



*This is a **graduate profile** from Antioch University New England's Clinical Mental Health Counseling program. For more information visit ANE's web site at: www.antiochne.edu*

Merging Two Careers

Clinical Mental Health Counseling program grad Travis Jones, MA '02, uses his Antioch New England training to help veterans cope.



What do you do with a master's degree in mental health counseling and experience as a combat veteran? These two credentials seem miles apart, but for Antioch University New England alumni Travis Jones, they led to a job helping veterans as a global war on terrorism outreach counselor.

Since Travis's father was a history teacher and Travis was interested in the subject, it would have been natural for him to follow the same path. But his football coach taught a class in psychology at his high school, and he decided to sign up. "I was always trying to help people out with their problems, trying to be a mini psychoanalyst with my friends and even my parents," Travis recalls.

After earning his bachelor's degree from Carson Newman College in Tennessee, Travis moved to New Hampshire and decided to pursue his master's degree in counseling at Antioch New England. The flexible schedule attracted him since he had other responsibilities as well. "I was trying to find something I could fit into my schedule," he says. "I would dedicate one day a week to going down to ANE and then the rest of the time do my internship; try to hold a part time job; do the National Guard job; and be a husband." Travis earned his master's from ANE in 2002.

While attending university, Travis was a member of the National Guard; he started in 1997 in Tennessee and joined the New Hampshire National Guard in 1999. He's now a battalion personnel officer, a human resources position that has Travis maintaining awards, evaluations, and other records for soldiers. In 2004, the Guard sent Travis to Iraq as a platoon leader with the 744th Transportation Company. The transportation unit's

mission was to ship food, fuel, building supplies, medical supplies, and other necessities across Iraq. Travis was in charge of more than thirty men and women.

Travis would have gotten his job as an outreach counselor pretty quickly -- if he had been in the right place. When he returned to the U.S. in March 2005, Travis went to see a counselor at the veteran's center for the three-day debriefing returning soldiers go through to help them reintegrate into life at home. He accidentally showed up at the wrong vet center office, but the counselor there was available and agreed to see him. Travis mentioned that he was looking for a new job, and that he'd like to do something that combined his degree in counseling with his interest in helping veterans. The counselor told him that there was an opening at the White River Junction vet center in Vermont -- the office Travis was supposed to have gone to. "A few weeks later I got a call from the White River Junction vet center just to see how I was doing," he says. "The first thing out of my mouth was, 'I heard you have a position open; I want to apply for it.' So it went from talking about how I was doing as a veteran to talking about my being a potential employee." Travis got the job, and started in June of 2005.

As a global war on terrorism outreach counselor, Travis speaks at hospitals, vocational rehabilitation groups, churches, community groups, and other gatherings about veterans' issues. He also counsels vets ranging from World War II up to the present conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. "Trying to readjust from a 24/7 warrior mind-set to a 24/7 American citizen mind-set is a drastic and sudden change that's not easy for most of us to overcome," he says.

Being a combat veteran himself, Travis has an instant connection with these vets. "They'll see counselors who have no experience in military whatsoever; it's kind of hard to reach them coming from that way," says Travis. "But coming as a combat veteran, they're like, 'Okay, you and I have some shared experience...when I mention some places in Iraq, you're not going to ask me where that was.'" Travis does everything from just listening to helping veterans find jobs that use their skills. "It's very rewarding," he says.

"I plan on working at the vet center for as long as long as possible; I'd like to see myself still working there ten, twenty years from now," Travis says. "I love working there. I love working with veterans. I love speaking engagements. I love getting out there, seeing veterans, seeing the public, and doing education."

More about Antioch University New England's CACREP Accredited Clinical Mental Health Counseling master's degree program:

Antioch New England's Clinical Mental Health Counseling program trains counselors to help people address the personal, familial, and social issues that interfere with their abilities to lead healthy and productive lives. The practice-oriented program equips graduates for a variety of specialties in mental health counseling, including community agency work, substance abuse and addictions work, in-patient treatment, and college counseling.

About Antioch University New England

This is Antioch University New England's forty-fifth year as an institution of higher education. Based in Keene, New Hampshire, ANE offers rigorous, practice-oriented, values-based master's, doctoral, and certificate programs to more than one thousand students. Degrees in education, leadership and management, environmental studies, and psychology reflect a dedication to activism, social justice, community service, and sustainability. You can learn more about ANE and by visiting: www.antiochne.edu.