Introduction:

Welcome to Locating Counseling Field Experience Sites with Walden Career Services. Are you actively searching for a field site to complete your master’s in clinical mental health counseling program requirements? Unsure of where to begin? In this program, we will provide you tools to get started.

To be fully prepared before you research potential sites, ask yourself these important questions:

- First, are you familiar with your Field Experience requirements and timelines? If not, visit the School of Counseling Field Experience to learn more.
- Second, have you maximized the resources offered by the Career Services Center? If not, visit the Career Services Resources for Field Experience page to gain the skills you need to succeed.
- Finally, have you strengthened your cover letter and resume, and created a career portfolio to showcase artifacts of your work? If not, create an account on OptimalResume and get started today!
After you check all three boxes, you are ready to start locating potential sites!

A helpful tool to find sites is the Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator. This tool allows you to search for a variety of services in your area and see them on an interactive map. It was created by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and allows searchers to find treatment centers based on their needs, such as: substance abuse, mental health, physicians, and veteran care.

Another helpful tool is Psychology Today’s “Find a Therapist” search, which shows photos, credentials, biographical, and contact information of therapists at multiple centers and facilities. It is nice for people searching for a therapist in that they can find someone they may be able to relate to. For field searches, this tool helps in that you can ensure that the person you are looking to work with has the needed credentials.

A different way to search for sites is to review accrediting groups to see what organizations are accredited through them. Each accrediting body has specific criteria they look for, so if a site you are considering is not accredited by that particular group, do not discount them right away. The Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities is an international accrediting body that focuses on quality improvement. The multitude of programs they work with include Aging Services, Behavioral Health, Child and Youth Services, and (Durable Medical Equipment, Prosthetics, Orthotics, and Supplies), Employment and Community Services, Medical Rehabilitation, Opioid Treatment Programs, and Vision Rehabilitation Services.
The Council on Accreditation accredits child welfare, behavioral health, and community-based social services. You can search for accredited organizations by name, state, or focus.

The Joint Commission – Quality Check Search allows you to determine if sites have earned the Gold Seal of Approval. The Joint Commission awards the Gold Seal in recognition that the organization is dedicated to patient safety. You can review a report stating the services that an organization offers, as well as its location.

Finally, another great place to look is directly on the Central Office of Field Experience list. This list covers sites where previous Walden students have completed their Field Experience. Review the Counseling list first, but also look at the list for other Walden programs as well, as there may be opportunities at those sites for counseling students. To view these lists, you will need your myWalden credentials. If you no longer have access to your credentials, please contact socmafieldexperience@mail.waldenu.edu for assistance.

Now that we’ve explored search sites and the site list, let’s discuss a few networking strategies that can further expand your search.

Networking is one of the key strategies for finding a field experience site, as well as a job in the future. Talk to the people you know. What have they heard about different counselors? What are their reputations? You may find that a friend knows a counselor who may be willing to work with you. Having those connections can help build a relationship before you even reach out and inquire about an opportunity.
Volunteering is another great way to build relationships. If you are able to volunteer in your field, such as with a crisis hotline, you will find others who have similar interests as you, or have connections in the field. You will also gain valuable experience that you can highlight on your resume!

If you are a person of faith, meet with your clergy to see who they refer members to for counseling. They may be able to make an introduction for you!

With professional associations it is not always enough to simply join. To truly network within a professional association, such as American Counseling Association, you will need to find a way to get involved. See if your local or regional chapter offers conferences, workshops, or networking events.

There are a variety of potential sites that may not come to your mind right away. Here we have some ideas that you may not have considered. If you have specific questions about how these sites would fit into your particular program, please reach out to the School of Counseling Field Experience office.

If you have exhausted your local options, or if you do not have potential sites near you, you may need to consider expanding your search. Can you drive an extra 10 or 20 minutes to your site?

Maximize each opportunity by being prepared. Are your resume and cover letter ready? Do you have a list of potential questions to ask each site? Do you have the contact information and
requirements from the Field Experience office? Is your interview outfit ready to go? Have everything ready before you start reaching out to field sites.

It is extremely important to keep a record of what field sites you apply to and who you speak with. This can help you remember where you have applied and when. It will also help you remember who you speak to, so you can follow up with them directly.

For more tips on finding field sites, resumes and cover letter resources, online and offline networking strategies, and interviewing skills, visit the Career Services Resources for Field Experience page.

The Career Services Center also offers resources organized by college. Students can find professional associations, job opportunity links, and LinkedIn groups that are relevant to their field of study.

We invite you to register on OptimalResume with your Walden credentials to access custom resume, cover letter, and career portfolio templates for Counseling Field Experience.

Finally, for questions related to the Field Experience process or requirements, visit the School of Counseling Field Experience page or contact your Field Experience Coordinator.