

Just the Basics
of the
Counseling
Master's Project*

Graduate Counseling Program
Kalmanovitz School of Education
Saint Mary's College of California

2011 - 2012

(with directions for submitting to ProQuest)
(Based on *APA Publication Manual, 6th ed., 2010*)

*(Revised and abbreviated, with elements from previous versions, material written by Dr. Victoria Courtney, Dr. Colette Fleuridas, and Dr. Suzy Thomas, excerpts from the *KSOE Guidelines for the Master's Thesis, Synthesis Project, and Counseling Master's Project [2011-2012]*, and a template created by Nelson L. Eby, GW University, and Douglas Degelman, Vanguard University of Southern California)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
GCP Master’s Project	2
Relevant Coursework	3
Copyright Permissions	3
Your Master’s Project Committee	4
Overview of the Counseling Master’s Project.....	5
Heading Levels	8
Heading Examples	9
References.....	13
Requirements for Typing and Formatting your Project.....	14
Page Requirements in Order of Appearance	15
Additional Tips.....	16
Sample Pages	17
Title Page Sample	18
Signature Page Sample.....	19
Copyright Page Sample.....	20
Abstract	21
Table of Contents.....	22
Acknowledgements	24
Checklist for Preparing the Counseling Thesis or Project	25
Directions for Submitting Your Master’s Degree Manuscript to ProQuest	26
Binding Options Other than ProQuest	28

Introduction

This set of guidelines is intended to be brief and practical, and your chair will work with you on the specific details of your **MA Project***. Please also consult the guidelines published through the Kalmanovitz School of Education for more detailed information.

You should allow between one full year to 18 months to finish the paper; therefore, be sure you begin at least by the summer before you plan to graduate and participate in the May Commencement. **The requirements for participation in Commencement are:**

- 1) You must have approved by your chair *all four chapters* of the paper by the first Monday in April. All chapters must then be approved by your reader by the first Monday in May. It is to be expected that some papers will still require minor editing or revisions after that date. The first week in May is the deadline, because we need to submit a list of graduates for the Commencement brochure.
- 2) All faculty agree that they will return papers to you in a timely fashion in order to help you finish by the deadline. Specifically, faculty will not keep a chapter longer than two weeks and will attempt to return it earlier. You are not to turn in a first draft of all four chapters at once. Given these limitations, we encourage you to work one chapter at a time and not to wait until the last minute to submit your chapters to us.
- 3) If you want to graduate by the end of spring term without participating in Commencement, then the entire paper must be completed and approved by your faculty chair and reader by the last day of the spring semester in order for us to post a grade for you for COUN 550.

We, as a faculty, encourage all of you to finish your papers so that you can participate in Commencement and receive your degrees. You spend a lot of time and money at Saint Mary's College, and you deserve to reap the full benefits of those efforts. We will all work together to support you to finish by the deadline, if that is your goal. If you finish your project in the summer, fall, or winter, you may participate in the Commencement the following May.

***The Faculty of the Graduate Counseling Program
Kalmanovitz School of Education, Saint Mary's College of California***

*Please note that this set of basic guidelines is for those students who are doing a **master's project**, not the **master's thesis**. A **thesis** is similar to the master's project, but involves original research. In order to do the thesis option, students must take both EDUC 572 and EDUC 582 to prepare them for the research component. They must also have their proposal approved by the Saint Mary's College's Institutional Review Board (IRB). For further information on the thesis, please consult with your chair and see the *KSOE Guidelines for the Master's Thesis, Synthesis Project, and Counseling Master's Project (2011-2012)*.

GCP Master's Project

Description of the Master's Project

The **master's project** is an in-depth, graduate-level term paper. It is a thorough study of a specific counseling topic that results in a written synthesis of the literature, assessing both the problem and at least one way to best address the issue from a counselor's perspective. The purpose of the project is to master the literature on a particular topic and to integrate this information into a clinical or program application that addresses the identified issue. The process necessitates recent and relevant research to design an application of the counseling literature to a particular psychological need, problem, diagnosis, and/or clinical/student population. Projects may also address community or school-based problems or needs relevant to the role of the counselor. The proposal of a new or integrated psychological theory or model is also acceptable.

Once the research and other literature on the topic are studied, it is synthesized into a paper that includes a theoretical rationale supporting the focus of the study, a review of the literature, and an application of this material to the community, school, relational or clinical issue (see project options, below). The paper culminates with a discussion about the project as a whole, including its strengths and limitations, implications for counselors, and suggestions for additional counseling applications and research.

