

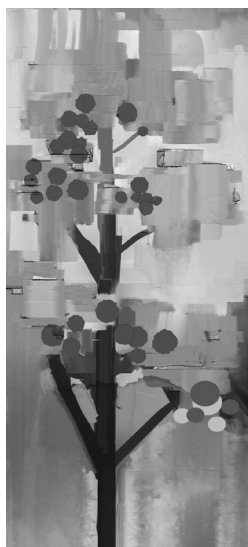
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# *Counselor Self-Care*



AMERICAN COUNSELING  
ASSOCIATION

6101 Stevenson Avenue • Suite 600  
Alexandria, VA 22304  
[www.counseling.org](http://www.counseling.org)



# Counselor Self-Care

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*To my grandchildren, Kyla, Keegan, and Corey,  
who remind me to be in the moment.*

—Jerry Corey

*To the memory of my father, Edmund Muratori,  
and in gratitude to my mother, Vera Muratori,  
and my extended family.*

—Michelle Muratori

*To our parents, for their love, patience, and sacrifice.*

—Jude and Julius Austin

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## *Preface*

The topic of self-care for mental health professionals is increasingly in the spotlight. When we attend professional conferences, there is not even standing room in the audience in sessions on self-care. The four of us have a keen interest in self-care for counselors and decided to engage in this collaborative project. We are convinced of the motivational value of presenting these ideas to students and professionals, and we hope you will take an honest look at how you are caring for yourself and providing care for the clients you serve. We offer diverse perspectives on self-care with the objective of encouraging counselors and counselor trainees to evaluate their present level of self-care and consider specific changes they want to make in attending to all aspects of wellness in their personal life. We are all engaged in professional work in different settings and are at different stages in our careers. Individually and collectively we strive to offer a balance of challenge and support as you consider ways to enhance your personal and professional life through self-care.

Rather than providing a reference book focused on an exhaustive review of the empirical and scholarly literature on counselor self-care, our approach is to take you on a personal self-care journey. To speak to you in a personal way, the four of us set the tone by revealing our own self-care journeys, and you will hear our voices throughout this book. In addition we invited 52 guest contributors, from new professionals and graduate students to seasoned professionals, to share their experiences and thoughts about various aspects of self-care, including what challenges them the most.

Our central purpose is a focus on relevant themes in self-care that stimulate thoughtful reflection and encourage discussion of practical and useful ideas. We present the ideas in a conversational and personal way and continually asked ourselves how we could inspire you to want to take positive actions that would lead to building on the resources you already possess and to acquiring a set of self-care practices that will work for you in all aspects of your life. No one person has the ideal formula for optimal self-care; we are unique individuals with varied life experiences. With this in mind, we invite you to take this opportunity to live vicariously through our and our contributors' struggles and triumphs with self-care. Some of these stories and ideas will strike a chord in you, lead to new insights, and inspire your growth (or determination to change). We imagine that the personal narratives included here may evoke a range of reactions including empathy, sadness, laughter, anger, and surprise—all emotions you are likely to encounter on a personal journey. We hope you enjoy reading *Counselor Self-Care* as much as we enjoyed creating it!

This book can be used as a supplement in a wide range of courses in the counseling field and related helping professions. *Counselor Self-Care* is an ideal supplementary resource for both master's and doctoral programs in counseling. It has been intentionally written to be a practical and personal book relevant not only for graduate students but also for professionals at all phases of their career. New professionals and seasoned professional alike must develop self-care practices that will enable them to carry out their professional roles effectively.

## Overview of the Book

**Chapter 1: Taking Care of Yourself** offers a rationale for adopting self-care practices as a requisite for competent professional practice. Self-care as an ethical mandate is emphasized, as is taking active steps to acquire and maintain wellness in all aspects of living. The concept of wellness is presented as a life-long journey that has implications both personally and professionally, and therapeutic presence is discussed with a focus on wellness. A key message of the chapter is how caring for self is a must if you are taking care of others. Empathy fatigue and counselor burnout, managing empathy fatigue, preventing burnout, and happiness as a foundation of self-care all receive our attention.

**Chapter 2: Seasons of a Career** illustrates how and why self-care is essential at all the stages of one's career: graduate school, early



career, mid-career, and late career. In this chapter, we each describe key experiences at the different stages of our careers.

**Chapter 3: Self-Care in Graduate School** is written largely from the perspective of Julius Austin and Jude Austin, who discuss their experiences in their master's and doctoral programs and what they learned from their journeys about self-care and becoming counseling professionals. Topics include committing to self-care, setting boundaries, coping with anxiety, reflecting on motivations for becoming a counselor, maintaining self-worth, and practicing self-care during the dissertation process.

