	<p>1. Diagnostic Case Study Assignment in COUN 583 - Y1 Spring 2. Final Case Presentation in COUN 573 - Y2 Spring</p>

Professional Dispositions: Students demonstrate the interpersonal capacity to relate to others in the appropriate and professional manner as expected of professional counselors.	14. Students will demonstrate the appropriate counseling dispositions (dominant qualities) and behaviors expected of professional counselors. (dispositions)	1. CCS-R (part 2) in COUN 504 - Y1 Winter 2. CCS-R (part 2) in COUN 510 - Y2 Spring
---	--	--

The Counselor Activity Self-Efficacy Scales (CASES) - click [here](#) to see a copy.

The CMHC program utilizes the CASES, a self-report measure, to assess a broad range of counseling skills and tasks and students' progress regarding their self-efficacy to perform these skills, tasks, and client scenarios. The CASES is given two times in the program: the first CASES administration is given early in the 1st year winter term. The second CASES is administered in the 2nd year spring term. The aggregate results in both categories (each category contains multiple skills, tasks, and scenarios totaling 41 items) are compared from the 1st to the 2nd administration for each cohort as a measure of their skill development and growing self-efficacy as a counselor.

Beginning year of cohort	Total average difference between administration 1 and administration 2, expressed as a percentage of the first total score
2018	20.42
2019	21.73
2020	(no second administration of CASES)
2021	9.78

One likely possibility for this apparent decrease in the amount of improvement from administration 1 to administration 2 is that the first administration of CASES for this cohort was rather late in this cohort's first year. Students took CASES between March 21 and July 12 of 2022, after they had had substantial training & supervision in both individual and group therapy and in some cases had even begun internship. In the future, the first administration of CASES should be complete prior to the end of the winter term and the second administration should take place in the final weeks of the Spring term in order to fully capture growth in self-efficacy. This was the case for this year's administration of CASES to the first year cohort (all student took the measure between March 17 and March 20, at the end of Winter term) and will likely yield findings more similar to the 2018 and 2019 cohorts when the students take the second instance in the Spring. Still, even with about half of the improvement overall, students on average did report higher self-efficacy on each of the 42 items in CASES.

Survey data

Each year, the CMHC program administers comprehensive and anonymous surveys to key stakeholders to ascertain their experiences, perspectives, feedback and suggestions for the program. Our list of key stakeholders: New/1st Year Students, Graduating Students, Site Supervisors, and Alumni (1st year post-graduates).

Program Strengths

Many program strengths were identified by survey respondents (new, graduating and former students, as well as site supervisors and employers). Scores on the great majority of items were high.

New Students Survey:

18 students completed this survey, completed between 3/17/2023 & 3/18/2023.

Program Experience (selected items)

Item	Percent of respondents that agree or strongly agree
CMHC faculty have encouraged me to join professional mental health organizations.	77.8
The application process was managed effectively	88.9
The academic advising process meets my needs.	44.4
I would recommend this program to other potential students.	77.7
Class size in experiential courses (e.g. 502, 504, 506, 510) is conducive to learning	77.7

Program Highlights from the Survey:

I appreciate the support you offer while allowing room for us to grow throughout the challenges. There is zero enabling going on that I can sense.

So far in the program I have not interacted with staff, so it seems a little earlier to talking about interactions. Faculty has been very helpful as professors in my journey as a counselor- in training.

I think [faculty and staff] are generally helpful. Some professors seem more involved in the students well being than others. I like more hands on approach and a professor who is straight forward and patient.

[E]verything feels adequately tailored to my professional development as a therapist-in-training.

The classroom experience has been one of the best parts of the program.

It is a highly meaningful and significant Program. I learned a lot in past 6 months, and appreciate every faculty's compassion, kindness, and dedication. The workload for CMHC faculty is HEAVY.

502, 504 has been most meaningful and/or helpful for me so far. I have also found the supervision times associated with these classes super helpful. Working one-on-one with other people is extremely helpful for my learning process. Having the counseling lounge outside rm. 050 in the Ed/Psych building available to me has been a wonderful resource.

502, 504, and counseling theory have had the greatest impact on my learning thus far. I really appreciate the experiential learning aspects of 502/504. Counseling theory required an incredibly heavy workload but I retained a lot of new information from that class so it was effective. Getting to know my cohort members has also been a highlight of this program. I really feel supported by all my classmates and value what each one of them brings to this experience.

I am learning so much. I appreciate the knowledge and intelligence of the professors and supervisors. You guys know what you're talking about and have the experience to back it up. I also have appreciated the practicum experience. It's so good to actually get to do the work.

