

Bethune-Cookman University

Department of Counseling: Master's of Counseling Program

Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

Students and faculty in the Master's of Counseling program are guided by the American Counseling Association ([ACA, 2014](#)) Code of Ethics and are committed to the ethical practice of counseling. In classroom, field work, and extracurricular activities, we acknowledge and value the diverse backgrounds and perspectives of our students, faculty, site supervisors, and clients. We believe that an emphasis on diversity, inclusion, and advocacy strengthens the learning experiences of all.

As a program in the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, we share a commitment to diversity and inclusion. We align with the mission of the Bethune-Cookman University's to create an inclusive learning environment. "Our goal is to create an inclusive learning environment that nurtures future graduates who exemplify compassion, leadership, and inspiration. Whether in the classroom or beyond, we uphold the importance of promoting counseling values and personal beliefs while recognizing and embracing the diversity of backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives." We aim for every individual to feel a sense of belonging within the Master's of Counseling community. The presence of civility among all members of the Master's of Counseling (including faculty, staff, and students) is essential in creating an inclusive environment that promotes personal introspection, development, and a sense of collective harmony.

Diversity signifies difference and heterogeneity between and among individuals, groups, and cultures. Specifically, diversity is inclusive of, but not limited to, all ages, races, ethnic groups, genders, gender identities, sexual orientations, national origins, cultures, socioeconomic classes, abilities, ways of thinking geographic regions, religions, and veteran status

The consensus definition of counseling (Kaplan et al., 2014) describes counseling as a professional relationship that empowers diverse individuals, families, and groups to accomplish mental health, wellness, education, and career goals. To do so effectively involves an ongoing commitment to the aspirational Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (Ratts et al., 2015) endorsed by the ACA.

Specific to the personal values of our students and faculty, the Bethune-Cookman University's Master's of Counseling program is guided by the ACA (2014) Code of Ethics, Section A.4.b. Personal Values:

Counselors are aware of—and avoid imposing—their own values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Counselors respect the diversity of clients, trainees, and research participants and seek training in areas in which they are at risk of imposing their values onto clients, especially when the counselor's values are inconsistent with the client's goals or are discriminatory in nature.