

CLINICAL TRAINING & ACADEMIC COURSE CHANGES

Information Session — May 2026

Counseling Department

The Family Institute at Northwestern University



AGENDA



- Clinical Training Changes Overview
- The New Pre-Practicum Course
- Pre-Practicum Course Content & Delivery
- Clinical Training: Timeline
- Clinical Training: What's Changing/ What's NOT Changing
- Site Requirements & Hours
- Academic Curriculum Changes
- Course Renaming & New Courses
- What this means for you

CLINICAL TRAINING CHANGES OVERVIEW



PRACTICUM RENAMING

Practicum-1 becomes
Pre-Practicum

Practicum-2 becomes
Practicum-1

Practicum-3 becomes
Practicum-2



NEW PRE-PRACTICUM COURSE

A new preparatory course
taken BEFORE starting
client work at sites.

Ensures clinical training
readiness.



2-QUARTER PRACTICUM

Starting Fall 2026

Students take:
Pre-Practicum

Practicum in CMHC I
Practicum in CMHC II

Course Delivery

- Asynchronous course with 2 Live Sessions
 - Live Sessions: Week 3 and Week 8
 - Mondays 10:00 – 12:00 CDT
 - Live sessions hosted by Clinical Training Director

Course Requirements

- Asynchronous reflection prompts
- Quizzes
- Certifications (HIPAA, CALM, PFA)
- Licensure scavenger hunt

ABOUT THE PRE- PRACTICUM COURSE

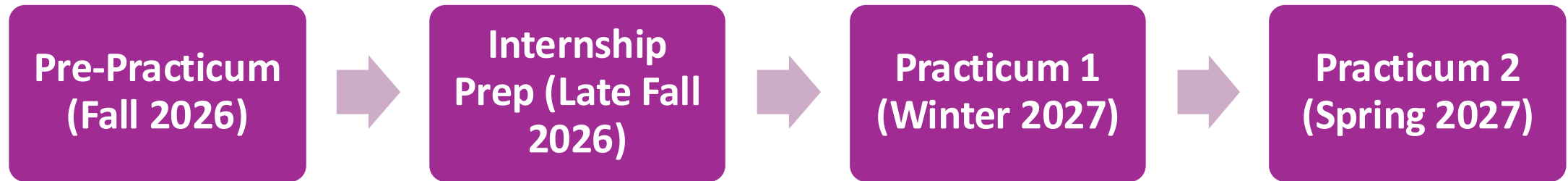
Starting Fall 2026

PRE-PRACTICUM COURSE CONTENT

Goal: Prepare students for clinical training and self-reflective practice

- ✓ Clinical Training Information & Fieldwork Handbook
- ✓ Introduction to Self-Reflective Practice (RPS prep)
- ✓ Boundaries & Communication with Clients
- ✓ Professional Disclosure Statements
- ✓ Legal, Ethics & Clinical Documentation
- ✓ State Licensure Processes
- ✓ HIPAA Training & Certification
- ✓ CALM Suicide Intervention Certification
- ✓ Psychological First Aid (PFA) Certification
- ✓ Telemental Health Best Practices
- ✓ Managing Grievances & Conflict Resolution
- ✓ All About Supervision

CLINICAL TRAINING TIMELINE



Key Dates

Fall 2026: Pre-Practicum in CMHC launches as a pre-requisite

Winter 2027: Practicum begins as a 2-quarter experience (Practicum in CMHC I)

Spring 2027: Practicum in CMHC II completes the clinical practicum sequence

SUPERVISION DETAILS

WHAT'S NOT CHANGING

- Internship: Nothing is changing with the internship sequence. All internship requirements remain the same.
- CCS: Clinical Consultation and Supervision remains unchanged throughout the clinical training experience.

WHAT IS CHANGING

- TRIADIC SUPERVISION: Triadic will take place over 2 terms instead of 3.
- RPS : Reflective Practitioner Supervision will be reduced to 2 terms instead of 3. The format and expectations WILL be the same.

PRACTICUM: CHANGES

Starting Fall 2026

Hours & Structure

- **Practicum will be a 2-quarter experience**
- **Hour requirement stays the same:**
 - 200 total hours
 - 50 direct client hours
 - 1 hr/week individual/triadic site supervision
 - 2 hrs/week RPS
- **Start Date:**
 - *Previously:* Rolling start dates in Fall
 - *Going forward:* First day of Practicum 1 in Winter

Expected Site Activity

- **9–16 hours at the site per week**
(Previously 6–16 hours/week)
- **3–4 client sessions per week**
(Previously 2–3 sessions/week)

Internship Orientation Activities

- Begins the quarter prior to Practicum
- Continues through Pre-Practicum

ACADEMIC CURRICULUM CHANGES

New courses, renamed courses, and curriculum sequencing

NEW COURSE

Foundations of Clinical Mental Health Counseling

Replaces Professional Topics

Starts Fall 2026

Course Description

This course introduces students to the profession of clinical mental health counseling and the development of counselor professional identity. Students will examine the historical, philosophical, and empirical foundations of the field, as well as the roles and functions of mental health counselors across contemporary practice settings.

