

NCC PROFILE



Melissa Luke

My name is Melissa Luke and I am currently employed as assistant professor and coordinator of school counseling at Syracuse University. Previously, I worked for over 15 years as a teacher and counselor in K–12 schools.

It was while working as a high school English teacher that I observed firsthand how students' various socio-emotional challenges could both directly and indirectly impact their success in school. Because students frequently shared their personal, peer and familial struggles with me, I decided to enroll in a counseling course to learn more about how to effectively and appropriately respond. That first course led to a master's degree in school counseling. While seeking

licensure as a licensed mental health counselor (LMHC) in New York state, I continued post-master's coursework, which led to doctoral study.

Even after years as an educational and counseling professional, it was not until my doctoral training that I fully understood the importance of professional identity and certain mechanisms for its development, such as professional organization involvement and advanced credentialing. However, thanks to the guidance and support of wonderful doctoral mentors, I sought and obtained both the National Certified Counselor (NCC) and Approved Clinical Supervisor (ACS) credentials.

In addition to formally connecting me to a network of dedicated professional counselors worldwide, I have been fortunate to benefit from many of the resources available to NCCs. As an academic, I am aware that both credentials are public markers of my professional training and competence, and provide broader credibility. As an NCC, I recognize the importance of continued growth, so I engage in continual professional development by reading professional journals, attending and presenting at national conferences, and pursuing other continuing education opportunities. That said, I was surprised to be randomly selected for a continuing education audit when it came time to recertify my NCC. After getting over my initial fear that I had not adequately documented my professional development, I assembled the necessary material and reflected on the learning that it represented. I had not ever stopped to take stock of the learning that had become part of my regular professional growth. This experience stands out for me as an NCC because it facilitated my acknowledgement of and, ultimately, gratitude for my ongoing development as a professional.

As I look to the future, I have two interrelated goals for myself as an NCC. I would like to expand the scope of my work as a counseling and educational professional to increase others' professional training, while also continuing to increase my own knowledge and skills. Toward this end, I am extremely eager to begin the program evaluation of the Mental Health Facilitator (MHF) program. Not only will I be exposed to new learning experiences within the MHF training, but I will also be able to utilize my research experience as part of the program evaluation. Further, I hope to have opportunities to be part of future MHF trainings and play a small role in others' learning and growth.

Dr. Melissa Luke was selected by NBCC International to receive a research grant partially funded by the NBCC Foundation to lead the first evaluation of the MHF program.

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