

# Become a Genetic Counselor

Help your community,  
one family at a time.



national society  
of genetic  
counselors, inc.

**nsgc**



Barbara Harrison,  
Genetic Counselor

As a child, Barbara Harrison regularly went to visit her cousins, yet often they were unable to come out and play. Quickly she learned they suffered from sickle cell disease.

Despite their chronic condition, her cousins were full of life. Barbara was amazed that their parents never acted like their family was different; they simply adjusted to their situation and moved on. Inspired, Barbara became interested in genetics and how genetic conditions affect people's lives. Her hope was to give back to her community and to work in the medical field. One chance conversation with a professor is all it took to start her down the path to a career in genetic counseling.

Today, Barbara's main area of interest is recruiting students, especially those of diverse backgrounds, to the profession. As a genetic counselor, Barbara maintains her ties to the community. She educates her patients and their families about their genetic health in an effort to erase the stigmatism associated with genetic conditions.

Do you know somebody in your family who has a genetic condition? Perhaps your father is recovering from cancer, or your sister has cystic fibrosis? Maybe muscular dystrophy runs in your family, and your cousin is thinking about getting tested during her pregnancy?

*Who would they ask for help?*



Genetic counselors and physicians work together to make a difference.

# *How about you?*



Genetic counselors are advocates for their clients.

## **Become a Role Model**

Consulting with a genetic counselor is an intensely personal experience. It demands a special bond of trust and understanding – the kind of bond that comes from belonging to the same community. Unfortunately, only 3 percent of genetic counselors in the United States are African-American or Hispanic. That's not enough. You have their trust. Now, you can become a trusted resource for your community.



Add a different face to genetic counseling.

## **Help Others**

As a genetic counselor, you educate individuals and their families about the effects of genetic conditions and common diseases. By tracing family history and evaluating test results, you can identify individuals at risk. With your help, families can learn how to manage their health. Your knowledge can change lives.

## **Give Back to Your Community**

There are a variety of career settings that serve many different people. You could focus on cancer screening at a private practice. Or maybe you would prefer to counsel expectant parents at a community clinic. New and different opportunities regularly become available. Choose a path or create your own.



Take advantage of unique opportunities.

## Opportunity for Advancement

Genetic counselors earn a professional-level salary and benefit from rewarding careers. Through graduate-level courses and clinical training you will earn a highly respected Master's degree. It will also prepare you to seek professional certification and launch you into one of the most personally satisfying careers in the health sciences. As a genetic counselor, you'll change others' lives and enrich your own.



A career in genetic counseling begins with you.

## How to Prepare

Application deadlines and procedures vary. Basic requirements include:

- Bachelor's degree in biological or social sciences, or other relevant field
- Graduate Record Exam (GRE)
- Letters of recommendation
- Statement of academic and career goals
- Advocacy and/or internship experience



Become a genetic counselor after two years of training.

For more information about becoming a genetic counselor, visit our website at [www.nsgc.org](http://www.nsgc.org)