Certified Substance Abuse Counselor (CSAC) Requirements

A Certified Substance Abuse Counselor must have education at the bachelor’s level or higher. Additionally, the candidate must have 220 hours of didactic education in substance abuse and 180 hours of experiential tasks. Didactic education must include at least twenty hours of group counseling and twenty hours of treatment planning and research. It must include at least ten hours in each of the following: human behavior dynamics, substance abuse signs and symptoms, case management and continuum of care, relapse prevention and recovery process, treatment approaches, group dynamics, support groups, and adjunctive treatment, crisis intervention, professional identity and ethics.

The 400 required education/training hours may be done through an accredited school or a Board-approved integrated program. The Board may approve individualized programs consisting of seminars and workshops. The Board notes that individuals who take classes as part of a personal treatment program may not credit them.

The trainee must accrue 2,000 hours of experience. This must include at least 100 hours of supervision; up to 50 may take place in a group setting. A candidate will take the Certified Substance Abuse Counselor Examination through the NBCC. The Board will communicate approval to the NBCC. At this point, the candidate will receive registration information; a study guide will also be provided. Examinations are offered twice a year, in April and October.

Community College Training Providers

Southwest Virginia Community College

http://sw.edu/catalogs/substance-abuse-rehabilitation-counselor/

Southwest Virginia Community College currently offers the Certificate for Substance Abuse Rehabilitation Counselor. This college is located in Cedar Bluff, Virginia but offers all courses online. Courses begin in August, but check in with the college about new start dates throughout the semester. Scholarships are available.

Contact Information: Cathy Smith-Cox, Dean of Humanities, Social Science, Natural Science, Mathematics, Health Care Technology, Cathy.Smith-Cox@sw.edu, 276-964-7340

Northern Virginia Community College


Northern Virginia Community College offers the Certificate for Substance Abuse Rehabilitation Counselor. The college has multiple campuses in Northern Virginia with most courses taught at the Alexandria Campus. These courses are taught in the evening and some courses are taught in hybrid form which means the class meets online and in the classroom.

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