MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE
STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS ADVISING GUIDE:
Human Services Program

The Human Services Major at MCC strives to prepare students for career employment in a variety of mental health, developmental disabilities and human service settings as direct care workers, as well as for transfer to bachelors degree programs. The curriculum balances both an academic and experiential learning approach, exposing the student to the history and function of human service programs and positions, current issues, services and modalities in the field, as well as courses which emphasize helping skills. Students who successfully complete the program will become knowledgeable about the many different populations served in human services, understand the opportunities in the field and become skillful in being able to enter the workforce as a direct care worker.

In addition, many students will be able to transfer on to pursue a bachelors degree, most notably in mental health, human services and social work. Emphasis is placed on oral and written communications skills, group work, critical thinking, self-awareness and development, service in the community, as well as interpersonal skill building and understanding of multicultural issues necessary for working with diverse populations. The program's faculty brings many years of professional job-related experience to the classroom. Several courses in the program offer the opportunity for students to learn while being in the community, especially through Service-Learning and a required field placement experience. Students have their choice of a **Career Option** or a **Transfer Option in Human Services**.

This advising guide includes information that will help you to explore your academic and career interests and determine whether the **Human Services Major** will support your long-term goals.

EXPLORE YOUR OPTIONS WITH ACADEMIC ADVISING

Throughout each semester, meet with your advisor so that he/she can guide you through a self-exploration process that will help you identify your academic and career interests.

Beginning of Semester:

___ Schedule an appointment to meet with your academic advisor during the first few weeks to discuss future plans and how a Human Services Degree can help you achieve your goals.

___ Explore your personal interests by completing Focus2, an online career assessment tool: https://www.middlesex.mass.edu/careerservices/focus2.aspx

Mid-Semester:

___ Schedule an appointment with academic advisor review your academic progress, Focus2 results and create an academic plan in Degree Works.

Before Semester Ends:

___ Schedule an appointment to discuss and register for the classes you will take the following semester. (Early November for spring, Early April for fall and summer)

___ Visit the Academic Career & Transfer Center or call 1-800-818-3434 to schedule an appointment.

INSIDE THIS GUIDE

- **Exploring Your Options**
- **Personality Inventory**
- **Career Path**
- **Transfer Path**

HUMAN SERVICES PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Graduates of the program are prepared to:

- Demonstrate basic counseling skills and describe the foundations of counseling theory;

CONT. NEXT PAGE

Sponsored by the Title III grant: *Strategies for Success: Increasing Achievement, Persistence, Retention and Engagement, 2008-2013.*

HUMAN SERVICES PROGRAM OUTCOMES (CONT.)

- Discuss the theory of human services, the current operation of the service system, and major issues facing human services in the United States;
- Define career options in human services and demonstrate the significant differences in prevention and treatment programs serving various populations;
- Demonstrate ability to work with diverse populations;
- Explain and discuss fundamental psychological concepts;
- Examine the principles and concepts of society's social problems and develop and analyze strategies for change;
- Discuss and demonstrate group process and inter-personal relations as it applies in the work place and for clinical use in the field;
- Use engineering assumptions and mathematics for problem solving;
- Apply the Direct Support Skill Standards in their coursework and field work;
- Develop research and writing skills, particularly those needed for accurate record keeping.

HUMAN SERVICES SELF-ASSESSMENT

Answer true or false to the following statements:

#	QUESTION	TRUE	FALSE
1.	I see myself as a natural helper.		
2.	I often go out of my way to help others in distress.		
3.	People close to me have remarked how easy it is for them to talk to me.		
4.	It is fairly easy for me to have compassion for another person.		
5.	I enjoy working with people more than making things or working with technology.		
6.	I can be a team player and can work well in groups.		
7.	I am able to think on my feet and make good decisions under pressure.		
8.	I am open-minded.		
9.	I normally take the initiative to learn about individuals or conditions which are new to me.		
10.	I have strong skills in observing others' verbal and non-verbal gestures.		
11.	I am able to record experiences accurately.		
12.	I am confident I can assist others in reaching their goals.		
13.	I am respectful of others' personal issues and do not take over or give advice inappropriately.		
14.	I am willing to acknowledge areas of weakness and work to strengthen them.		
15.	I am more interested in job satisfaction than monetary compensation in my work.		
16.	I am able to recognize and take care of my emotional, physical and social needs in a healthy way and can teach self-care skills to others.		
17.	I am able to communicate my thoughts and feelings effectively, ask questions clearly and directly and give effective feedback to others.		
18.	Being honest and authentic is important to me.		
19.	I can see the importance of not overly reacting in an emotional way to personal problems.		
20.	I am generally an optimistic person and see the potential in myself and others.		

The more true responses you have designated, the greater potential you are for this field of studies and subsequent work in the human services.

CONT. NEXT PAGE

IS THE HUMAN SERVICES MAJOR THE RIGHT FIT FOR ME?

Think about the following abilities and skills that human services professionals possess:

- **Interpersonal and communication skills:**
  Whether you are interested in working with the elderly, children, adolescents or those with psychiatric conditions or developmental disabilities, interpersonal and communication skills are essential. You will need to be able to develop skills to work with and communicate with people of very diverse backgrounds. It is essential that the human service worker be able to develop an effective relationship with clients to help them in reaching their individual goals. Work in the field can be challenging and even uncertain at times, and you will need to have the ability to communicate well under pressure. Human service workers need strong interpersonal skills to be able to effectively work with clients, their families and co-workers. Further, written communication skills are needed in writing up case notes, incidence and progress reports.