I have felt supported through the professors and safe to ask questions. I have also appreciated the extra reading suggestions and candid advice coming from professors.

Learning counseling skills, being challenged, getting real life experience with clients has been amazing. I think this program is unique in that we get thrown in early but we learn a lot and we have a ton of support from the professors and supervisors.

Cohort connection has been very meaningful and a big support system

Critiques and suggestions for improvement (themes):

- Several (~4) comments that staff and faculty appear stressed/burned out/overwhelmed
- Several (~5) comments requesting improved communication & coordination across courses
- Two comments that requested more focus on technical training (eg in Crisis class)
- Two comments that it would be preferable for the group class to precede the group practicum

Graduating Students Survey:

22 students completed this survey, completed between 6/8/2023 and 6/12/2023

Item	Percent of respondents that agree or strongly agree
Program Satisfaction: The academic advising process meets my needs.	81.9
Program Satisfaction: Faculty mentoring meets my needs.	81.9
Program Satisfaction: The CMHC Program Coordinator (Cody Christopherson) is helpful to students.	100
Program Satisfaction: The CMHC Clinical Coordinator (Victor Chang) is helpful to students.	95.5
Program Satisfaction: The CMHC Faculty are helpful to students.	95.5
Program Satisfaction: Courses are consistent with my employment goals.	86.3
Professional identity	95.5

Each graduating student survey asks students to rate their level of improvement across different

counseling knowledge domains from the beginning to the end of the program. Here are those results:

Course	No improvement	Minor improvement	Substantial improvement
Professional Identity	0	4.5	95.5
Helping Relationship	0	4.5	95.5
Human Growth & Development	0	27.3	72.7
Assessment	0	86.4	13.6
Group Counseling	0	40.9	59.1
Social & Cultural Awareness	0	22.7	77.3
Career Development	0	50	50
Research and Program Evaluation	0	54.5	45.5

Highlights from qualitative comments:

Program Satisfaction: Faculty and Staff Helpfulness

I like the flexibility of faculty and staff in scheduling time to meet! They are really resourceful and willing to help

Program Satisfaction: Work-Life Balance and Course Structure

The schedule worked well for me. The amount of work was easy to balance with my life.

The course work is heavy but it was expected. This program prepares you at the start to understand how hard it will be since it is done in a shorter period of time. I chose this program because I knew it would be done in a shorter period of time. This served me well.

It was hard, but I think each person needs to figure this part out for themselves because it looks very different for each one of us.

Course Satisfaction: Classroom Experience

I appreciate more interaction with other students. The internships classes and experiences including supervision were valuable experiences. I loved hearing about everyone's various clients and conceptualizing their situations as a group.

I liked my cohort size of 22-24

Course Satisfaction: Practicum and Internship

Supervisors are a significant factor in my growth in the practicum experience. I learned a lot from Sharon and Robert!!

Im so thankful to have these experiences, it made me the counselor who I am today.

Critiques and suggestions for improvement (themes):

- 3 comments about preferring in-person classes rather than zoom/online
- Several comments about financial aid, more grants and scholarships, and communicating this information
- Several comments about focusing on specific modalities (ACT, IFS, and CBT specifically mentioned)

Alumni Survey:

Historically, the alumni survey has yielded very low response. For the prior two years, only two alumni for each assessment cycle had responded. This year, we were able to yield 12 responses completed between 6/16/23 and 7/11/23. This survey was sent to alumni who had been out of the program for one year (graduated Spring 2022). Results are below:

- Currently a registered counseling intern working toward state licensure –91.7% (with the remaining person planning on registering in the future)
- The CMHC faculty were helpful to my professional growth – 91% agree or strongly agree
- CMHC faculty were knowledgeable in the field of counseling—100% agree or strongly agree
- I would recommend this program to other potential students - 75% agree or strongly agree

How did your education at SOU in the CMHC program help in your career opportunities? (selected answers)

Working for one of the best organizations in southern OR due to my ability, passion and education. Pay is competitive, and they are making a new position for me to customize my desirable caseload to match my need/passion.

CMHC at SOU helped to place me with my current employment position, and I love my job!

It enabled me to have the background and credentials to work as a counselor. It taught me the fundamentals of counseling.

I believe that the program benefited me the most by encouraging intense introspection and the knowledge and support to delve in.

I had enough tools to enter into my role with confidence and be successful/go to work. Also, I had a strong idea as to the population I wanted to work with. And, I am grateful for multicultural counseling- I have a deeper awareness and understanding because of this class, and I have gotten to be there for individuals in life-saving ways, thanks to this class... I have noticed many people whom I work with could benefit from taking a multicultural class...

