ADDICTION STUDIES PROGRAMS: ESTABLISHING COMPETENCY IN EDUCATION OF ADDICTION COUNSELORS

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NAADAC ANNUAL CONFERENCE

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

• Identify specific challenges of the certification and licensure process for addiction counseling students and brainstorm potential solutions for their individual schools and states.

• Promote open discussion about need for uniform educational standards among all educational institutions.

• Describe process of setting up Addiction Studies program in Higher Education

• Describe the purpose and practice of gatekeeping for the students entering the addiction counseling educational program.

• Describe specific teaching techniques, assignments, and practices which promote the development of competence in addiction counseling.

• Describe specific supervision practices to enhance personal and professional growth of the addiction counseling student.

• Describe program evaluation process
ADDITION COUNSELOR WORKFORCE

• There has been a shortage of addiction counselors for decades (NPR, February 14, 2016)

• Today's addiction counselors and addictions treatment centers often are compelled to evaluate their programs by demands for accountability from funding sources, including grants and managed care (McDaniel, Speiglman, & Beattie, 2006).

• Payment for addiction specific services requires licensed addiction counselors.

• Addiction counselors today must know about addiction but also must demonstrate competency in the areas of co-occurring disorders, cultural issues, relapse prevention and family dynamics (Astramovich, Hoskins, Wendy, 2013).

• Research supports the need for specialized and ongoing training for those who provide substance abuse counseling services (Miller et al, 2010).
CERTIFICATION AND LICENSURE OF ADDICTION COUNSELORS

- Credentialing is currently important to the addiction counseling profession because many organizations, such as funding groups, currently require counselor credentials for reimbursement of client services; and the credentialing process furthers the education of the addiction counselor (Miller, 2005).

- Certification and Licensure Standards for Alcohol and Drug Counselors (CT Dept. Public Health)
  - Certification Requirements
    - 360 hours supervised practical training/education (240 specific to addiction counseling)
    - 300 hours supervision
    - CAC (IC&RC) Examination (CT. Certification Board)
  - Licensure Requirements
    - Certification req’s met and Master’s degree in counseling, social work, family therapy or psychology program with at least 18 hours counseling
CONNECTICUT CERTIFICATION BOARD (CCB)

- Agency in charge of certification of addiction counselors and giving IC&RC (Certified Addiction Counselor (CAC) exam
- Offers certifications in addiction counseling, supervision, medication assisted treatment, gambling, prevention, recovery specialist, co-occurring disorders, criminal justice professional,
- Provides education and training
- Promotes ethical standards of practice among addiction counseling professionals
REQUIREMENTS OF ADDICTION STUDIES PROGRAMS

- No cohesive national requirement for all programs – In 2009, CACREP incorporated addiction instruction into their accredited counseling program standards.

- NAADAC – National Certification Commission for Addiction Professionals (NCC AP)
  - NCAC I (GED, HS, 270 hrs. education)
  - NCAC II (Bachelors, 450 hrs. education)
  - MAC (Master’s, 500 hrs. education)

- National Addiction Studies Accreditation Commission (NASAC) is an organization that grants accreditation based on a set of standards and credentials being met and maintained.
  - NASAC is the only accrediting organization that represents addiction-focused Major and Minor programs, Educators, and Practitioners at the Associate, Bachelors, Masters, Masters, Post-Grad, and Doctoral levels. (NASAC.org,)
SETTING UP AN ADDICTION STUDIES PROGRAM

• Identifying workforce needs of the region and state
  • Environmental Scan
  • Occupational Outlook Data
• Surveys of Employers
• Surveys of Students in academic agency
• Identify other addiction specific programs in state
NVCC ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN-CURRENT TRENDS

• Identified workforce shortage of licensed and certified addiction professionals in Connecticut

• Older addiction professionals are retiring

• Grassroots professionals no longer meet requirements to work in field

• Identified opportunities as well as threats (other similar programs) for college if program started

• Affordable Health Care ACT and Mental Health and Addictions Parity Act require increase in credentialed addictions professionals

• “Quality care requires competent workforce” (Substance Abuse Treatment Workforce Environmental Scan, Nov. 2003)
OCCUPATIONAL OUTLOOK

- Overall employment of addiction counselors expected to increase by 22% (much faster than average) from 2014-2024.
- Average annual salary in Connecticut estimated at $42,900.
- Industries include individual and family services, residential mental health, substance abuse facilities, hospitals, outpatient mental health substance abuse agencies.

CORE COMPONENTS OF ADDICTION STUDIES PROGRAM

- Meets educational institution accreditation standards
  - NEASC
  - General Education hours
- Meets State/Region certification/licensure requirements
  - Education hours
  - Clinical Practicum hours
- Covers core components TAP 21 (CSAT, 2006)
- Faculty Training and Requirements
  - Faculty licensure as a clinician
  - Experience in the addiction field
Scholars have suggested that counselor preparation in the area of addiction should incorporate both reflective and experiential learning activities (Mac-Master & Holleran, 2005; Osborn & Lewis, 2004; Sias & Goodwin, 2007).

Morgan et al. (1997) found that most courses used typical academic methods of evaluation, such as tests (63%), research papers (66%), report writing (41%), and oral presentations (21%) should incorporate both reflective and experiential learning activities.

