

**George Mason University  
College of Education and Human Development  
Counseling Program**

EDCD 797.B06 – Neurodiversity and Counseling  
1 Credit, Summer 2023  
Saturday, June 24<sup>th</sup> & Sunday, June 25<sup>th</sup> 9:00 AM – 4:30 PM  
Thompson Hall Room L013 – Fairfax Campus

**Faculty**

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**Prerequisites/Corequisites**

Admission to the Counseling program, EDCD 603

**University Catalog Course Description**

Advanced topics in education

**Course Overview**

Neurodiversity and Counseling provides students with an introduction to the multifaceted and complex topic of neurological contributions to diagnostic conditions, observable clinical traits, underlying neurological processes, and factors that create diversity/heterogeneity in the population. In addition, students will have experiential practice with assessing behavioral symptoms, assessment tools, interpreting data, and planning treatment interventions.

**Course Delivery Method**

This course will be delivered in person using a lecture format.

**Course Objectives**

This course is designed to enable students to do the following:

- Understand and consider neurodiversity as an important part of the healthcare provider
- Learning to consider and include perspectives of neurodiversity within the assessment and treatment planning process
- Validation of client concerns related, but not limited to, personal preferences, culture, gender, socioeconomic, and other contributing factors
- Understand incidence and prevalence of complex neurodevelopmental conditions such as Autism Spectrum Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, behaviors associated with self-harm, and Intellectual Disability
- Introduction to neurobiology and explanations as to how these conditions manifest, mechanisms in the brain, and basic neuroanatomy

- Discussions on how to interpret testing information in the development of the client's treatment goals
- Common co-occurring conditions, such as Anxiety, Depression, and related mood disorders
- Basic explanation of psychopharmacology and common categories of medications typically prescribed by treating physicians (e.g. antidepressants, mood stabilizers, stimulants, etc.)
- Explanation, role play, and classroom-based practice utilizing techniques of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Applied Behavior Analysis, and other validated methods of service delivery
- Strategies for establishing rapport and aligning with the client on counseling or behavioral treatment approaches
- Understanding of collaborative approaches with physicians, educators, speech therapists, and other interdisciplinary contributors

### **Professional Standards (CACREP)**

EDCD 797 is a special topics course and meets the requirement that all master's students take 2-3 credits of special topics course work. This 1-credit course will contribute to counseling students' knowledge of a particular population of clients.

EDCD 797 fulfills the requirements of the following professional organizations:

Virginia Department of Education requirement for school counseling licensure that candidates understand the knowledge, skills and processes of individual counseling. Virginia Department of Health Professions requirement that Licensed Professional Counselor candidates complete graduate study in theories and techniques of counseling and psychotherapy. Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) core requirement described in Section II.K.e: Helping relationships: An understanding of counseling and consultation processes. American Counseling Association Code of Ethics requirement that counselors establish counselor education and training programs that integrate academic study and supervised practice.

### **Required Texts**

None

### **Course Performance Evaluation**

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor (e.g., VIA).

- **Assignments and/or Examinations**

Day 1: Class lecture, participation, small group exercises, end of day Discussion Board #1

Day 2: Class lecture, participation, small group exercises, end of day Discussion Board #2

- **Other Requirements**

**Attendance:** In accordance with the policies of the Counseling Program, on-time attendance at every class meeting is expected. Late arrival to class will be considered an absence. Due to the short nature of this class, **any unexcused absences will result in loss of course credit.** Attendance is required for all classes. Excused absences are permitted for illness, religious holidays, or emergency situations only; documentation is required for the absence to be considered excused. Work-related absences are not considered excused.

**Course Requirements:** Each student is expected to: (1) attend each class, (2) arrive on time and stay for the entire class period, (3) participate in discussions and in-class exercises (4) submit assignments by the end of each day.

- **Grading**

**In accordance with the George Mason University Grading Policy, the following grades may be achieved:**

A [100-94]; A- [93-90]; B+ [89-87]; B [86-84]; B- [83-80]; C [79 – 70]; F [69 and below]

### Professional Dispositions

See <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/polices-procedures/>

Students must adhere to program professional dispositions:

<https://cehd.gmu.edu/assets/docs/forms/Professional%20Dispositions.pdf>

### Professional Dispositions Assessment

- Professional Dispositions Assessments are completed by instructors in all courses except electives and field experience courses (Practicum: 750/751; Internship 1: 792/793; and Internship 2: 794/795). In electives and field experience courses, instructors or supervisors may choose to complete a Professional Disposition Assessment should the need arise. In field experience classes, University and Site Supervisors will assess students on a Student Evaluation that is specific to P&I.
- A developmental approach to PD Assessment is used, understanding that students are developing in their awareness, skills, and abilities throughout the course of the Counseling Program. In general, students in “basic or pre-practicum level” courses may demonstrate the disposition sometimes or inconsistently. Students in “intermediate or practicum level” courses should demonstrate the disposition more often or frequently. The courses are assigned to levels as follows:

