

The American Counseling Association's "Counseling Corner" Weekly Columns

Professional Counselors Have A Great Deal To Offer

from the American Counseling Association

Yes, the month of April is more than spring showers and blooming flowers. It's also Counseling Awareness Month. Okay, not that exciting, but still a great time to learn more about professional counselors and the services they provide.

Did you know that professional counselors will have earned at least a masters degree, and that many hold doctoral degrees? Or that professional counselors are now licensed mental health providers in all 50 states?

This means that when you turn to a counselor for help, you're working with a highly-educated, trained and experienced professional.

Many people may not realize the wide range of services professional counselors offer. The people with whom most professional counselors work are ordinary people who need a little help, advice and direction. They may be facing family, work or life problems that seem overwhelming, they may be at points in their lives where things "just don't seem right", or they're simply unsure as to what to do next.

"Help" is the main product that professional counselors have to offer. They don't tell someone what to do, but rather help guide the person in understanding and discovering what could make his or her relationships or situation better, or how to explore new paths in life.

Professional counselors today specialize in a variety of areas. While most of us only remember our school counselors, there are many other counselors who focus on children and adolescents, families, substance abuse issues, military, career, employment, retirement counseling and much more.

A professional counselor is a facilitator and a guide. His or her job is to offer suggestions about helpful directions and possible actions. The counselor isn't there to provide answers, but rather to assist the client in growing, learning new things, and the necessary actions for a more satisfying life.

Counseling is meant to be a process that helps people change for the better. When someone is dealing with a loss, relationship issues, child rearing anxieties, anger, depression or any of the numerous issues that all of us can face, that's when it's time to turn to a licensed professional counselor who has been trained to provide needed help.

If you think there are issues in your life that could be helped by talking with a trained professional, you can locate local counselors through the Internet, phone book yellow pages, local mental health agency, or online at the American Counseling Association website, www.counseling.org.

Counseling Corner" is provided by the American Counseling Association. Comments and questions to ACAcornet@counseling.org or visit the ACA website at www.counseling.org

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