

A2SPIRE: Addictions Attitudes, Screening, Prevention, Intervention, Referral, and Empathy

This project involves designing and implementing a comprehensive set of online instructional modules to educate students in the University of Florida's (UF) counselor education program in substance use disorder (SUD) prevention and intervention. Online modules will be infused throughout clinical mental health; marriage, couple, and family; and school counseling training programs, and are designed to scaffold learning for counseling practitioners appropriate to screening, referring, assessing, and treating individuals with problematic substance use and SUD in school and clinical settings. Professional counselors are frequently service providers, and work across varied treatment settings that are critical to early identification, referral, and treatment of SUD. The 12 online modules are organized within three units: screening, assessment, and treatment. The overarching goals of Project Counselors A2SPIRE are to increase the capacity of the UF Counselor Education (CE) Program to educate future counseling professionals in SUD; increase the number of trained counseling professionals to assess, refer, and treat SUD using evidence-based treatment approaches; increase counseling students' competencies in this area; and decrease stigma among counseling professionals towards individuals with problematic substance use and SUD. Project A2SPIRE personnel will seek to increase the program's capacity for educating counseling professionals in this area by developing, implementing, and evaluating the online SUD curriculum, and then using performance data to refine the curriculum. Students will report the usefulness of the training to continuously improve the online modules. Project A2SPIRE will train at least 140 counseling students during the two-year grant period, and build a sustainability plan to expand the online training post-funding. The online training format will support sustainability of the program to include continuous training for counselors, as well as other counseling-related professionals. Lastly, assessment throughout the implementation and evaluation of the Project A2SPIRE curriculum will guide the creation of test items that project staff will provide to committees responsible for revising certification and licensure test items, and advocate for their use in further revisions of examinations.