Other experiential methods that were used included attendance at 12-step or other recovery meetings (23%), treatment center visits or counselor interviews (11%), and role plays (8%). (Morgan et al., 1997)
ADDICTION SPECIFIC COURSE WORK

• Specific Courses
  • Common coursework found among addiction studies programs – may have several addiction specific courses, commonly includes human services or psychology courses (not addiction specific)

• Courses should address TAP 21 Skills Groups:
  • Treatment Admission
  • Clinical Assessment
  • Ongoing Treatment Planning
  • Counseling Services
  • Documentation
  • Case Management
  • Discharge and Continuing Care
  • Legal, Ethical and Professional Growth Issues
# Comparison of Coursework in Addiction Studies Programs

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<td>• Abnormal Psychology</td>
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<td>Introduction Mental Health Systems (HSE)</td>
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<td>Case Management</td>
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COURSE ASSIGNMENTS SUPPORTING ADDICTION COUNSELING COMPETENCIES

- Course Assignments – build upon what students need to know once working in the field
  - Model what is done in treatment agencies
  - Attendance at 12-Step program (initial course in addiction studies)
  - Visit to substance abuse treatment program (initial course in addiction studies)
  - Prevention Program Assignment
  - The Biopsychosocial Assessment (required in 4 courses)
  - The Written Case Study (required in 4 courses - involves summarizing biopsychosocial data, assessments, developing diagnosis, and treatment plan)
  - Group Leader/ Critical Analysis of Group (analysis of planning, running of group, connection to use in addiction treatment)
  - The Resource File (outside agencies, family services, social services agencies, AIDS programs, Domestic Violence programs, criminal justice contacts, etc)
THE CLINICAL INTERNSHIP

• CACREP-accredited counselor training programs require completion of practicum or internship

• Application/Interview Process for Internship Admission
  • Gatekeeping as an Ethical Obligation (Smith, K, 2014; Glance, et al, 2012)
    • ACA and CACREP require Counselor Educators to serve as gatekeepers which may involve determining whether students have deficiencies needing intervention or potential dismissal (Ziomek-Daigle, J., Christianson, T., 2010).
  • Application and Screening Forms
  • Interview Process

• Internship Sites
  • Interagency Agreements and Contracts
  • Initial Contacts with Sites
  • Supervision Process (Agency and College Specific)
  • What students can and cannot do
THE CLINICAL INTERNSHIP - “PRIMUM NO NOCERE”

- Internship Handbook and Forms – Examples
- Internship Student Meetings/Information Sessions
  - What should be discussed with students prior to entering an agency and working with actual clients?
- Internship Seminar
  - Qualifications of Instructors (supervisory experience)
    - Lessons learned
  - Required Assignments
  - The Taped Counseling Interview of client
    - Required both semesters
  - Maintaining Supervision Records of Internship class
- Site Visits
SUPERVISION OF ADDICTION COUNSELING STUDENTS

• Ongoing from time student enters addiction studies program
  • “Gatekeeping”
• Provided by faculty with licensure and experience in the addictions field
• Documentation of student issues, behaviors, and specific actions taken and student response
  • Assists with gatekeeping and support for acceptance/non-acceptance to clinical internship
  • Ability to take supervision or feedback from instructors
• Internship
  • Weekly discussion and documentation of cases and student comments, issues
  • Site Visits to collaborate with on-site supervisors
PROMOTING STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP IN ADDICTION STUDIES PROGRAMS

• Honor Program – provide advanced studies and research options for students

• Recovery Society- attendance at conferences, participation in campus activities, recovery support

• Drug and Alcohol Awareness Day (campus and off campus locations)

• Community Involvement promotes program presence at community events and allows students to practice interpersonal skills, educating others about addiction
  • YMCA dances
  • Treatment Agency Events

• Waterbury School System – proposal for 2016-17 academic year
ADDICTION STUDIES PROGRAM EVALUATION

► Course level evaluation
  • Exams, research papers, role plays, Biopsychosocial Assessment and Case Study, Reflection papers, exit exam (practice CAC exam)

► Faculty Evaluation
  • Faculty and Student evaluations

► Programmatic Evaluation
  • College-level Self Study – first one completed May 2012
  • NASAC Accreditation – evaluates programs every 5 years
  • DARC Advisory Board
  • CAC Exam (IC&RC) given by CCB
    • NVCC has a 100% Pass Rate!
NVCC INTERNSHIP SITE/EMPLOYERS SURVEY

► 62.5% indicated they had hired a DARC intern (90% of DARC interns are hired prior to finishing their year long internship)

► Overall knowledge of the DARC Intern was rated as Excellent (12.5%), Above Average (75%), and Average (12.5%).

► Overall skill level of the DARC interns was rated as Outstanding (25%), and Above Average (75%).
NVCC GRADUATE SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

► Overall experience with the DARC program was noted as excellent (83.3%)
► 75% strongly agree that the DARC program prepared them for the next level of education (qualitative responses indicated DARC student often more prepared than graduate level social work, counseling students)
► 75% employed in addictions field
► 87.5% responded that the internship site hired them.
► Faculty interest in students’ work/academic success was rated as excellent (91.7%)
► Faculty members who teach in the DARC program were rated as excellent (83.3%) and good (16.7% - adjunct rating).
UNIQUE ISSUES EFFECTING RETENTION AND GRADUATION RATES

- Financial – cannot afford, need to work FT
- Class offerings- need evening/day/weekend
- Relapse
- Mental health issues
- Transfer
- Student not appropriate for counseling-goes to new degree program
- Student discharged from internship prior to finishing
DISCUSSION

• What are our current challenges in addiction studies?
• What needs to be done further to promote a uniform educational standards?
• Additional comments and feedback
REFERENCES

- NPR. Shortage of Addiction Counselors Further Strained by Opioid Epidemic, February 24, 2016.
THANK YOU!

If you would like to contact me regarding this presentation, consultation or resources please feel free to contact me!

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