Provided me with knowledge, practice experience, and support in my new career. I ended up employed by the company where I did my internship.

By providing CACREP accredited courses with a vast base of counseling education. The class topics covered enough that I felt prepared enough upon graduation to step into a counseling role with any population.

While I am a tough critic, in terms of my educational expectations...I also realize the value and knowledge I gained from the CMHC curriculum, professors, and supervisors. It prepared me, overall, to directly dive into my work as a therapist.

Looking back, what changes would you suggest for the CMHC program? (selected answers)

- Correct the over-emphasis on social justice/BIPOC/LGBTQ+. (2 comments)
- More information about special populations (children/the elderly). (3 comments)
- Different/better organization of courses (2 comments)
- More emphasis on specific therapeutic interventions and specific techniques (3 comments)
- More training and information on mandatory reporting and billing (2 comments)

Site Supervisor/EMPLOYER Survey:

Six site supervisors responded to the survey between 6/19/2023 and 7/5/2023. With this very small sample, limited conclusions can be drawn. However, the results are below.

Item	Percent of respondents that agree or strongly agree
The SOU CMHC Program internship expectations and requirements are clear to me.	100
The student evaluation procedures are appropriate and manageable	83.3
The SOU clinical coordinator is accessible and helpful	83.3
The course schedule is compatible with students' internship schedules	66.7
Did your organization hire a graduate of the SOU Counseling Program in the past two years?	50% yes

Exit exam results: Our students once again continued to score above the national average in all eight CACREP core areas and in the overall total score on the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Exam (CPCE). Thus, our students demonstrate a strong basic fund of knowledge in the counseling field in comparison to a national sample of masters and doctoral level students and professionals. Scores across domains and these data have been shared with program faculty, especially the instructors of those courses, to note for their continued course development.

2023- April CPCE Results

CPCE Core Knowledge Area	National Mean	SOU Mean
Professional Counseling Orientation and Ethical Practice	10.9	12.3
Social and Cultural Diversity	9.8	10.8
Human Growth and Development	10.3	11.0

Career Development	10.1	11.1
Counseling and Helping Relationships	9.6	10.7
Group Counseling and Group Work	11.4	12.3
Assessment and Testing	9.6	11.3
Research and Program Evaluation	11.2	12.5
Total	82.9 (14.5)	92.1

Program Changes for AY 2021-22

Considering the overall positive program evaluations and all the assessment data and feedback received, the CMHC faculty agreed to focus on a few key areas of program improvement for the coming year:

Actions:

Increase elective offerings which will give students specific focused skill training. We will double our current number of credits dedicated to electives. These electives may also focus on specific populations.

Improve program communication by establishing a google group email list so that all faculty, staff, and students are equally informed about program announcements and changes. This will also improve advising because advisors will be looped in to information and changes.

Improve program communication by introducing town hall-style meetings with an open format for Q&A, announcements, etc.

Improve alumni, supervisor, and employer response rate by incentivizing participation. We will provide \$10 Dutch Bros coffee gift cards to all respondents this coming year.

Teach as many courses as possible in-person (vs online). Because two faculty are on sabbatical this year, it is possible that there will be more than one course online or hybrid. However, when possible we will prefer term-by-term faculty who can teach in-person.

Continued Coordination and Work with SOU Graduate Program Assessment

Through collaboration and coordination with the SOU Director of University Assessment, the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies, the Graduate Council, the Social Sciences Division Director and the CMHC Chair, the CMHC Assessment Coordinator will continue providing the necessary data, results tracking, and assessment reporting within the Nuventive Improve software system and continuing preparing the Annual Graduate Program Assessment rubrics, narratives, and reports.

In conclusion, we hope that this annual assessment report conveys the breadth, depth, utility, and robustness of our integrated assessment processes and associated results. The CMHC program takes program evaluation and program improvement seriously and we believe this report highlights our endeavors and is demonstrable proof of our efforts.

CMHC Faculty & Staff 2022 – 2023

Role	Name	Contact information	Notes
Program Chair & Assessment Coordinator	Dr. Cody Christopherson	christoc1@sou.edu	
Clinical Coordinator (Fall 2023)	Dr. Victor Chang	changv@sou.edu	Sabbatical Winter 23 & Spring 24
Clinical Coordinator (Winter & Spring 2024)	Dr. Doug Smith	smithdou@sou.edu	Sabbatical Fall 23
Counseling Faculty	Dr. Lindsey Warwick	warwickl@sou.edu	
Office Coordinator	Ms. Angel McDonald	mcdonald@sou.edu	