Creativity in counseling

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Cover Story

Working outside the box
By Lynne Shallcross
When it comes to infusing creativity into counseling sessions, an open mind and a willingness to try are much more important for practitioners than any perceived level of artistic expertise.

Features

A Musical Chronology and the Emerging Life Song
By Thelma Duffey & Shane Haberstroh
Akin to a musical scrapbook, this creative intervention uses meaningful music to help clients connect with feelings, thoughts and memories, while giving perspective to relevant life experiences.

Your witness
By Stacy Notaras Murphy
The courtroom is an intimidating environment for many counselors, but a growing number of practitioners are finding fulfillment by serving as expert and lay witnesses.

Opinion

Ensuring college access for all: A call to the school counseling profession
By Cheryl Holcomb-McCoy, Vivian Lee, Julia Bryan & Anita Young
To safeguard the future viability of school counselors, it is time to advocate for a stronger school counselor identity that includes claiming college and career readiness as a dominant knowledge and skill domain.

Reader Viewpoint

Popping some sizzle into study skills
By Debra Madaris Efird
To boost their presence in the academic arenas of their schools, counselors might consider offering sessions to students on motivation, time management, memorization and test taking.
Being a baby boomer

On the first day of 2011, the oldest baby boomers began turning 65. Each day for the next 19 years, 10,000 more boomers will reach that milestone. In an effort to gauge baby boomers’ outlook on life and other issues, the Pew Research Center polled 1,500 people in December. The study found a mixture of gloom and good health, contemporary ideals and traditional beliefs. Here are some of the findings:

* 80 percent of baby boomers say they are dissatisfied with the way things are going in the country today, compared with 60 percent of those ages 18 to 29.
* 21 percent of boomers say their standard of living is lower than that of their parents at the same age; just 14 percent of non-boomers feel the same.
* 61 percent of baby boomers feel younger than their actual age, compared with about half of American adults in general.
* 70 percent of baby boomers, as well as young adult Millennials, say the main purpose of marriage is mutual happiness and fulfillment rather than raising children.
* 66 percent of baby boomers say divorce is preferable to staying in an unhappy marriage; only 54 percent of younger adults said the same.
* 43 percent of baby boomers report being a “strong” member of their religion, which is a higher rate than younger adults (38 percent of Generation Xers and 37 percent of Millennials) but lower than adults born between 1928 and 1945 (50 percent).
Claiming your creativity

Are you creative? That’s the question I want you to consider as you read my column. This month’s Counseling Today cover story focuses on creativity in counseling, which caused me to reflect on my personal journey of incorporating creativity into my work and getting comfortable with the notion that I am creative. You see, I was never one of those kids in class who could color or paint very well. In fact, I can barely draw a stick person. Sure, I love music and all forms of dancing, but creative was not one of the words I would have used to describe myself or what I did in my counseling practice. That is, until I met Thelma Duffey, professor of counselor education and department chair at the University of Texas at San Antonio and founder of the Association for Creativity in Counseling.

ACC is a fairly new division within the American Counseling Association that focuses on creative, diverse and relational approaches to the work of professional counseling. Thelma and I engaged in hearty conversations regarding the word creativity and discussed how counselors are often resourceful and creative in ways we may not even realize. After listening to her and exploring various definitions of creativity, I walked away feeling more enlightened and better about what I was doing as a practitioner. It caused me to realize that I am creative.

Creativity involves the ability to transcend traditional ideas, rules, patterns and relationships to create meaningful new ideas, methods and interpretations. Creativity involves originality, progressiveness and imagination. I believe I demonstrate these qualities in all areas of my work. Reflecting on my work with young clients in detention facilities, I remember exploring different ways of connecting with them. Although I was grounded in traditional counseling theories and techniques, modifications were needed to connect with these clients effectively. That was my creative moment.

