Professional Counseling in Memphis

by: Dr. Kevin Shelby

Memphis, Tennessee is a city with a rich history. It has a story, characterized by diversity, struggle, grit, and pride. It’s the home of Elvis, Beale Street, Rendezvous ribs, and the mighty Mississippi. Memphis is the place where historic battles were fought and pivotal moments in the Civil Rights movement happened. The great people of this city are resilient and strong, revealing a character that propels them forward with tenacity and hope. This is a city full of compassion and warmth, a place where the smiles are as genuine as the people who wear them.

With all of the great architecture, museums, music, restaurants, Broadway performances, sports teams, and many other wonderful things, Memphis has its deficits as well, and its story continues to be shaped by the landscape of its struggles, which include childhood poverty, children in foster care, physical and mental health difficulties. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, there is a shortage of workers capable of meeting the needs of those suffering from mental health issues in Memphis (Tennessean). In a city with so much to offer and yet so many challenges, Memphis is in tremendous need of people who are willing to help change the trajectory of mental health in this great city.

Harding School of Theology (HST) has been equipping ministers and missionaries to expand the kingdom locally and abroad since 1958. For the past 24 years, under the leadership of Dr. Ed Gray, students have received counseling training that is recognized today as some of the most effective education and preparation offered in the city of Memphis.

As state licensure boards for counseling began to focus more on standardized processes for licensing counselors, accreditation became increasingly important for counselor education training. In response to those demands, in 2017 the counseling program on the Memphis site became a part of Harding University’s Professional Counseling: Clinical and School program, which is accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP). This change allowed the Memphis site to acquire the very prestigious CACREP accreditation and join the faculty in Searcy and Rogers, Arkansas to create one of the best counseling training programs in the country. We are proud to be a part of a tremendous team of people who love the Lord, their students, and the work of reaching the hurting.

Today, on the Memphis campus, we have a clinic supervised by Dr. Kevin Shelby that serves our community staffed by our student therapists who are in their final year of school. We utilize cutting edge technology to improve multisite connection between faculty members and students and to aid distance students in connecting to campus when needed. We host professional meetings once a month and provide Continuing Education credit to local providers. Our students do internships at local hospitals, community mental health agencies, local nonprofits, and private practice counseling centers. The needs are great, and we are doing our part to answer the call. We are excited about the road ahead as we grow our program in Professional Counseling and expand our footprint in Memphis and throughout the world.
1) Where were you born? Nsawam in the Eastern region of Ghana

2) When you were a child, what did you want to be when you grew up? A preacher and a world traveler.

3) Siblings: Five siblings (2 boys, 4 girls) I’m the second boy who paved the way for the girls.


5) Spouse: Olivia Okai

6) Children: Bestynna (19 – Sophomore at Harding), Beslynn (15 y/o in 10th grade, Searcy High), and Bennisa (13 y/o in 8th grade, Ahlf Junior)

7) Somewhere you would like to visit and why? Israel, Canada, and Australia

8) If you could have dinner with anyone, who would it be and why? A blind teacher who pleaded for me to be enrolled in the 7th grade.

9) Something not many people know about you: I’m good at gold refining, sewing lady’s dresses and in making wedding and engagement rings.

10) Favorite color: Gray

11) Favorite movie: Titan-ic

12) Favorite sport and/or team: Soccer and boxing

13) Favorite thing about Searcy: Christmas parade and fireworks on July 4th.

14) Favorite book (other than the Bible): Romeo and Juliet

15) How long have you been teaching at Harding? Since January 2018

16) Biggest challenge or obstacle: Creating the time to complete my first book for publication. The book is titled: “The Stimulus Package for Your Marriage.”

17) Proudest moment or accomplishment: Baptizing my oldest daughter at age 12 as a birthday request.

18) Person who had the biggest impact on your life and why? Mr. & Mrs. Brackett for supporting me whilst I was a student at Harding and for being a great mentor of faith to me.

