

AUT



A FUTURE IN
COUNSELLING



WHAT IS COUNSELLING?

Counselling is the process of supporting a person to resolve personal, social, or psychological difficulties. People turn to counselling to explore life's challenges, including grief, trauma, physical and mental health problems, job issues and relationships.

A professional and well-trained counsellor supports clients to see things more clearly, assisting them to focus on feelings, experiences or behaviour that will bring positive change. Counsellors are highly aware of the socio-economic, political and ecological factors that can contribute to a sense of distress or unwellness.

Counselling is client centred and strengths based – looking at the client's goals, values, relationships, hopes and dreams. Counsellors are trained to listen deeply and respectfully to what the client says about their life, the challenges they face and the changes

they wish to make. They draw upon a wide variety of psychological, emotional, social, cultural and spiritual practices in their work.

Counselling is often a second or third career change and life experience is valued. Some people decide to become a counsellor following their own experience of adversity, or after witnessing others' difficulties and wanting to learn how to support them more fully.

Do you enjoy listening to people and supporting them to find solutions to their problems? Are you interested in how people's environment and upbringing can impact on their resilience? Do you follow media stories about social injustice and challenges? Do you want to make a difference? If so, then counselling may be a fulfilling career choice for you.

OUTLOOK AND TRENDS

Diversity is important – There is an ongoing need for the counselling profession to reflect our increasingly diverse society. Counsellors need to ensure they develop the skills and awareness to cater to the ethnicity, sexuality and gender identity of all their clients.

Bi-cultural and multicultural counsellors – There is a need for more Māori and Pacific counsellors, along with other ethnically and culturally diverse counsellors. The ability to speak other languages and/or feel at ease across cultural difference can make a huge impact on some clients, especially in school and community settings.

Funding for primary and intermediate school counselling – Government is putting a lot more emphasis on school centred counselling. There has been an increase of funding of non-governmental organisations to provide counselling into primary and intermediate schools, as well as high schools. The NZ Association of Counsellors has drawn up specific guidelines in this area, and AUT now includes a specialist course on counselling children and young people.

Counselling for the elderly – The elderly are becoming the lost generation in terms of counselling support. Many elderly people experience grief around loss of their life partner, loss of independence, physical health, lifestyle etc. As numbers increase in this group, counselling support will be needed, and not only for those that can afford to go to private practice. Yet options for specialist counselling for the elderly are limited. This is a potential area of specialisation for prospective counsellors.

Commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi – The counselling profession in Aotearoa is guided by a commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. It is an ongoing requirement that counsellors engage in regular professional development through the Puawānanga Process to gain – and maintain – cultural understanding and competence about tangata whenua. This includes core competencies related to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, as well as an understanding of how to apply the articles of Te Tiriti to counselling practice.

WORK SETTINGS

Counsellors work within a wide range of public/government environments such as schools and tertiary institutions, as well as non-governmental organisations and private agencies. These include employee assistance programmes, community counselling agencies, Māori and Pacific health providers, refugee and migrant services, and addictions agencies.

Contract work and self-employment are common. ACC counselling often makes up part of a private practice portfolio as a counsellor.

CAREER ROLE EXAMPLES

Primary and secondary school guidance counsellor – Delivers one-to-one or group counselling for children and young people. Provides specialist advice to school crisis intervention teams, as required. Facilitates group counselling sessions (grief, abuse survivors, anger management, etc). Collaborates with staff to encourage students to meet their potential. Helps establish a safe and inclusive climate in the school. Participates in the school's wider pastoral care environment.

Tertiary counsellor – Provides short term therapeutic services. Focuses on improving students' ability to succeed in their academic and personal lives. Works collaboratively with other staff in student health services and contributes to the wellbeing of the wider campus community.

Māori and Pacific counsellor – Provides cultural-specific services and culturally appropriate models and knowledge and experience of Kaupapa Māori and Pacific. Has sound

understanding of tikanga (cultural norms and practices and traditions), especially in regards to Māori and Pacific communities. Works effectively with family/whanau and has strong connections with local communities.

Addiction specialist counsellor* – Works collaboratively with clients and internal and external treatment team members to support clients' treatment and recovery. Refers clients to support groups. Monitors client access and involvement with treatment and other providers to address barriers to treatment and the recovery process.

*Requires further specialist study in addictions.

SIMILAR PROFESSIONS

Counselling is one of a range of talking therapy professions in Aotearoa New Zealand, including psychotherapy, psychology and psychiatry. Differences between these professions include training requirements, registration processes and working environments.

Psychiatrists initially train as medical doctors, then specialise in psychiatry and typically work in medical settings. Clinical psychologists undertake undergraduate training in psychology then do specialist postgraduate study.

Psychotherapists are most similar to counsellors as both involve "talking therapies". Psychotherapy focuses on helping people understand themselves by exploring how people's early life experiences and personality affect thoughts, feelings, relationships and behaviour. While counsellors do take this into consideration, they focus more on people's difficulties and concerns, helping people develop more satisfying and resourceful ways of living.

SALARY GUIDE EXAMPLES

	Salary (per year)
Hauora Māori worker (DHB)	
(3-year degree or equivalent cultural experience)	\$52,813–\$87,697
Alcohol and other drug clinician (DHB)	
Bachelor's graduate	\$52,813 starting salary
Master's graduate	\$62,000 starting salary
Senior level advanced practitioner	\$81,500 upward
School guidance counsellor	
Bachelor's graduate	\$56,000–\$75,000 (first 5 years)
Senior	\$57,800–\$75,500
Private practice counsellor	
Depending on location, and if contracting to organisations such as ACC	\$80–\$140 per hour

Source: PSA Auckland Region Allied/Public Health/ Technical MECA October 2020; [payscale.com/Careers NZ](https://www.payscale.com/careers-nz)

Salary range is indicative of the NZ job market at the time of publication (mid-2021) and should only be used as a guideline.



SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

A career in counselling involves ongoing personal reflection and development of understanding who we are and why we do what we do. This includes:

- Knowledge and understanding of key ideas, research and practice relevant to relational counselling (theory that mutually satisfying relationships are necessary for one's emotional wellbeing)
- Understanding of the values underpinning the counselling profession, according to ethical frameworks for practice

- Commitment and active engagement with the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi bi-cultural practice and multi-cultural practice/knowledge of social and cultural issues
- Strong awareness of yourself, others and the world, regarding the physical, cognitive/emotional, spiritual, and social dimensions of life
- The psychological and emotional robustness required to work in and with complex emotional situations.
- Empathic, genuine and respectful engagement with clients and their experience
- Committed to justice, fairness and sustainability

PERSONAL QUALITIES

- Warm, open, empathic and able to gain people's trust
- Patient, tolerant and sensitive with impartial, non-judgmental attitude
- Trustworthy, discreet, with personal integrity and ethics
- Resilient and self-aware, with ability to examine own thoughts, feelings and limitations
- Interact well with people from all backgrounds

THE AUT ADVANTAGE

AUT is the only New Zealand university offering a 3-year undergraduate counselling programme. The degree has a trauma informed, integrative and multicultural approach. AUT is an NZAC accredited provider, thus graduates are eligible for provisional membership on degree completion.

FURTHER STUDY

At postgraduate level, students can study a Bachelor of Health Science (Honours) or Graduate Diploma in Health Science in Addictions, Violence and Trauma, Mental Health or Māori Health. You can also continue into a Master of Health Science and PhD programme.

Research areas include body psychotherapy, trauma informed approaches and decolonisation of counselling practices.

REGISTRATION & SUPERVISION

Graduates are expected to become provisional members of one of three professional associations: NZAC, NZCCA or DAPAANZ. Full membership requires a minimum number of ongoing professional development hours.

Counsellors must undertake regular and ongoing professional supervision to help counsellors reflect upon and develop effective and ethical practice. Supervision includes personal support, mentoring, professional identity development and reflection upon the relationships between persons, theories, practices, work contexts and cultural perspectives.

A portrait of Chrissy Guinibert, a woman with long, wavy, light brown hair, smiling warmly at the camera. She is wearing a black top with a vibrant pink and white floral pattern. The background is an office setting with a white ceiling, a wooden bulletin board, and a window with blinds.

CHRISSEY GUINIBERT

Guidance Counsellor at Papatoetoe High School

Bachelor of Health Science in Counselling

"I got my role as guidance counsellor at Papatoetoe High School after I did a placement there. The role is quite varied. No two days, or even two hours, look the same! As well as individual and group counselling, we facilitate resiliency programmes and mediations. At times we run workshops in the classroom, participate in staff professional development seminars and speak at assemblies. We are also often involved in school groups, such as diversity, mentoring and special interest groups.

Working with the high school age group is so rewarding because we get to see them grow and develop over a period of a few years. I am often amazed and inspired by the young people I work with, and it is neat to see them figure out life and grow into young adults. I feel privileged to be a part of their journey! Working at a school is a real gift.

I have always had a passion for working with young people and knew that I wanted to work as a counsellor in a high school right from the start of my training. Adolescence is such a significant period of someone's life – there is so much going on. It was a difficult time in my own life to navigate, as it is for a lot of young people, which is why I have a passion to support this age group. I also really enjoy working in an environment that is so diverse. It allows for very interesting work to be done, and it has taught me so much.

Public speaking is the biggest challenge for me as a guidance counsellor – my comfort zone is definitely in my office working with individuals or small groups. Having to take up the challenge of public speaking has given me insights into some of the challenges that the people we work with experience."

ADVICE TO NEW GRADUATES

"Utilise supervision! Your supervisor is a world of knowledge and they are there to help support you, so don't shy away from making the most of your time together.

Don't let your NZ Association of Counsellors application get away from you. It may seem like you have a long time to complete it, but that time goes by quickly. If you stay organised, and don't leave it to the last minute, you will submit something that you are really happy with."

USEFUL WEBSITES

New Zealand Association of Counsellors (NZAC)
www.nzac.org.nz

New Zealand Christian Counsellors Association (NZCCA)
www.nzcca.org.nz

Addiction Practitioners' Association Aotearoa New Zealand (DAPAANZ)
www.dapaanz.org.nz

Talking Works; Directory of NZ professional counsellors, psychotherapists and psychologists
www.talkingworks.co.nz

Le Va – Pasifika Family & Community Support Services
www.leva.co.nz

Vantage Pointrecovery.com – digital trends
www.digitaltrends.com/web/therapists-turning-to-skype-for-online-counseling-sessions/

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information about the study of Counselling please go to:
www.aut.ac.nz/counselling-major

For other Future Career Sheets visit:
www.aut.ac.nz/careersheets

EMPLOYABILITY & CAREERS

For employability and career support, AUT students can book an appointment through
<https://elab.aut.ac.nz/>

 @AUTEmployabilityandCareers

FUTURE STUDENTS

Contact the Future Student Advisory team for more information: www.aut.ac.nz/enquire

futurestudents@aut.ac.nz

 @AUTFutureStudents

CURRENT AUT STUDENTS

Contact the Student Hub Advisors team for more information: 0800 AUT UNI (0800 288 864)


www.aut.ac.nz/enquire

studenthub@aut.ac.nz


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The information contained in this career sheet is correct at time of printing, November 2021.

