2014-2015 TESTIMONIALS from current students & recent graduates

RECENT CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING PROGRAM TESTIMONIALS:

“My completion of the M.A. Clinical Mental Health Counseling program at Northern Arizona University was an invaluable experience that has prepared me to succeed in whatever professional helping setting I have encountered thus far in my young career; even in my work with especially challenging populations. I also truly believe that it has adequately prepared me to have a rich and productive counseling career, and to face and excel in any future employment settings. In the program, I was given the freedom and knowledge to develop my own unique, efficacious, and evidence-based counseling framework. Coursework was informative, experiential, and stimulating, and the faculty were very approachable and responsive. Overall, I couldn’t have asked for anything more in a graduate counseling program and experience”.

- Steve Nickolaisen, 2014 CMHC Graduate, NAU-Flagstaff. Doctoral Candidate in Counseling Psychology at NAU-Flagstaff, anticipated graduation of 2017

“While the classes and teachers are wonderful, I think I was prepared the most by my peers and the hands on experiences. ….. I have been able to take this awareness and incorporate it into working with my current staff on reframing how they may state things in ways that are more culturally sensitive and trauma-informed. The trainings that were offered during the program, as well as the supervision offered throughout practicum and internship were extremely helpful. This taught me how to be prepared for staffing, and what clinical supervision should look like. I do wish that there was more opportunity or classes offered in modalities (i.e. EMDR, Somatic Experiencing, etc.) that we could get certified in before venturing out into the field. Overall, I think that this program gave me a great foundation that assisted in finding my niche (trauma, yay!!)” –

- Erica Van Parys, 2014 CMHC Graduate, NAU-Flagstaff, working as psychotherapist in Flagstaff.

“Having the opportunity to attend the M.A. in Community Counseling program at Northern Arizona University-Yuma was a blessing. The instructors and advisors were knowledgeable not only in the school setting and in the material presented, but also in real world counseling applications. The supervision provided by the instructors was amazing, an unforgettable experience that is still helping me now. Overall, the program prepared me for the real world of counseling and was an awesome experience”

- Jose Amparo, 2012 M.A. Community Counseling Graduate, NAU-Yuma. AZ Licensed Associate Counselor serving as psychotherapist at Blake Easter Seals Foundation, Yuma, AZ

“The strategic and measured approach to training found in the MA Counseling program has been instrumental to my success, both in and outside of the classroom. I’ve been challenged, encouraged and mentored by incredible faculty, all of whom have my best interests in mind. I’ve been granted several opportunities to lead my peers via student organizations, and to become involved with co-curricular research beyond program expectation. As I complete the program, I feel prepared and empowered for the next step in my career. I know that the high quality education I’ve received at Northern Arizona University will continue to serve me and inform my decisions as I continue in the field of mental health.”

- Garrison Garcia, MA - Counseling, graduating Dec 2015, assistant researcher in Dr. Kolodinsky's research in the integration of counseling and positive psychology. Outstanding Master's Student in Educational Psychology, winner of his 8th grade chess tournament and thinker of thoughts.
“My experience as a CMHC graduate student at NAU has shaped how I have developed my own professional identity as a counselor. Through this program, I was educated on fundamental principles that have been the basis of my current work. These principles include knowledge of ethics, evidence based practices, fundamental counseling skills developed through counseling processes and practicum experiences, as well as multicultural counseling perspectives. In addition to providing these essential understandings of the counseling profession, I deeply appreciate the safe and open space provided by the faculty, as well as my cohort, so that we may learn from each other. I learned the most from the opportunities to listen to other’s perspectives, support alternative styles and viewpoints, and the ability to critically discuss and deconstruct differing approaches to counseling. Overall, I value the limitless opportunities that this program has offered to grow as a professional counselor, as well as an individual”.

• **Victoria Giles-Vazquez, M.A. CMHC Intern, Spring/Summer, 2015**

“The professors in this program are engaging and highly experienced. They are approachable and are willing to help—on anything from assignment questions to questions about internship and beyond. One of their strengths is the fact that they have so much clinical experience and that they continue to practice as they teach, which makes their teaching current in the field. As I complete my first year I am astounded by how much I have already learned about how to orient myself in the field and how to be an effective counselor. My knowledge of theory and clinical self-efficacy has already developed in leaps and bounds. The chance to practice the skills and theories we talk about in class with clients brings into sharper focus the importance of gleaning everything I can from each class as I prepare to become a professional. I am looking forward to the rest of my classes and the deeper clinical experience of Practicum next year before beginning internship and receiving my degree.”

• **Elinor Priest, CMHC First year student, NAU Flagstaff**

“In all honestly, the program helped me figure myself out. And I think that is a big part of being able to work with others.”

• **Abbie, 2014 CMHC Graduate, NAU-Flagstaff, working as psychotherapist, Flagstaff, AZ**

“I wanted to express great pride in our program and are faculty's abilities to maintain current evaluations of research and evidence-based techniques. I am currently in a clinical training for (a Flagstaff-based internship site) I’m astounded at the knowledge that I have already acquired through the Masters program training. Even while sitting with colleagues who have the same level of education, I am astounded at how far forward and knowledgeable I am in our field. I wanted to take this moment to let you know that I greatly appreciate all that our faculty does to keep us up to date on the current research and what truly makes a difference with clients. I’m very proud to tell the people of this organization that I am from Northern Arizona University’s Clinical Mental Health Program when I’m able to follow and add to the clinical presentations for training with colleagues. Thank you for your efforts in creating and maintaining our program and to all the faculty who make students the highest priority. It truly makes a difference.”

• **Erin Hanks, M.A candidate, August 2015**

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calling to be a change agent for the field itself, and clinical endeavors in the future. Currently, though, I feel that I have devotion to the field of school counseling and an application, with the exception of a few courses focused more on theory. Through application, I gained skills not also providing Tier 2 interventions. School counseling cannot exist in the absence of student support groups and core counseling curriculum. As a former teacher, one of my passions is being in the classroom with students in groups. As I completed practicum and internship, I engaged in a multitude of classroom and group lessons, reaching the entire student body while also providing Tier 2 interventions. The coursework in the NAU degree itself focused almost solely on practical application, with the exception of a few courses focused more on theory. Through application, I gained skills not only in school counseling, but also in clinical counseling, keeping the door open to the possibility of pursuing clinical endeavors in the future. Currently, though, I feel that I have devotion to the field of school counseling and a calling to be a change agent for the field itself, and consequently for students.”

- **Erika Phillips, AZ Cert K-12 Guidance Counselor, full-time school counselor in Phoenix, AZ., Graduate of NAU-Flagstaff 2013**
“The importance of being a student from NAU’s M.Ed. in School Counseling program became obvious to me as I began my internship. I have felt well prepared for each challenge I have been faced with, due to my training at NAU. As I begin to search for jobs, I am confident that the NAU Counseling program has given me the tools necessary to have a positive impact on my future students and school district”.

- Kimberly Sears, 2014 graduate of NAU-Phoenix School Counseling Masters

“I will graduate from the CACREP accredited Northern Arizona University school counseling program in three months. This final semester as a school counseling intern, I can truly see how wonderfully this CACREP program has prepared me to become a Professional School Counselor. I am confident entering the job market because of the specific CACREP requirements that I have completed during the course of my graduate program. So grateful I chose a CACREP program.

- Amy Allen Rogers, Candidate for School Counseling Masters degree, May, 2015, NAU-Phx