Becoming a Licensed Professional Counselor

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Psyc 1300 TTH 8:00

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October 31, 2017
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*My Plan* (2012) is an online assessment that can help individuals learn more about specific careers and degrees they might enjoy or be good at. In the personality assessment, my results concluded that my personality type is ESFJ. I scored very high in the Extraversion scale, which indicates that being around others socially or in the work place is something I really enjoy. Extraverts are also confident in their social interactions and clearly convey their emotions. I agree that I am an extravert, because I have frequently been told that I am assertive and talkative. I definitely prefer to spend time with friends and family rather than being alone. Within the Sensor/Intuitive domain, I scored only slightly higher in the Sensor category compared to the Intuitive category. Sensors tend to be grounded and practical, looking at situations with a realistic viewpoint rather than an idealistic notion. I agree that most of the time I take a Sensor standpoint to life because I tend to process information with a realistic mindset, but also consider Intuitive, idealistic circumstances and ideas. According to the personality inventory I am mostly a Feeler, which means I am caring and empathetic to others in multiple circumstances. I agree that I try to take an empathetic approach to understanding others, but sometimes I might be too empathetic. Within the Judger/Perceiver domain, I scored higher as a judger. I agree with this result, because judgers like their world to be fair, organized, and just. While I may not always be organized, I do prefer organization and planning over spontaneity (*My Plan*, 2012).

Within the My Plan personal interests inventory, I scored high in Artistic and Social domains. My primary interest was Artistic, which indicates that I have an enjoyment for multiple expressions of independent art. I agree that Artistic is a strong interest for me, because I enjoy writing, photography, music, and creative freedom in school and work. My secondary interest was Social which is related to Extraversion. Someone with a high social interest will
enjoy being around others and communicating with others. I consider myself to be friendly and enjoy many of the activities a Social person would enjoy including working out, visiting with friends, and planning parties (My Plan, 2012).

The My Plan Skills Profiler indicated I would likely be successful as a healthcare practitioner, educator, within management, counseling, and social sciences. This is interesting to me, because the Skills Profiler identified the main careers I have been interested in throughout my life. The My Plan Values Cluster concluded that I value Independence and Achievement in the work place. People who value Independence enjoy having personal freedom in their area of work and enjoy the opportunity to be minimally restricted in their work. I enjoy the freedom to be creative, although I do not necessarily have to be alone in my work. Valuing Achievement means that an individual likes to specifically see the results of their efforts and enjoys a sense of personal accomplishment. I consider myself an over achiever most of the time, so I agree that achievement is something I value in the workforce (My Plan, 2012).

Becoming a Licensed Professional Counselor is a career goal I have just recently focused on. Prior to wanting to be a counselor I have considered other professions in the helping field including an orthopedic surgeon, volleyball coach, and speech professor. However, I changed my career path after I took two psychology classes from Wharton County Junior College. I was very interested in learning how the mind works and how to help people with mental health disorders. As a teenager I experienced depression, but never received professional help for my problems. After learning more about psychology, I have realized I would enjoy helping other teens cope with their problems. I have told my family and friends that I want to be a counselor and they agree that I have good listening skills and empathy to help me become a great licensed professional counselor.
Education and training for a licensed professional counselor may be different from state to state (BLS, 2012-13). The state of Texas requires counselors be licensed to practice therapy. The licensure within Texas is called an LPC, or licensed professional counselor. Requirements for this credential include a masters’ or doctoral degree in the counseling field, specific classes have to be completed at the graduate or doctoral level, and practicum experience with at least 300 hours earned (including 100 direct contact hours). To obtain LPC licensure, an individual must also pass the National Counselor Exam and the Texas Jurisprudence Exam, earn three thousand additional internship hours with half of the hours consisting of direct contact with clients, and eighteen months of experience (Texas Department of State Health Services, 2011). The Bureau of Labor & Statistics (2012-13) notes that counselors have to renew their licenses as required by their state, adhere to a code of ethics, and maintain continuing education within their area of expertise.

A career as a licensed professional counselor could include providing therapy services, testing, and assessment for a variety of age groups. Duties of a counselor would include interviewing clients, conducting therapy, working with the community, and collaborating with other medical and mental health professionals. Depending on the counselor’s area of expertise, they could work with young children, adolescents, young adults, or the elderly. Counseling can address a variety of issues including every day issues like marital problems, or more severe mental health concerns including major depression or bipolar disorder. The type of counseling one chooses could affect where the individual practices. A licensed professional counselor may work in a private practice, nursing home, public school system, hospital, rehabilitation center, or within the community (BLS, 2012-13).
According to The Bureau of Labor & Statistics (2012-13), employment demand for counselors is growing in the upcoming years. The demand growth is more prevalent in rural areas that may not have as many masters’ and doctoral degree graduates with the requirements for counseling licensure. Salary range for counselors can vary depending on the specialization and place of employment. A majority of mental health counselors have the capability of earning between $30,000 and $50,000 per year. The counselor’s credentials, experience, and place of employment will influence annual salary (BLS, 2012-13).

Counseling is a rewarding profession that is in growing demand. It is a career that allows a variety of opportunities for work location and specific daily duties. Although becoming a licensed professional counselor requires significant education and steps toward licensure, the work can be quite rewarding.
References