19) Favorite scripture: "Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will." Romans 12:1-2

20) Words of wisdom for our students: Edmund Burke said, “The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing.” Following from this quote, I want to advise that your time at Harding is an opportunity to join a “community of good men” who are passionate about doing a great deal of good for society. Count yourself as an inducted member of this great community of good men to make a lasting positive impression in the world.
Alumni Spotlight—Michael Jones

My name is Michael Jones, Ed. S., LPC-S, NCC, BC-TMH. I received my Ed.S. from the professional counseling program in July 2010. I have been married to my wife, Dana, for 20 years. We have been blessed with two daughters, Mikayla (14) and Emily (11). We have lived in Searcy for 10 years now.

My journey as a counselor began in 2003. I worked for an intensive outpatient program in Canton, Ohio for individuals with substance abuse issues. This was my first experience in mental health. Since that time, I have worked in an acute psychiatric hospital setting, outpatient clinical mental health counseling, school-based counseling, community mental health, and currently run a private practice. My specialty areas of counseling have focused on utilizing technology in counseling/supervision, working with military families, counseling troubled teens, and multicultural issues.

During my time at Harding, it was impressed upon me to be active in professional organizations, be an active voice of influence in the mental health field, and continue my education. In 2013, I was in the first group ever to receive a $20,000 Doctoral Minority Fellowship from the National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC). This experience gave me the opportunity to meet leaders in the counseling field and be influenced to step into leadership roles. From 2015-2018, I was the president of the Arkansas Association of Counselor Education and Supervision (ArACES) and am the current president-elect of the Arkansas Counseling Association (ArCA). I am also heavily involved with the Southern Association of Counselor Education and Supervision (SACES). This organization recognized me as an “Emerging Leader” in 2014.

Since my graduation from Harding University, I have presented over 25 times at state, regional, and national professional counseling conferences. I have co-authored a book chapter on social justice, authored a curriculum on telemental health counseling, and currently completing my dissertation for my Ph.D. in counselor education and supervision from Regent University. I currently work as a senior instructor of counseling for Messiah College.

To say that Harding University has been an influential part of my career growth would be a vast understatement. I will forever be indebted to the professors there who mentored and supported me in my professional development. I am thankful for the instruction I received at Harding and know that I would not be in any of my current positions if it were not for the education I received in the professional counseling program. I am proud to be an alum of this excellent counseling program!
Vivian Julianna McLeod was born to alumna, Estee McLeod, on September 21, 2018. She was 8lbs 1oz and 20” long.

Callie Smith was born to alumna, Mae Kellie Smith, on September 19, 2018. She was 8lbs 5 oz and 21” long.

Vivian Julianna McLeod was born to alumna, Estee McLeod, on September 21, 2018. She was 8lbs 1oz and 20” long.

Congratulations, Michael Jones
Outstanding Alumnus 2018!
Spring 2019 Calendar

Counseling New Student Orientation ..................................................... January 10
Classes Begin .................................................................................. January 14
MLK Day (no classes) ................................................................. January 21
Spring Break .................................................................................. March 11 - March 15
Spring Sing ..................................................................................... April 18 - 20
Final Exams ................................................................................... May 6 - 10
Commencement ............................................................................. May 11
Extended Summer Session Begins .............................................. May 13
Memorial Day (no classes) ........................................................... May 27

The Compassion Clinic

We have our clinical resident staffed clinic, The Compassion Clinic, open to see clients from our community! We have some appointment openings for the spring. We have a wonderful play therapy room for children. We also have rooms for assessment, individuals, couples, and groups counseling. Military clients and their families are welcome! The clinic is currently open on Tuesdays from 2-8 pm. Call 501-279-5926 to schedule an appointment.

Statement of Purpose: The Compassion Clinic seeks to provide not only a state-of-the-art training clinic for clinical residents, but also an outreach mission to the communities we call home. In accordance with the values and mission of Harding University to offer the talents and skills God has blessed us with to the community as a ministry to help those that are hurting. To this end we seek to provide quality services to our clients and a quality education to our students.