- **Openness to life-long learning and becoming culturally competent:**
  Human service workers are introduced to new situations and issues frequently. Further, it is likely they will be working with individuals from a variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds which will require the worker to learn more about the values and norms of that group to be able to work more effectively with them; to become culturally competent. Many times they will be exposed to a new disorder or treatment regime and will need to do research and/or additional training to be able to implement best practices with that individual given their treatment goals. Human service workers will be challenged to remain open to all new changes in the field and the possibilities of assuming new and multiple roles, necessitating further training and education at times.

- **Ability to work under pressure and handle stress:**
  It is critical that every human services professional has the ability to handle stress and develop effective coping skills. Human services professionals regularly handle individuals with serious and challenging conditions and face difficult situations, some involving danger to self and others. A career in human services can be extremely stressful, and the professionals in the field need to find healthy and successful ways in which to deal with the inherent stress of the career. Further, the greater self-awareness and effective coping skills developed, the more helpful they can be to their clients as they act as positive role models and can be teachers and mentors.

- **Strong sense of ethics:**
  Ethics are essential in any human services career. A good human services professional needs to develop an ethically sound view of his/her role in the overall system. Issues such as confidentiality, boundaries, being aware of ethical guidelines in that specific role and agency, sense of safety and acting in the best interest of the client, care of self and the individual being served are essential. The integrity of your work and the decisions that you make on the job are critical to establishing an effective relationship with the client, their family and fellow staff members.

- **Critical thinking and problem solving skills:**
  Ethics are essential in any human services career. A good human services professional needs to develop an

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ethically sound view of his/her role in the overall system. Issues such as confidentiality, boundaries, being aware of ethical guidelines in that specific role and agency, sense of safety and acting in the best interest of the client, care of self and the individual being served are essential. The integrity of your work and the decisions that you make on the job are critical to establishing an effective relationship with the client, their family and fellow staff members.

- **Overall health and well-being:**
  All human services professionals should have a reasonable amount of physical fitness and psychological well-being. Since stress is common in the helping professions, it is important that human services professionals pay attention to their overall health and well-being. Self-care is essential and finding new and different ways of maintain good overall health is necessary to be able to help others.

- **Good computer and technical skills:**
  Computers are common in human services today. A good human services professional should have good computer and technical skills. You will have to use computers and other devices to review a person's case history, understand specific disorders and treatment plans, write progress notes, research new areas of treatment and available resources, and perform other tasks necessary for the job.

THE CAREER PATH

The Career Path prepares graduates to work in a variety of settings, including community residences for individuals with developmental disabilities or psychiatric needs, clubhouses, substance abuse facilities, elderly care programs, youth residences and rehabilitation services. Graduates will have been exposed to the history and present landscape of human services, the variety of populations served, numerous entry level direct care positions, and opportunities to practice and develop communication and counseling skills, group leadership skills, and courses in areas where they may work in the future. Students will have opportunities to practice these skills by working in the field via service learning options and a required field placement seminar. Graduates can expect to be employed in entry-level direct care worker positions.

Career Planning Activities:

___ Work with advisor to discuss *MassTransfer*, Articulations and transfer agreements

___ Visit your selected campuses in person. Every college looks good online or in a glossy photo, but you can get a better feel when you visit

___ Meet with transfer counselor to identify transfer scholarships

___ Research admissions requirements and deadlines at 4-year colleges and universities

MCC ADVISING RESOURCES

Career Services:
https://www.middlesex.mass.edu/careerservices

Transfer Services:
https://www.middlesex.mass.edu/transfer

***MassTransfer*:**
https://www.middlesex.mass.edu/transfer/masstransfer.aspx

Financial Aid:
https://www.middlesex.mass.edu/financialaid

Foundation Scholarships:
https://www.middlesex.mass.edu/foundation/scholarships

College Board Match Maker:
https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search

CONT. NEXT PAGE

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THE TRANSFER PATH

Students are able to develop a strong foundation in human services and also study relevant topics in psychology and sociology, such as Abnormal Psychology, Child or Adolescent Psychology, Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, Sociology of the Family and Positive Psychology. The curriculum emphasizes both an academic and practical approach, providing students with general education courses and specific courses in human services. A number of the human services courses will prepare the graduate to enter the field as a beginning practitioner, especially those in Counseling Skills and Dynamics of Interpersonal Relations. The capstone course in Field Placement and Seminar allows the student to join a human services agency and practice the skills they have been learning with a population they have considered serving. Academic courses emphasize oral, written and group communications, as well as interpersonal skill-building and understanding of the multicultural issues necessary for working with diverse populations. This program qualifies for *MassTransfer*, which guarantees credit transfer to Massachusetts state universities and the University of Massachusetts.

Transfer Planning Activities:

___ Work with Advisor to discuss *MassTransfer,* articulations and transfer agreements

___ Visit your selected campus in person. Every college looks good online or in a glossy photo but you can get a better feel when you visit

___ Meet with transfer counselor to identify transfer scholarships

___ Research admissions requirements and deadlines at 4-year colleges and universities

Schools linked to the Human Services major:

UMass Boston
UMass Lowell
Salem State University
Fitchburg State University