<i>Course Level</i>	<i>Courses</i>
<b>Basic (Pre-Practicum)</b>	Core: 602, 601, 525, 603, 609, 606, 604, 656 CMHC: 654, 652, 658      SC: 613, 611, 626
<b>Intermediate (Practicum)</b>	Core: 608, 660, 628, 619, 610, 797

Professional Dispositions assessments are scored as follows:

- **4: Consistently Evident** – The student demonstrates the disposition all or almost all of the time. This rank is considered exceptional, particularly for students who are at the beginning of their program. Students who are advanced in the program (i.e., in their last year of the program and enrolled in Internship I or II) should expect to achieve this rank.
- **3: Frequently Evident** – The student demonstrates the disposition often or most of the time. It is expected that students in the middle of the program (i.e., usually the second year for full time or third year for part time students) will achieve this rank. This reflects that they have moved beyond the initial phase of counselor training and are developing well towards being a professional counselor.
- **2: Sometimes Evident** – The student demonstrates the disposition sometimes or inconsistently. It is expected that students at the beginning of the program (i.e., first year for most students) will achieve this rank. Students at the beginning of the program are expected to be developing towards these professional dispositions as a part of their counselor training and preparation for their future as a professional counselor.
- **1: Seldom Evident** – The student demonstrates the disposition rarely or not at all. In some instances, this may also indicate a harmful demonstration of professional disposition(s). Students at the beginning of their program may achieve this rank, which can be developmentally appropriate as they learn the expectations for students and future professional counselors. Should this occur, students should expect to meet with their advisor, who will assist them in addressing the area of concern.
- **N/A: Not Applicable** – An instructor or supervisor may use this to note that they did not have the opportunity to observe the disposition or that it was not relevant in the given context. This is most likely to occur at the beginning of the program when some dispositions may not be germane to the particular class.

### Class Schedule

Class	Date	Topic(s)	Assignments
1	Saturday, 6/24/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to neurodiversity</li> <li>• Overview of basic genetics</li> <li>• Diagnostic criteria, assessment, treatment, and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class participation</li> <li>• Small group exercises</li> <li>• Discussion Board #1</li> </ul>

		case study exercises of Intellectual Disability and Autism Spectrum Disorder	
2	Sunday, 6/25/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complex and comorbid conditions</li> <li>• Neurobiology primer</li> <li>• Neurodevelopmental artifacts and their associated clinical presentation</li> <li>• Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder</li> <li>• Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder</li> <li>• Conditions that lead to self-harm behavior, such as mood disorders, body dysmorphic disorder, and eating disorders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class participation</li> <li>• Small group exercises</li> <li>• Discussion Board #2</li> </ul>

Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.

### **Counseling Program Mission Statement**

The Counseling Program is committed to preparing counselors who promote the social, psychological, physical, and spiritual health of individuals, families, communities, and organizations in order to contribute to the advancement of global well-being. The program strives for national and international excellence in implementing a counseling perspective which provides a foundation in basic counseling skills and focuses on social justice, multiculturalism, international, advocacy and leadership. It is our belief that a global perspective on development across the life span, and an understanding and appreciation of multiculturalism, diversity, and social justice are integral to the preparation of professional counselors, requiring that professional counselors are prepared to assume leadership roles, be proactive change agents and become advocates for social, economic and political justice. The program is committed to accomplish this mission by working through interdisciplinary teams as well as promote the interconnectedness of teaching, research, service and professional practice. Through this mission faculty will facilitate a continued tradition of international, national and regional leadership

through the development of collaborative partnerships and projects, research, publications, presentations, consultation, and training.

### **Core Values Commitment**

The College of Education and Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles: <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>.

### **GMU Policies and Resources for Students**

#### *Policies*

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see <https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/> ).
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see <https://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>).
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their Mason email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students **solely** through their Mason email account.
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor (see <https://ds.gmu.edu/>).
- Students must silence all sound emitting devices during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

#### *Campus Resources*

- Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/>.
- For information on student support resources on campus, see <https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus>

### **Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking:**

As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Responsible Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730 or emailing [titleix@gmu.edu](mailto:titleix@gmu.edu).

**For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/>.**