Who Takes This Course?

Students who are Pre-Clinical Training or in Practicum:

Required: information is relevant to early program experience

Students in internship: Optional: *may* take as a 3rd elective but **not required**

Professional Topics: Will no longer be offered after Spring 2026

COURSE RENAMING & UPDATES

Research Methods

→ Research Methods and Program Evaluation

Now includes program evaluation content to align with 2024 CACREP standards. Course covers qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods research designs, basic statistics, needs assessment, and program evaluation with focus on evidence-based interventions.

Assignments are no longer connected to capstone

COUN 406

Methods 3

→ Skills for Outreach, Prevention, and Intervention

Previously titled "Skills for Social Justice Advocacy, Outreach, and Prevention." The revised title better reflects the course content and scope of clinical practice.

COUN 480

CURRICULUM PLANS & SEQUENCING

- **Prescribed Course Sequence**

- Students will follow a revised course sequence with pre-requisites to progress through the curriculum.

- **Curriculum Plans at Entry**

- Upon entry, students complete a curriculum plan designed to pace them through the program, accounting for pre-requisite skills, knowledge, and state licensure requirements.

- **Professional Topics**

- This course will no longer be offered. It is replaced by the ***new*** Foundations course.

SUPPORT FOR CURRENT STUDENTS



Updated Curriculum Plans

Curriculum plans will be updated and managed for all current students to ensure you meet all requirements during the transition.



Your Support Team

All students will be supported through these changes via program leadership, student success, and faculty advisors.

IMMERSION REQUIREMENTS

CACREP Policy A.2.e requires programs to assess students' dispositions and skills live at least twice during the program.

1 Foundations Immersion

- Replaces New Student Immersion (online) and Orientation (on-ground)
- Associated with the Foundations course
- **Must occur prior to Practicum**

2 Group Dynamics Immersion

- Remains as the 2nd required immersion
- Associated with Group Counseling course
- Updated to include assessment of group counseling skills and CMHC dispositions

*Note: Orientation will now be **online and asynchronous** for **both** online and on-ground delivery methods.*

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

New requirements take effect Fall 2026 and beyond | Total course credits are NOT changing

Foundations of CMHC — Starting Fall 2026

New Students & Pre-Clinical Training / Practicum Students

Required to take Foundations of CMHC

This course prepares you for clinical training and replaces Professional Topics.

All Other Current Students

Can take Foundations as an elective or choose from:

- Human Sexuality
- Counseling Children and Adolescents
- Play Therapy Methods
- CBT
- Psychopharmacology

UPCOMING INFORMATION SESSIONS

Monthly sessions to cover changes in greater detail. Dates and Zoom info will be emailed.

MAY

Clinical Training
& Academic Courses

JUNE

Capstone Sunset
& Portfolio Requirement

JULY

Immersions

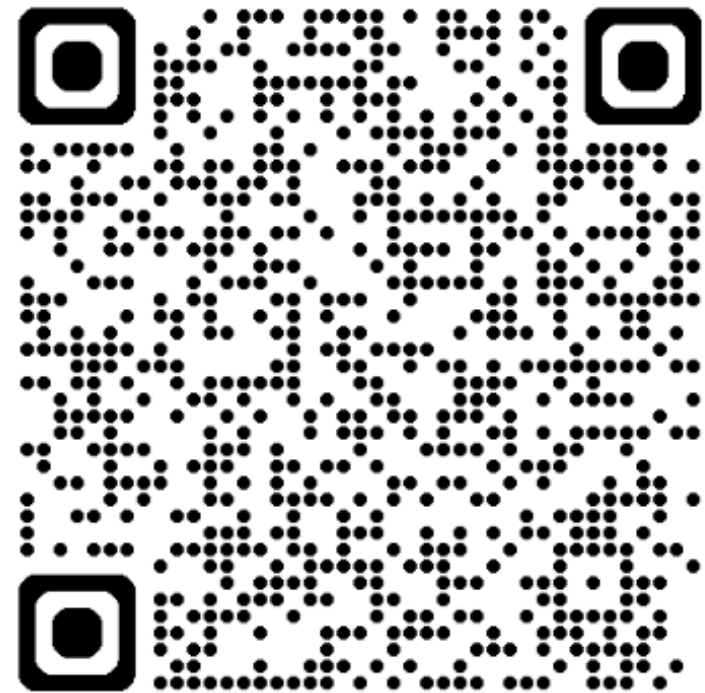
AUG

Curriculum Planning
& FAQs

A specific FAQ document will be shared. A feedback/question form is available for ongoing questions.

7. FAQ & ANY ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

QR code to FAQ
document &
where to ask a
question



QUESTIONS?

*Thank you for your engagement and flexibility
as we build an even stronger program together.*