**Chapter 4: Personal and Professional Stressors** addresses how counselors and counselor educators have been affected by and have navigated the personal and professional stressors they have experienced.

**Chapter 5: Managing Stress in a Stressful World** presents a wide variety of routes to stress management: meditation, mindfulness, relaxation, yoga, Pilates, tai chi, experiencing nature, sound nutrition, exercise, recreation, and service to others. This chapter is full of ideas for self-care from a holistic perspective. There is no one right way to practice self-care; many different strategies can be used to deal effectively with stress and to achieve wellness.

**Chapter 6: Establishing Personal and Professional Boundaries** focuses on our successful and unsuccessful experiences setting boundaries at home and at work. Creating healthy work-life boundaries is explored, and our contributors share their ideas on establishing good boundaries, both personally and professionally.

**Chapter 7: Relationships With Self and Others** focuses on self-compassion, embracing the self, finding ways to nourish oneself through solitude and connections with others, developing forgiveness for self and others, taking time to form meaningful relationships, and mentorship.

**Chapter 8: Finding Meaning in Life** highlights the relationship between meaning in life and self-care. The existential approach is given attention as a way of finding meaning in life. Several guest contributors describe ways they create meaning for themselves and how this is connected to self-care.

**Chapter 9: Creating a Realistic Self-Care Plan** highlights the importance of designing a realistic action plan to enhance your self-care practices. The emphasis is on making an honest self-evaluation of your self-care and then deciding how you can make key changes in living. Several guest contributors describe their personal strategies for designing and implementing self-care action plans.





## *Acknowledgments*

*Counselor Self-Care* is the result of a team effort. It is a collaboration between four coauthors and our guest contributors and reviewers, who have brought their influence to the development of this book. We appreciate the work of Marianne Schneider Corey, who was a reviewer and consultant for us at various stages of development of the book. We also extend our gratitude to the people who read the manuscript and provided us with valuable feedback: Mike Aldrich, Ruth Burton, Jamie Bludworth, Craig Bray, Omar De La Vega, Riley Harper, Robert Haynes, Amanda Johnson, Kim Kabar, Nicholas Lazzareschi, Jeff Markow, Naomi Tapia, and Alyssa Theis.

Special appreciation goes to Carolyn Baker, the associate publisher at the American Counseling Association. Carolyn encouraged us along the way and contributed her expertise by reviewing the entire manuscript, providing insightful comments and suggestions, and offering support and guidance throughout the evolution of this project. A special note of thanks to the manuscript editor, Kay Mikel, who made sure the presentation was clear, practical, personal, and effective. Our gratitude goes out to the 52 guest contributors for their inspiring and honest personal stories about their experiences with self-care. You can learn more about them in the Guest Contributors section.



## *About the Authors*



**Gerald Corey, EdD, ABPP**, is professor emeritus of human services and counseling at California State University, Fullerton. He received his doctorate in counseling from the University of Southern California. He is a Diplomate in Counseling Psychology, American Board of Professional Psychology; a licensed psychologist in California; and a National Certified Counselor. He is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association (Division 17, Counseling Psychology; and Division 49, Group Psychotherapy); a Fellow of the American Counseling Association; and a Fellow of the Association for Specialists in Group Work. He received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Mental Health Counselors Association in 2011, the Eminent Career Award from the Association for Specialists in Group Work in 2001, and the Outstanding Professor of the Year Award from California State University at Fullerton in 1991. He regularly teaches both undergraduate and graduate courses in group counseling and ethics in counseling. Jerry Corey is the author or coauthor of 16 textbooks in counseling currently in print, along with more than 60 journal articles and book chapters. His book, *Theory and Practice of Counseling and Psychotherapy*, has been translated into Arabic, Indonesian, Portuguese, Turkish, Korean, and Chinese. *Theory and Practice of Group Counseling* has been translated into Korean, Chinese, Spanish, and Russian. *Issues and Ethics in*

*the Helping Professions* has been translated into Korean, Japanese, and Chinese. With his colleagues he has conducted workshops in the United States, Germany, Ireland, Belgium, Scotland, Mexico, Canada, China, and Korea—with a special focus on training in group counseling.