Although some counseling professionals seek specific credentialing in the creative arts, others simply access their inborn creativity and use it within their scope of training as counselors, remaining mindful of the ethics and parameters of their practice. As ACC attests, creativity, when used within the scope of a counselor’s professional competency, can provide innovative opportunities for everyone involved.

During the winter break, I helped my oldest daughter, a teacher, move into her new second-grade classroom. Looking around the school, I noticed all the wonderful colors and beautiful new learning centers. I thought about how we are taught as kids to be creative, taught that it is OK to take a book and sit on the floor or color outside the lines. My smile started to fade, however, as I reflected on our progression through academic training. As we got older, we had to stay more within the lines, and there were no longer any bright colors present in the classroom. Being a teacher and an administrator myself, I realize the importance of having rules and order, but do we lose something really valuable in this process? Can we keep both the color and the order? Can we have structured creativity? This seems like an oxymoron.

I recently read an article by Jeffrey Baumgartner titled “10 Steps for Boosting Creativity.” The steps included listening to music, brainstorming, carrying a small notebook and a pen/pencil to record ideas, and, if you are stuck looking for an idea, opening a dictionary. Other tips: defining your problem, going for a walk or engaging in gentle exercise, not watching TV, not doing drugs, reading as much as you can and, finally, exercising your brain.

Reflecting again on the concept of creativity in our professional lives, I believe this is a skill we all must possess to be effective counselors. I hope you do as well.

I wish everyone a Happy Valentine’s Day!
Here is a great piece of advice that can make a tangible difference in someone’s future: The Center for Professional Development at Excelsior College, offering the education and skills needed to advance in a current job or start a new career. And like the degree programs at Excelsior College, the Center’s non-credit programs are designed to provide a first-rate online learning experience for adult students.

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Executive Director’s Message

Richard Yep

N ext month, thousands of professional counselors and graduate students will come together in New Orleans for the ACA Annual Conference & Exposition. The registrations we have received indicate that we will be welcoming professionals from all over the country and from many parts of the world. Those who have visited New Orleans previously know a truly unique city is waiting to greet them, and those who have never been to the Big Easy ... well, all I can say is buckle your seat belt and be prepared for quite a ride! New Orleans has a vibrancy that extends beyond the greatest jazz and the most amazing restaurants. It is a city with a true soul, a spirit that continues to rise up and face adversity — not unlike the counseling profession.

Many of you attending the ACA Conference will be involved in our community-wide Day of Giving Back project, which will encompass providing services in many different venues throughout New Orleans, as well as learning about community advocacy strategies that participants will be able to take back to their own cities.

I hope you are able to join us in New Orleans — and not just because we are trying to meet some financial commitment for the association. Rather, I want you there to witness the services and networking being brought about by the changing demographics we see in the ACA membership. We have an increasing number of graduate students relative to professional members. We have a number of midcareer counselors who are seeking new career paths. We also have a “graying” group of members who have seen the best of times (and perhaps the worst of times) in regard to the opportunities and challenges the counseling profession has faced over the past 60 years.

Clearly, we will have an incredible mix of professionals and students, and we hope that the Annual Conference will help to meet the needs of each unique constituency.

In January, I attended the annual conference of the American Association of State Counseling Boards. As the organization kicked off its 25th year of service (which will be observed at AASCB’s 2012 event in Charleston, S.C.), we heard from Ted Remley, the conference’s keynote speaker and AASCB’s first president. Ted made a number of interesting points as he looked back at AASCB’s history, but he also inspired the group to meet the challenges that it will face in the coming years.

Ted noted that he and his contemporaries made up the first generation of licensed counselors. Many of you in Ted’s generation recall when there was no such thing as counselor licensure and what you went through to achieve passage of that legislation. Ted asked the audience to remember that we have licensure today because counselors stepped up, faced the challenge and did something that he believes truly kept the profession alive.

Ted observed that if the profession was going to survive, it needed to work together rather than fragmenting into specialties that went off to do their own thing. Similar to how AASCB supported licensure efforts throughout the United States during the past 25 years, Ted encouraged the group to begin working on creating and supporting minimum standards for reciprocity and portability.

