

# Genetic Counseling

## Background

Genetic counseling is useful for planning pregnancy, during pregnancy, caring for children, and managing one's health. Genetic counselors are trained to educate a prospective parent about genetic risks, pros and cons of genetic testing, reproductive risks, and options for screening related to diseases with potentially inherited or genetic causes. They may provide personalized help patients may need as they make decisions about their genetic health. They also assess the psychological implication of risk notification and the need for psychological counseling with the test results.

**What can I expect to make in this career?** According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Handbook the 2020 median pay for a genetic counselor \$85,700.

**What classes at GVSU might help me in my career?** Discuss with your advisor which courses would best serve your career goals.

- PSY 367 Health Psychology
- PSY 303 Adult Psychopathology; PSY 452 Theories of Counseling
- BIO 355 Human Genetics (and possibly other Genetics courses)
- STA 215 Intro Applied Statistics; PSY 300 Research Methods

**What additional education is required?** According to the NSGC, many genetic counselors first pursue a bachelor's degree that includes courses in genetics, biochemistry, psychology, and statistics. Training to become a genetic counselor involves earning a master's degree in an accredited program. These programs are usually 2 years in length.

**What are applicable skills for this career?** Communication, compassion, critical-thinking, and decision-making skills are all important for those working in this career field.

**Employer Possibilities:** With a career in genetic counseling you can work in many different settings. For instance, one may be able to work in hospitals, offices of physicians, colleges/universities, medical/diagnostic laboratories, or be self-employed.

### Sources/More Info:

<https://dictionary.apa.org/genetic-counseling>

[https://www.cdc.gov/genomics/gtesting/genetic\\_counseling.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/genomics/gtesting/genetic_counseling.htm)

<https://www.aboutgeneticcounselors.org/Who-Are-Genetic-Counselors/What-Genetic-Counselors-Do>

<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/genetic-counselors.htm#tab-1>