

Interview a Health Profession

The health profession I chose was a school counselor named Christina Tillery.

Christina works as a School Counselor & Doctoral Student/ Highland Springs High School & Virginia Commonwealth University

Christina's degrees include a BA in History, Master of Education in School Counseling, PhD (May 2024) Counselor Education and Supervision in education or specifically school counseling. Christina states, "It has been my personal experience in public schools that I have cherished so much and the acknowledgment that schools can be a great resource to strengthen students, families, and communities.

I am inspired by the potential of public schools and the impact that they can have if funded properly and equity issues are addressed."

I genuinely want to be a part of the movement that reimagines schooling and evokes students' change. I had always had a passion for working with young people, even when I was a teen myself. After my sophomore year as an undergrad at the College of William & Mary, I applied to the WM School of Education. My acceptance to the program helped develop me into a secondary social studies teacher. I became a middle school history teacher in Charles City County Public Schools, where I strived to be an engaged teacher by attending community events, community church services, and supporting students' activities in those four years.

As a teacher, I enjoyed teaching the content and helping students create a strong bond with history. However, I yearned to continue to build deeper relationships with students beyond the classroom, which sparked my interest in school counseling. As a school counselor, each day I can help young people take steps to be the best version of themselves academically, mentally and socially."

In her second year of teaching, she applied to the VCU's School Counseling program. She continued to teach during the day and took classes at night. It took her 2.5 years to complete the program. In the program she had to complete coursework on counseling, mental health, and school counseling. Additionally, she had to complete a practicum and internship prior to graduation. Basic roles and responsibilities Christina has is Address students' academic, mental, and social needs through individual or group counseling. Collaborate with stakeholders (students, teachers, admin, parents/families, community partnerships). She served on various committees focused on student support and achievement. She has also been helping students reach their personal definition of success whether it's passing a class, getting a job, graduating etc. is her favorite part of her job. The most surprising aspect of her career is, how much the mental health of children and teens are not taken into consideration by educational leaders and politicians. Christina believes that addressing students mental health needs during the pandemic. Currently understaffed.

The advice my health professional gives is to “Research all of the wonderful subfields of Health professions. Network with those currently in the field. Find a mentor.”