This culminating activity is intended to be immediately useful to counselors. Some of you may have the opportunity in your field placement, internship, or worksite to implement your proposed plan, assess its effectiveness informally, and include one or two case studies or a program evaluation in your master's project. Also, you may choose to use this project in the future as a foundation for writing a grant or program proposal.

Options for the Master's Project

The project includes many options, as long as it contains these components:

- 1) a problem or need or question is identified (a counseling/clinical issue or school/community need and/or research question) (stated in Chapter I);
- 2) a thorough review of the literature is done, including research studies, your chosen theoretical models or orientations, and other literature relevant to your identified problem or need and issues or topics (Chapter II);
- 3) an application of the literature to address the problem, usually in a given setting (e.g., school, college, agency) (Chapter III); and
- 4) a discussion of the proposed application (Chapter IV).

The options are numerous, and include, but are not limited to:

- 1) identifying and **applying a theoretical approach to a school or clinical setting;**
- 2) **integrating two or more theoretical approaches** and/or techniques to a given setting or identified population; (this approach could be a good place to integrate a discussion of your emerging *theoretical orientation*);

- 3) assembling the components for a *grant proposal* (review the literature on the problem, counseling/human science solution [theory and research], and a proposed application to a given setting and/or population);
- 4) designing a *conference presentation* (following this format);
- 5) preparing a school or agency *in-service training or community-based training* (e.g., training program for community college counselors, or for parents);
- 6) designing a *group intervention* using one or more counseling theories and addressing a specific issue or population;
- 7) creating an original *therapeutic dialogue* between client(s) and clinician, with transcripts of the conversation and analysis of the therapeutic interventions; for example this can be applied to individuals, couples and families.

Relevant Coursework

For all students beginning classes in the Graduate Counseling Program in summer 2009 and thereafter, *COUN 500 Introduction to Counseling Research* is a required course that should be taken their first term. Also, *EDUC 572 Research Seminar I* is required of these students. Successful completion of *COUN 500* is a pre-requisite for *EDUC 572 Research Seminar I*, during which students will select a topic, find relevant research, and write what is equivalent to Chapter I of the Counseling Master's Project. All GCP students are required to take *COUN 550 Counseling Master's Culminating Project*; students are given the choice of completing their Master's Project or preparing to take a comprehensive exam, which is offered throughout the year as GCP students are ready to take the exam. You should meet with your advisor early on to decide when to take *EDUC 572* and to begin to consider whether you want to complete a Master's Project or to take the comprehensive exam. This decision need not be final until you are completing *EDUC 572*.

You must pass the *Writing Proficiency Exam (WPE)* before taking *EDUC 572 Research Seminar I*. As of summer 2009, the WPE is given to students enrolled in *COUN 500*; school psychology students take the WPE when it is offered through *COUN 500*. Those students who do not pass the WPE are required to take a grammar and composition class (*EDUC 501*), prior to taking the WPE again.

COUN 550 and In Progress (IP) fees: Register for 550-01 the term in which you plan to FINISH your paper. Make sure you continue to re-register for *COUN 550-02* and pay the "in progress" (IP) fee for each semester until you have completed the project. Talk with your chair or contact the GCP Program Assistant if you have questions

Copyright Permissions

If the work includes large sections of other copyrighted works (including, but not limited to, tables, graphs, lists, photos), please submit written permission from the publisher or author with your document. Indicate in the document that the material is "Used with Permission." Materials included that are consistent with "fair use," such as short or standard block quotations, do not need this written permission.

Your Master's Project Committee

Your project faculty advisory committee includes **a chair and a reader**. The chairperson must be a full-time Saint Mary's College faculty member. The reader(s) may be full- or part-time. At least one member of your committee needs to be a full-time GCP faculty member. It is your responsibility to contact the faculty members to invite them to fulfill these roles. Once you have committed to having a faculty member chair your paper, it is important to honor that commitment; if you choose to switch chairs, it is your responsibility to inform your first chair and obtain permission to switch. Preferably, members of your committee have knowledge about the topic that interests you and at least one of the members has some expertise in the problem you plan to address and/or your proposed application.

The ideal chair is both interested in your topic and competent to supervise the development of that topic into an acceptable study/project proposal. It also helps if you feel that your chair cares about your personal and professional development. A chair must be willing to read succeeding drafts of the proposal during the development stage, make comments, and return the drafts to you promptly so that you can continue to move forward. A chair must also be willing and able to protect you from unreasonable demands made by other committee members.

