

NATURE OF WORK

Substance abuse counselors help people who have problems with alcohol and drugs. They counsel individuals who are addicted to drugs, helping them to identify behaviors and problems related to their addiction. They also conduct programs aimed at preventing addictions from occurring in the first place. These counselors hold sessions designed for individuals, families, and/or groups.

WORKING CONDITIONS

The working conditions of substance abuse counselors vary. Some work in offices, clinics, hospitals, group homes, and shelters. Many spend their time in the field visiting clients. Most work a 40 hour weeks. The work tends to be extremely satisfying and rewarding.

TRAINING & QUALIFICATIONS

Counselors must be aware of educational and training requirements that are often very detailed and that vary by area and by counseling specialty. Prospective counselors should check with state and local governments, employers, and national voluntary certification organizations in order to determine which requirements apply. In New Mexico, substance abuse counseling is regulated and licensed by the New Mexico Counseling and Practice Board.

JOB OUTLOOK

The demand is extremely strong for substance abuse counselors in San Juan County, in the state of New Mexico and across the country. The need for certified counselors has grown dramatically in response to drug offenders increasingly being sent to treatment programs rather than to jail. Substance abuse counselors will be needed to staff statewide networks that are being established to counter the huge impact that drugs and alcohol abuse has on public health, safety, and welfare. Under managed care systems, insurance companies are increasingly providing for reimbursement of counselors as a less costly alternative to psychiatrists and psychologists. These jobs are expected to increase between 2006-2016 at a faster than average pace.

CAREER OPTIONS

Substance abuse counselor, human service worker, case management aide, social work assistant, community support worker, mental health aide, community outreach worker, life skill counselor, gerontology aide.

ESTIMATED SALARY RANGE

New Mexico — \$26,567 - \$37,910

Nationally — \$26,567 - 45,570

RELATED OCCUPATIONS

Counselors, childcare workers, occupational therapist assistant, physical therapist assistant, nursing, and psychiatric or home health aides.

SJC Basic Program Information

The program is designed to provide students with employable skills for entry level positions in substance abuse treatment, client advocacy, community outreach, community shelters, youth programs, and other service oriented programs. Students that are planning to transfer to a 4 year institution is advised to check with an adviser from the school in which they will transfer. A grade of a "C" or better is required in in all Human Services Education and elective courses.



For further information go to:

www.sanjuacollege.edu/pages/158.asp

www.bls.gov/oco/ocos067.htm

www.careers-nm.org



* Most of this information is from the Occupational Outlook Handbook—2008-2009

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