

## Alumni Spotlight: Kim Williams (MACC '20)



**Current title:** Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor Associate

**Family:** I am blessed to be married for 34 years to my high school sweetheart, Roy. We have one adult son, Kenneth.

**Favorite professors:** Dr. Vickey Maclin and Dr. Christopher Cook

**Favorite class:** Helping Relationships

**Favorite memory:** The mandatory weekend retreat was a very rich experience. I went into the weekend dragging my feet and left it wanting to do it all again!

### **What have you been doing since you left Gordon-Conwell and where are you serving now? Do you have a particular specialization?**

Gordon-Conwell prepared me to go directly into private practice after graduation. I am an independent contractor at Central Psych Charlotte, located in the Elizabeth neighborhood in Charlotte, North Carolina. I specialize in treating anxiety, grief and women's issues in individual counseling.

### **What do you love about your work?**

I am thankful for the invitation to join God where He is at work in the lives of those I have the privilege of coming alongside in the counseling space. I see myself as a "tentmaker" like the Apostle Paul, serving the community. Whether the person I am treating is a follower of Christ who chooses to incorporate their faith in therapy or the person is an atheist, my authentic personhood bears witness to the God that I serve without the need to mention a scripture verse or refer to the Triune God by name. I marvel at how the Holy Spirit does a work in and through me that brings about healing insights for the client. This front-seat perspective thrills me to no end! I start each workday wondering what miracle I am going to witness today!

### **What are the particular challenges of serving as a therapist in your context?**

One of the challenges is overcoming the learning curve as a new clinician in private practice. I had to learn how to become paneled with a health insurance company, how to handle taxes, how to navigate a web-based practice management system along with a host of other topics as a new business owner. Fortunately, there are a lot of online resources available and plenty of CE courses that helped with getting my footing. Isolation can also be a challenge. It's easy to find comfort in my own bubble. However, isolation is not the best environment to grow as a counselor. Hearing about the interests

and challenges of other mental health professionals helps to broaden my scope. Participating in group supervision and monthly site meetings helps me to feel connected to the mental health community and gives me exposure to different perspectives in real-time.

**What has been Gordon-Conwell's biggest impact/influence on your counseling practice?**

The greatest influence that Gordon-Conwell's MACC program has had on me as a counselor is the training on how to integrate theology and psychology. My undergraduate studies at a small seminary in the late 2000's discouraged students from pursuing licensure as it was believed by most counseling professors at the school that one could not be a licensed counselor and integrate theology. This misguided thinking, as I recall, centered around the view that to integrate the two would create legislative and ethical violations. Many students were instead encouraged to pursue a vocation in pastoral counseling. Thankfully, my growing struggle with the conflict between this perspective and the undeniable call of God to serve as a licensed counseling led me to the doors of Gordon-Conwell.

Gordon-Conwell provided the pathway to licensure that allowed me to honor who I am as a whole person—body, mind and spirit. It also prepared me to be my authentic self in my identity as a licensed counselor and in the practical application of counseling theories and approaches. Understanding what it means to integrate theology and psychology, what it does and does not entail, is consistent with my desire to live out my faith walk in a way that glorifies my Triune God and the call He has placed on my life.

**How has God woven together your Gordon-Conwell education with other life events to bring you to where you are now?**

I grew up in New York City, where there are many different subcultures. The subculture embraced by my family of origin and the community in which we lived had a strong negative view of weakness. Weakness was ridiculed and exploited growing up. Making mistakes or being "wrong" was considered a weakness, the repercussions of which included public embarrassment, bullying, and possible physical harm. Being weak made one a target. Relocating to Charlotte several years ago helped to soften my vigilance on displaying weakness but I certainly walked through the doors of Gordon-Conwell guarded.

One of the ways that God used Gordon-Conwell in such a profound way was by placing me under the tutelage of an exceptional team of faculty. Each professor, without exception, demonstrated on a consistent basis the strength and value of acknowledging their mistakes, calling out their flaws, and embracing their limitations. Seeing this behavior modeled taught me how to accept my imperfections, smile broadly, and laugh loudly at myself in my weakness. It has been one of the greatest educations in self-acceptance, humility, and authenticity that I have been exposed to in my life.

**What piece of advice would you give to young alumni who are beginning therapists?**

Counseling, done well, is an art form that incorporates psychology and the uniqueness of the counselor with our Triune God supporting the process in His mighty hands. The Lord knows right where you are in your mental health professional journey. Indeed, He has walked beside you and at times carried you! Rest in the fact that He will remain with you during the next leg of your journey. You may stumble and feel awkward as a new counselor, but He will uphold you. So, acknowledge when you are feeling anxious and nervous, but keep moving forward! You have been prepared for this work!

**Do you have any publications or links to share?**

Learn more about [Central Psych Charlotte](#), or view Kim's [Psychology Today profile](#).