The reader's (full- or part-time faculty member) role is to read drafts of chapters once the chair has approved the draft, and to give you additional feedback for revisions. If you find there is a conflict between what the chair and reader are advising in some area of the paper, consult first with your chair. Should you have particular difficulty working with either your chair or reader (e.g., he or she does not read, comment on, or return drafts in a timely fashion), and then you may: send notice in advance that materials are being sent to be read; schedule regular appointments and ask at those meetings for a firm commitment as to a date on which your materials will be read and returned to you; and keep working. If the difficulties continue, you may contact the GCP program director to discuss changing your chair.

Neither your chair nor your reader is to serve as an editor for your paper, especially in terms of English grammar, punctuation, and professional writing, in general.

A current list of editors is available from your chair or advisor, if needed. The list is also in the *KSOE Guidelines for the Master's Thesis, Synthesis Project, and Counseling Master's Project (2011-2012)*, Appendix C.

Overview of the Counseling Master's Project

Chapter I Introduction

Chapter II Literature Review

Chapter III Application

Chapter IV Discussion

References

Appendices

Below is an overview of the entire paper. It has a prescribed format, which usually includes the following elements:

Chapter I

Introduction

- **Introductory paragraph(s)** (length to be determined by the topic and with the assistance of the chair) (**required**).
- **Background or History of the Problem** (this might be an historical perspective, or some basic information about the topic needed to provide context) (**required**).
- **Statement of the Problem** (here is where you clearly and concisely state the problem you have identified about your particular issue/topic/population) (**required**).
- **Purpose and Significance of the Project** (here is where you briefly introduce the application you will be describing in Chapter III. This heading may include the overall purpose of your application, specific goals, basic logistics, and expected significance if your application was to be implemented) (**required**).
- **Theoretical Orientation(s)** (describe which counseling theory or theories you will use in the project) (**optional**, depending on your topic and application).
- **Review Questions** (3-4 questions that will help you organize your literature review—not all papers include review questions, and this is up to you and your chair) (**optional**).
- **Summary** (this is an optional 1-2 paragraph summary of what was presented in the chapter and what is to come in Chapters II, III, and IV) (**optional**).
- **Definition of Terms** (any important concepts or clinical terminology that is specific to your topic should be defined here) (**optional**, but use if needed).

Chapter II

Literature Review

- There is no way to tell you how long a literature review needs to be, but one way of knowing that you have reached what is called “a point of saturation” is to notice when you begin to feel familiar with the main authors and concepts you are finding in the literature.

A review of the literature (theory, research, and practice):

- is a thorough synthesis of published theoretical positions and research studies relevant to your topic or issue (mostly peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and academic or professional electronic sources). *Wikipedia, Newsweek, Psychology Today*, and the like are NOT scholarly references;
- can be organized using your Review Questions and presented in the order of the questions with subcategories, or it might take some other form of organization (e.g., Theory, Research, Practice). Your chair will guide you in this matter;
- includes some extensive reviews of particularly pertinent studies and incorporation of the literature into various sections related to your topic;
- should begin with the most recent studies on the topic (tip: use the reference lists that those authors include in order to build a more comprehensive review);
- often takes a “funnel” shape, starting out broad and becoming more narrow, ending with a justification for the application you will present in Chapter III;
- ends with a conclusion or a paragraph summarizing what was presented and what is to come in Chapters III and IV.

Chapter III

Application

This is your original application, which is designed by you based on the review of the literature that addresses the problem you have identified in Chapter I. Everything in Chapter III needs to be supported by the literature that you reviewed in Chapter II. This is your chance to be creative and design something original! You should write this chapter with enough detail so that someone could read it and do what you propose. Use appendices for materials that are very detailed, or outlines, or handouts, etcetera. The project could be a group, with descriptions of the sessions; an in-service, with a detailed description of the day’s events; a curriculum; or a case study, etcetera. The chapter ends with a conclusion or a summary paragraph and a reference to Chapter IV.

Chapter IV

Discussion

This is a brief chapter that includes the following sections:

- a brief summary of the paper (optional);
- the strengths of the project (optional);
- the limitations of the project;
- implications for counselors;
- suggestions for future research;
- a concluding paragraph.

