Certificate Program in Military and Trauma Counseling (MTC)

Introduction

More than two million American troops have deployed to the Middle East since September 11, 2001 in support of the Global War on Terror. More servicemen and women are surviving combat injuries than ever before due to improved battlefield medicine, post-operative medical technology, and better body armor. They may have experienced catastrophic physical injuries/disabilities (i.e., traumatic brain injury, spinal cord injury, and amputations) and serious mental health concerns (i.e., post traumatic stress, substance abuse, and behavioral addictions). In addition, transitioning from active duty deployment to civilian life or to veteran status has medical, physical, and psychological costs. Family members, friends, and significant others are all affected due to the parallel experience of psychosocial adjustment to medical, physical, or psychological injury.

In addition to providing master’s level counselor training for working with traumatized military personnel, the other major intention of the MTC certificate program is to prepare counselors to deal with the psychosocial and mental health aspects of various traumatic experiences across the life-span. For example, there are both common and unique trauma experiences in dealing with persons who are survivors of sexual abuse, school and workplace violence, and natural disasters such as floods, hurricanes, and tornadoes.

Thus, preparing professional counselors to work with the psychosocial and mental health aspects of military and trauma survivors is of paramount importance. The traditional counselor education curriculum does not address these issues to the extent that allows students to acquire the appropriate knowledge and skills in this specialty area. Also, the challenges of psychosocial adjustment and rehabilitation services among members of the military require skilled and competent professionals to cultivate optimal coping, resiliency and transition skills in clients.

1. Statement of Educational Objective, Description, and Content of MTC Program

The Certificate program in Military and Trauma Counseling (MTC) will prepare graduate students enrolled in counseling and counseling-related programs, as well as professional counselors currently working in the field, to work effectively with trauma survivors and the psychosocial and mental health needs of military personnel, veterans, and their families. The Certificate Program will teach best clinical practices through core counseling courses on medical/psychosocial aspects of disability, occupational analysis/career counseling, and military/trauma counseling.

Course content will include, but are not limited to the content areas listed below. Upon completion of the MTC Certificate Program, students will be able to:

- Examine and interpret the appropriate assessments related to military and trauma survivors that relate to the mental health, wellness, psychosocial, resiliency, coping, and career/occupational needs of the individual as well as family members.
- Apply critical elements in establishing a therapeutic working alliance that focuses on the unique cultural attributes of military, trauma survivors, and significant others.
• Develop treatment plans for impairments in mental, psychosocial, occupational, and independent functioning that specifically address transition needs; for example from active duty to civilian life or from pre to post trauma coping skills.
• Examine the medical and psychosocial adjustment aspects of chronic illness and disability as it relates to military and trauma survivors.
• Differentiate the various psychosocial adjustment phases and unique needs of military within the pre and post-deployment cycle.
• Choose the best treatment practices, procedures, and protocols for treating combat-related post traumatic stress disorders and other major mental health and psychological concerns related to traumatic experiences.

2. Admission Standards, Eligibility, and List of Required Course work

To be eligible for the MTC Certificate Program students must be: (a) admitted by the Graduate School as a degree or certificate student and (b) meet the minimum admission criteria including a letter of intent, a GPA of 2.7, and consent of the MTC Program Coordinator.

3. Statement of Proposed Course Sequence

The MTC Certificate Program requires a minimum of 12 s.h. of course work. It will include the following existing courses: REHB 6000- Medical and Psychosocial Aspects of Chronic Illness and Disability (3 s.h.); REHB 6100- Occupational Analysis and Career Counseling (3 s.h.); REHB 6375- Military and Trauma Counseling (3 s.h.); and 3 s.h. of electives. See course descriptions listed below. Electives should be selected in consultation with the Certificate Program Coordinator and may include, but are not limited to electives as follows: REHB 6703 Introduction to Substance Abuse (3 s.h.), REHB 6795 Prevention of Substance Abuse (3 s.h.), or REHB 6561 Research paper/project (3 s.h.). Other electives chosen by students must be approved by the Program Coordinator. The MTC will not require the development of any new courses. Up to three courses (9 s.h.) taken within the Certificate Program may count as course credit for students enrolled or concurrently enrolled in a graduate degree counseling or counseling-related program.

6000. Medical and Psychosocial Aspects of Disability (3)
   Functional capacities of individuals with disabilities, impact of disability on individual, and personal and social adjustment to life.

6100. Occupational Analysis and Career Counseling (3) Formerly REHB 5100
   P: Consent of instructor. Current occupational, vocational, career counseling, and career development theories and practices related to persons with and without disabilities across the life-span.

6375. Military and Trauma Counseling (3)
   P: Admission to graduate REHB program or consent of instructor. Focuses on providing assessment, counseling, rehabilitation, and transitional services to individuals and families in the military, veterans, and/or trauma survivors.
4. **Graduate Catalog Description of Coursework**

**Certificate in Military and Trauma Counseling**

The certificate in military and trauma counseling (MTC) will provide knowledge, skills, and best clinical practices to those who intend to work with active duty military, veterans, disabled veterans, military family members, and others affected by traumatic experiences acquired in civilian life.