The following are a few recent books Jerry Corey authored or coauthored, which are published by Cengage Learning:

- *Issues and Ethics in the Helping Professions*, Tenth Edition (2019, with Marianne Schneider Corey and Cindy Corey)
- *Groups: Process and Practice*, Tenth Edition (2018, with Marianne Schneider Corey and Cindy Corey)
- *I Never Knew I Had a Choice*, Eleventh Edition (2018, with Marianne Schneider Corey and Michelle Muratori)
- *Theory and Practice of Counseling and Psychotherapy*, Tenth Edition (and *Manual*) (2017)

These four books, authored or coauthored by Jerry Corey, are published by the American Counseling Association:

- *ACA Ethical Standards Casebook*, Seventh Edition (2015, with Barbara Herlihy)
- *Boundary Issues in Counseling: Multiple Roles and Relationships*, Third Edition (2015, with Barbara Herlihy)
- *Clinical Supervision in the Helping Professions: A Practical Guide*, Second Edition (2010, with Robert Haynes, Patrice Moulton, and Michelle Muratori)
- *Creating Your Professional Path: Lessons From My Journey* (2010)

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**Michelle Muratori, PhD**, is a senior counselor at the Center for Talented Youth at Johns Hopkins University, in Baltimore, Maryland, where she works with highly gifted middle school and high school students who participate in the Study of Exceptional Talent and their families. She earned her MA in counseling psychology from Northwestern University

in Evanston, Illinois, and her PhD in counselor education from the University of Iowa, where she developed her research and clinical interests in gifted education. Her graduate research on the academic, social, and emotional adjustment of young college entrants earned her recognition from the Iowa Talented and Gifted Association, the National Association for Gifted Children,

and the Mensa Education and Research Foundation and Mensa International, Ltd. At the University of Iowa, Michelle Muratori also earned the Howard R. Jones Achievement Award, the Albert Hood Promising Scholar Award, and the First in the Nation in Education (FINE) Scholar Award.

Since 2005, Michelle Muratori has been a faculty associate in the Johns Hopkins School of Education and teaches courses in the master of science in counseling program. In 2014, she was honored with the Johns Hopkins University Alumni Association Excellence in Teaching Award. She regularly presents at national conferences in counseling and gifted education and is a member of various professional organizations including the American Counseling Association. When not engaged in professional activities, she enjoys writing, attending concerts, and spending time with her family and friends.

Michelle Muratori has coauthored (with Gerald Corey and Marianne Schneider Corey) *I Never Knew I Had a Choice* (Eleventh Edition, 2018), published by Cengage Learning, and (with Gerald Corey, Robert Haynes, and Patrice Moulton) *Clinical Supervision in the Helping Professions* (Second Edition, 2010), published by the American Counseling Association. In 2007, she authored *Early Entrance to College: A Guide to Success*, published by Prufrock Press. She has contributed to a variety of other publications in the counseling and gifted education fields.

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**Jude T. Austin II, PhD, LPC-R (Va), NCC,**

is an assistant professor in the Counseling and Human Services Department at Old Dominion University. He earned his MA in clinical mental health counseling from the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, and his PhD in counselor education and supervision from the University of Wyoming. His current research involves exploring counseling students' development of therapeutic presence in session, counselor education pedagogy, political values in counseling, and counselor education faculty's relational dynamics. He teaches graduate courses in professional counseling and ethics, advanced counseling skills, and counseling theories. He has presented at state, regional, and national conferences, guest lectured at various universities, and has been invited to give a keynote address at the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor's Scholar's Day Research Symposium. He also contributes to the develop-

ment of various content for textbooks by Gerald and Marianne Corey, as well as online textbook content for Cengage Learning. Before becoming a counselor educator, he was a collegiate and professional soccer player.

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**Julius A. Austin, PhD, PLPC**, is a former collegiate and professional soccer player who earned his MA in clinical mental health counseling from the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, and his PhD in counselor education and supervision from the University of Wyoming. He is currently an assistant professor in the Marriage and Family Therapy and Counseling

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## *About the Guest Contributors*



Our guest contributors have added immense vitality and meaning to this book, providing a diversity of thoughts, experiences, and perspectives. The contributors include graduate students in counseling (both master's and doctoral level), counselor educators, licensed professional counselors, social workers, clinical and counseling psychologists, marriage and family therapists, psychiatrists, rehabilitation counselors, and mental health practitioners. We greatly appreciate their honesty, courage, and wisdom in sharing their experiences.

**Clara Adkins, BA**, is a second-year graduate student at Old Dominion University. She is a research graduate assistant and is beginning a clinical internship at a mental health clinic in the community.

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