References

This is a list of all references you have cited in the text of your paper and in any appendices. List in alphabetical order, per APA style. The 6th edition of the *APA Publication Manual* (2010) provides new lists of how to cite references in text and in the reference list; it extensively covers the wide range of electronic sources now available (see the APA Manual [6th ed.], pages 174-224).

Appendices

Appendices are to be listed in the order in which they are referred to in your paper. Some projects may have numerous appendices, while others may have few to none. If you copy material from other sources in your Appendices, such as a handout or survey, you may also need to obtain and include a letter of permission in the appendix. All sources cited in the appendices need to be in the reference list.

Heading Levels

In the *APA Publication Manual* (2010), see page 62, section 3.03, Levels of Heading, for all of the new 6th ed. requirements for headings. There are five heading levels. If you have three levels of headings in your paper, then use Levels 1, 2, and 3. If you have four levels of headings, then use Levels 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Level 1:

Centered, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading

Level 2:

Flush left, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading

Level 3:

Indented, boldface, lowercase paragraph heading ending in a period.

Level 4:

Indented, boldface, italicized, lowercase paragraph heading ending in a period.

Level 5:

Indented, italicized, lowercase paragraph heading ending in a period.

Heading Examples

(Level 1):

Chapter I

Introduction

Your introductory paragraphs do not have a heading

.....
.....

(Level 2):

Background of the Problem

Introductory paragraph for this Level 2 heading.

.....

(Level 3):

History of eating disorders. Text of paragraph follows

.....

Factors contributing to eating disorders. Text of paragraph follows

.....

(Level 4):

Individual factors. Text of paragraph follows.

.....

Family systems factors. Text of paragraph follows. If this Level 4 heading has subheadings, then this is the introductory paragraph.

.....

(Level 5)

First subheading of family systems factors. Text of paragraph follows

.....

Second subheading of family systems factors. Text of paragraph follows

.....

Statement of the Problem (Level 2)

Your Statement of the Problem is one to two paragraphs summarizing what you have already discussed about the problem.

Chapter I

Introduction

The introduction of the paper begins here. Double-space throughout the paper, including the title page, abstract, and the body of the document; some items, such as indented quotations and references, can be single-spaced. Examples of these are included later in these guidelines. The body of each chapter begins on a new page. Subsections of the body of the paper do not begin on a new page. Headings are used to organize the document and reflect the relative importance of sections.

Second Level Heading: Text Citations

Source material must be documented in the body of the paper by citing the author(s) and date(s) of the sources. This is to give proper credit to the ideas and words of others. When in doubt, cite more often. The reader can obtain the full source citation from the list of references that follows the body of the paper. When the names of the authors of a source are part of the formal structure of the sentence, the year of the publication appears in parenthesis following the identification of the authors—for example, Eby and Mitchell (2001). When the authors of a source are not part of the formal structure of the sentence, both the authors and years of publication appear in parentheses, in alphabetical order, separated by semicolons (Eby & Mitchell, 2001; Passerallo, Pearson, & Brock, 2000). When a source that has three, four, or five authors is cited, all authors are included the first time the source is cited. When that source is cited again, the first author's surname and "et al.," are used as follows (Passerallo et al., 2000).

Third level heading. When a source that has two authors is cited, both authors are cited every time. If there are six or more authors to be cited, use the first author's surname and "et al." the first and each subsequent time it is cited. Although direct

quotations are rarely used in an academic paper, when a direct quotation is used, always include the author(s), year, and page number as part of the citation. A quotation of fewer than 40 words should be enclosed in double quotation marks and should be incorporated into the formal structure of the sentence. A longer quote of 40 or more words should appear (without quotes) in block format, single spaced, with each line indented five spaces from the left margin.

Fourth level heading. The References section begins on a new page. The heading is a Level 1 heading: Centered, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading. The references (with hanging indent) begin on the line following the references heading. Single space within each reference, and double space between references. Entries are organized alphabetically by surnames of first authors. Most reference entries have three components: author(s), year of publication, and source reference. *Authors* are listed in the same order as specified in the source, using surnames and initials. Commas separate all authors, even for an entry with two authors. If no author is identified, the title of the document begins the reference. *Year of publication* is in parenthesis following authors, with a period following the closing parenthesis. If no publication date is identified, use “n.d.” in parenthesis following the authors. For journal articles, the *source references* include the title of article, journal, volume, and page numbers. For books, *source references* include the title of the book, city and state of publication, and publisher. Titles of books and journal articles are only capitalized for the first letter of the first word, the first letter of the first word after a colon, and any proper nouns (see References, below, for examples).