The MTC certificate requires a minimum of 12 s.h. of course work. Required courses include REHB 6000, 6100, 6375, and 3 s.h. of electives selected in consultation with the certificate program coordinator.

5. **Statement of How Course Objectives Meet Educational Objectives**

As a result of the growing numbers of military and veterans with medical, physical, psychosocial, and mental health concerns, professional counselors must be knowledgeable and skilled in working with the unique cultural attributes that are foundational in the military population. In addition to working with trauma in the military, the other major intention is to prepare professional counselors with a comprehensive overview of the psychosocial and mental health aspects of trauma survivors. This includes, but not limited to persons who are survivors of sexual abuse, school and workplace violence, as well as natural disasters such as floods, hurricanes, and tornadoes.

Additionally, there is a paucity of coursework in nationally accredited-counseling programs that deal with issues of trauma acquired in the non-military civilian population such as physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, as well as trauma experiences acquired through other incidents of violence.

Thus, the proposed certificate program is an effort to prepare students for careers in crisis and trauma response, stress debriefing, working on military bases and with the Veteran’s Administration to provide services to those traumatized by war, school and workplace violence, natural disasters and other issues that affect individuals and family members. The course work in the Department of Addictions and Rehabilitation is already in existence. Thus, we stand ready to meet these needs.

6. **Statement of Certificate Program Need**

A review of the current literature suggests that the behavioral health and psychosocial concerns of active duty military, veterans, disabled veterans, and military families have become a major funding priority, as well as a significant area for professional counselor training and development. There is a nationwide shortage of Licensed Professional Counselors (LPCs) and Certified Clinical Mental Health Counselors (CCMHCs) with appropriate training to deal with the mental health and psychosocial rehabilitation concerns of this group and their families. A review of accredited counseling programs suggests that few counselor education programs offer course work in trauma counseling for either military or civilian populations and there are no
such certificate programs found among the Commission on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) or Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP) accredited programs at the time of this proposal. ECU’s Department of Addictions and Rehabilitation Program has had a CORE-accredited program since 1975. It is anticipated that the Department will receive provisional status by fall 2013 for a CACREP-accredited program which should enhance student eligibility for counselor licensure and certifications to work with military populations.

7. **Method of Educational Delivery of Online Certificate Program**

The MTC certificate program will be delivered exclusively online using Blackboard and the available technology (e.g., Tegrity videotaped presentations, PowerPoint slides, readings, Blogs).

8. **Estimated Number of Certificates to be Awarded in the First Five Years**

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9. **Statement of How MTC Certificate Program will be Evaluated**

The MTC certificate program will utilize numerical data, student demographics, and qualitative measures that will be reported in ECU’s TracDat format. The assessment, analysis, and evaluation of the certificate program will integrate select program evaluation components from the department’s counselor accreditation bodies (i.e., CORE, CACREP) which include, but are not limited to: (a) External Review Committees to provide input on curriculum development, (b) student and faculty involvement with Professional Counseling Associations for research and professional development activities, (c) Counselor Licensure and Certification preparation for students entering the field, (d) developing Internship site and job placements at military installations, and (e) ongoing evaluation of faculty and student resources for continued certificate program development.

10. **Faculty Associated with Teaching the MTC Certificate Program**

Presently, there are three faculty members that teach the required course work and electives related to the certificate program; Drs. Crozier, Mizelle, Stebnicki. Depending upon CAHS budget, it is anticipated that adjunct professors with military and trauma counseling specialty areas may be needed as the number of students grow in the program.

11. **Program Coordinator**

Dr. Mark Stebnicki will serve as Coordinator of the MTC certificate program (see attached vitae or go to faculty website for access: [http://www.ecu.edu/cs-dhs/rehb/stebnicki.cfm](http://www.ecu.edu/cs-dhs/rehb/stebnicki.cfm)). Over the last 17 years in academia, Dr. Stebnicki served as Coordinator for two CORE-accredited programs and has extensive teaching, research, and mental health and rehabilitation practice experience working with active duty military, veterans, disabled veterans, and civilians who have experienced a range of traumatic events.
12. Professional Licensure and Certifications Available to Students

Students enrolled in the MTC certificate program will be concurrently enrolled in a CORE and CACREP-accredited program. Thus, students completing their counselor education program, depending upon their course work, will be eligible for the following certifications and license: The Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) license issued by the North Carolina Board of Professional Counselors; Licensed Clinical Addictions Specialist issued by the North Carolina Substance Abuse Professional Practice Board, Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) issued by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC); National Certified Counselor (NCC) and the Certified Clinical Mental Health Counselor (CCMHC) issued by The National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC).

13. Classification of Instruction Program (CIP) Title

CIP Code: 51.1508; Mental Health Counseling/Counselor.

14. Minimum Number of Weeks to Complete the MTC Certificate

The required course work for the proposed certificate currently exists in the department’s CORE-accredited program. The four course sequence given the current faculty’s teaching load and curriculum structure will take 30 weeks to complete. All courses are offered throughout the academic year during fall, spring, and summer semesters.