

CONSIDER A CAREER IN SUBSTANCE USE COUNSELING

Q&A: TANYA MIDDLETON

Tanya shares her experience and insight as a professional in the rewarding, yet challenging field of substance use counseling.

by Daniela Vranesovic, LPCC-S

How did you come to work with this population?

"My first exposure was during internship. The classes weren't offered when I got my master's degree so it was up to you to clinically get the experience. From there, I enjoyed the work. I saw the intersection of mental health and substance use so I stayed within the field."

What do you think is the biggest misconception about working with substance use disorder clients?

"One of the biggest misconceptions is that the clients don't want help. No one wants to wake up and say, 'I want to be addicted to this'. They just don't have the recourse or willingness to go about getting healthy."

Can you identify personal and/or professional attributes important for success in this field?

"You must have a desire for one...the work can be hard if you personalize it. So, knowing your role...boundaries. Resiliency to push through, patience, and the desire to keep going, no matter what. I believe this is both a personal and professional attribute."

Want to learn more? Consider joining the Ohio Substance Use Disorder Professionals (OSUDP) group. OSUDP is a special interest group of OCA dedicated to awareness, advocacy, and support for individuals with substance use disorders. Contact Daniela, OSUDP Secretary, at dvranesec@gmail.com for more information.



"Success for me in this field is giving clients the tools to wake up one day and not use. It's seeing these individuals continuing to get up and fight."

Tanya Middleton, Ph.D., LPCC-S, LICDC, SAP is Clinical Assistant Professor and Director of Field Placement of the CMHC program at the Ohio State University. She is Clinical Director/Proprietor of Solstice Counseling & Consultation Services LLC in South Euclid, Ohio. In her free time, Tanya enjoys biking, reading, cooking, and spending time with her family.

How has this work contributed your growth as a clinician?

"It has really made me understand the role of environmental factors that can impact successes and outcome. We can't just look at the person but need to look at where they are living, who is in their social support network. There is a holistic component. It gave me the ability to look at the whole person more than what I was doing before."

What do you enjoy most about your work with this population?

"I like the challenge. It presents something different and unique. Being able to help the clients recognize that they are dealing with something bigger than themselves."