Fifth level heading is italicized and not bold.

References

- American Psychiatric Association. (2000). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (4th ed., text revision). Washington, DC: Author.
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- Shea, J. D. (1992). Religion and sexual adjustment. In J. F. Schumaker (Ed.), *Religion and mental health* (pp. 70-84). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
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- Winston, E. L. (2000). The role of art therapy in treating chronically depressed patients. *Journal of Bibliographic Research, 5*, 54-72. Retrieved from <http://jbr.org/articles.html>

Requirements for Typing and Formatting your Project

Fonts and Printers:

The manuscript must be printed using the same font throughout the document. For consistency, readability, and professional appearance, students are required to use Times New Roman, 12 point font; this is required for submission to ProQuest. If you have appendices, you may use different fonts if needed.

Margins: all margins are 1 inch (top, bottom, left and right).

Any materials in the appendices that do not meet these specifications should be reduced on a photocopier so that 1 inch of empty space appears on the left margin. Do not right justify except for the Table of Contents.

Spacing:

With the exceptions noted below, the entire body of your paper is to be double-spaced, including the abstract and acknowledgements.

The following should be single-spaced: indented block quotations (direct quotes over 40 words) and items within tables or graphs or charts.

The Table of Contents and the References have both single and double spacing; see the samples in these guidelines (References, page 15 & Table of Contents pages 24-25).

Pagination:

All page numbers are at the bottom center of the page, in the footer.

All page numbers should be no less than $\frac{3}{4}$ inch from the bottom of the page.

Preface materials (title page, signature page, copyright page) are NOT designated page numbers.

The Abstract is printed with Arabic “1” at bottom center of the page; (please note that the first page of Chapter I also begins with Arabic “1”).

Beginning with the **Table of Contents**, assign and print lowercase Roman numerals (i, ii, etc.), and continue with Acknowledgements; numbers for the Acknowledgements page and Table of Contents are to be centered on the bottom of the page.

The body of the text (Chapter I) begins with Arabic numeral “1” (yes, another “1”) and continues through the References and Appendices, centered at the bottom of the page. Chapter titles use uppercase Roman numerals (I, II, III, IV).

Page Requirements in Order of Appearance

Title Page:

Follow the sample on page 20. Title is no more than 80 characters (including spaces and punctuation). The title is to be in all capital letters, but not bolded. No page number is designated or printed on the page.

Signature Page:

Follow the sample on page 21. No page number is designated or printed on the page. To avoid signature theft, the blank, unsigned version will be submitted to ProQuest.

Copyright Page:

Follow the sample on page 22. No page number is designated or printed on the page.

Abstract:

See page 23 for sample. The title “Abstract” is in bold, upper and lower case letters (APA Heading Level 1). Format is one paragraph, not indented, double spaced. Maximum of 150 words. The Abstract is printed with Arabic “1” at bottom center of the page.

Table of Contents:

See pages 24-25 for sample. Title is bold, upper and lower case (APA heading Level 1). These pages are fully justified (i.e., the margins are even on both left and right sides). Single space within chapters, and double space between chapters. Indents, as needed, are 5 spaces; (be sure that your tab is set for 5 spaces). Page numbering begins with lower case Roman numerals (i, ii, etc.), and page numbers are printed bottom center of the pages.

Acknowledgements (this is optional, as is a Dedication):

See sample on page 26. Title is bold, upper and lower case (APA heading Level 1). Use indented paragraphs, double space. Page number follows the Table of Contents as a lower case, Roman numeral(s), and it is printed on the bottom, center of the page(s).

Headers and Footers:

You do not need headers or footers, except for the page numbers at the bottom center of the page. Do not use running heads.

Additional Tips

(These are based on issues that tend to come up with GCP students' papers)

Plagiarism: Be very careful to put things in your own words, using your own syntax, throughout the paper. It can be easy to slip into bad habits around rewording; simply replacing with synonyms a few words in a sentence is not sufficient.

Repetition within your paper: There are places in the paper where you will revisit information from previous chapters. Be sure to do this without lifting entire sentences or paragraphs— reword your own work as well!

Outlining: If you have not been one to make outlines for papers, now is the time to start! Making a good outline can be extremely useful in organizing your paper and in helping you to focus on what to do next. Review your proposed chapter outlines with your chair before you start writing, to be sure that you are on the right track.

Keep writing! Writing is difficult work, and you will have times when you feel stuck. Keep working on something, even if it's just typing up your references. Another benefit of the outline is that, when you get stuck in one area, you can look at the outline and move to another section that you might find yourself able to write.

Keep track of references: Keep good notes about your references so that every reference in your paper is on your References list, and vice-versa. One tip when you get close to being done is to print your References and then search through your paper for the open parenthesis “()” symbol to double check that every reference on your list is in your paper.

Direct quotations: Use these only sparingly and always cite a page number.

Seriation: separate simple series with commas and complex series with semi-colons; use (a), (b), (c) to make the series easier to read.

Punctuation: Please review APA pages on punctuation! Students tend to make basic mistakes regarding commas, semi-colons, colons, hyphenation, and apostrophes.

Your writing style needs to be:

In the third person, (unless your chair approves some exceptions):

- Clear and concise (yet often redundant).
- Non-biased (avoid editorializing, stating your opinion, and making judgments).
- Adequately and appropriately cited.
- Straight forward (non-creative).
- If you have significant difficulties and/or the chair determines that extensive editing is required, you may be asked to hire an editor. A list is available in the *KSOE Guidelines for the Master's Thesis, Synthesis Project, and Counseling Master's Project (2011-2012)*, Appendix C.

Sample Pages

Title Page

Signature Page

Copyright Page

Abstract

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

Title Page Sample

*(Do not print "Title Page Sample:" on page)
(No bold, center left/right and top/bottom,
no page number designated or printed at bottom of page)*

THE UNDECIDED: MAJOR AND CAREER EXPLORATION COUNSELING
GROUP FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

(maximum = 80 characters, including spaces and punctuation)

(all letters capitalized, no bold)

A Master's Project

Presented to

The Faculty of the Kalmanovitz School of Education

Saint Mary's College of California

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

By

Kate Cole

Term & Year of Graduation

Signature Page Sample

*(Do not print "Signature Page Sample" on page)
(No page number designated or printed at bottom of page)*

This master's project, written under the direction of the candidate's master's project advisory committee and approved by members of the committee, has been presented to and accepted by the faculty of the Kalmanovitz School of Education, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree.

Candidate: (Type your name here)

Date

Master's Project Advisory Committee:

Chair: (Type your chair's name, highest degree)

Date

Reader: (Type your reader's name, highest degree)

Date

Dean: (Type the KSOE Dean's name, highest degree))

Date

Copyright Page Sample

(Do not print "Copyright Page Sample" on page)

*(Put in bottom 1/3 of page, no bold,
No page number designated or printed on bottom of page)*

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Kate Cole

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Abstract

The purpose of this project was to propose a primary alcohol abuse prevention program addressing psychological and developmental needs of college women. The literature has indicated that young women need and can benefit from gender-appropriate prevention strategies. The proposed program recognizes and builds upon women's strengths to facilitate experiences of personal success, which may enhance self-esteem. An intensive small group format encourages young women to practice social skills, self-assertiveness, personal sharing, and effective communication strategies. The safe, intimate context of the prevention effort aims to facilitate social integration for freshman. The components of the program intend to build young women's repertoire of coping and relational skills to buffer the transition to college and reduce risks associated with alcohol use and abuse.

(= 150 words maximum)

(One paragraph with no paragraph indentation, double space)

(designated as page "1" and printed in Arabic numeral "1" at bottom center of the

page)

Table of Contents

	Page
Acknowledgements (optional—begins right after Table of Contents).....	iii
Chapter	
I. Introduction	1
Background of the Problem.....	3
Statement of the Problem	6
Purpose and Significance of the Project.....	7
Theoretical Orientation (optional).....	8
Review Questions (optional).....	10
Summary (optional).....	12
Definition of Terms (if needed).....	12
II. Literature Review	13
Historical Impediments to Women’s Career Success.....	14
Sociopsychological barriers	19
Gender role socialization	21
Female self-concept	24
Achievement Motivation	30
Family Influence	34
Structural Barriers.....	38
Summary	40
III. Application.....	41
Group Structure.....	41
Group Membership	42
Formation and Recruitment	42
Group Sessions.....	44
Termination.....	48
Summary	49
IV. Discussion.....	50
Overview of Project (brief/optional).....	50
Strengths of Proposed Project (optional)	52
Limitations of Proposed Project.....	53
Implications for Counselors.....	54
Recommendations for Future Research	55
Conclusion	57

References.....	60
Appendices.....	65
A. Group Contract.....	66
B. Group Goals	67
C. Session Outlines	68

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