In New Orleans at the ACA Conference, I hope that attendees will take the time to embrace their diversity of thought, while also coming together with ideas that support a unified profession. As Ted said this past month, if the profession is going to make it, we have to work together.

As always, I hope you will contact me with any comments, questions, or suggestions that you might have. Please contact me via e-mail at rye@counseling.org or by phone at 800.347.6647 ext. 231.

Thanks and be well.
Is your altruism myopic?

By virtue of the fact that you are reading this particular article in this particular publication, it is reasonably safe to assume that you are either a member or a friend of the American Counseling Association. As such, you have often heard the analogy that ACA is like a family. The members and friends of ACA share many common beliefs about and are committed to helping people in need. This is one of the answers most often given when graduate students are asked why they have chosen the counseling profession or when those with many years of practice are asked what drew them to and kept them in the profession. They want to help people. They are altruists in the best sense of the word.

According to the American Heritage College Dictionary, fourth edition, the definition of altruism is an “unselfish concern for the welfare of others, selflessness” or “instinctive cooperative behavior that is detrimental to the individual but contributes to the survival of the species.”

As with most things that are basically good, however, there are sometimes holes or blind spots in our definition or comprehension of altruism. For many of us, one such hole, blind spot or anomaly is that when we think of altruism, we stop at the first part of the definition. We look only outside of the ACA family in our concern for the welfare of others. We see the homeless, the individuals experiencing emotional, interpersonal, intrapersonal or developmental pain, but we often overlook members of our family. Further, we do this to such a degree that it is detrimental “to the individual” (in this case, the counseling profession itself).

The ACA Foundation is committed to seeing to it that those who are in need survive. We also recognize that to make certain that happens, the profession itself, and the practitioners within the profession, must survive. Stated somewhat differently, the ACA Foundation believes we can do more as a family or group than we can accomplish as a bunch of individuals.

Whether it is assisting graduate students through scholarships, making certain that counselors who work with children in need have reading resources through our Growing Happy and Confident Kids program, helping colleagues who have experienced a disaster get back into practice through our Counselors Care Fund or giving special recognition to those individuals who have done an exemplary job within the profession, the ACA Foundation nurtures members of the counseling profession. In turn, this helps them to help others.

Being a family, the ACA Foundation depends on ACA members and friends to contribute to these programs in order to sustain them. It serves as a repository for the contributions from members over time so we can assist members when the need arises. If we had 45,000 members who each contributed $5 per year, we would have slightly less than one-quarter of a million dollars each and every year to sustain our profession through the programs mentioned previously.

That is less than two cups of Starbucks coffee per member. How about it? Would you be willing to do your part toward that end? There is a spot on your ACA membership renewal form to indicate your contribution to the ACA Foundation. Please give it your serious consideration!

Howard B. Smith is immediate past chair of the ACA Foundation.
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Congress clears bills that include counselor, antidiscrimination provisions

In a flurry of activity before ending an already historic session, the 111th Congress took two major steps forward — one on human rights and another specific to the counseling profession — as part of defense legislation. The breakthroughs came within days of each other shortly before Christmas.

On Dec. 18, the Senate voted 65 to 31 (with four senators not voting) to repeal the Department of Defense’s (DoD’s) “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy. In place since 1993, “don’t ask, don’t tell” was adopted as a compromise between those who wanted to end the military’s policy of excluding gay and lesbian service members and those who wanted to retain the policy. Under “don’t ask, don’t tell,” the DoD has been prohibited from questioning prospective service members about their sexual orientation, while service members have been required to keep any homosexual orientation to themselves or face discharge. According to the Pentagon’s Comprehensive Review Working Group that evaluated the policy, more than 13,000 service members have been “separated” from military service since “don’t ask, don’t tell” was enacted. The working group’s report concluded that the military could effectively adapt to a repeal of the policy.

Language repealing “don’t ask, don’t tell” was included in the defense authorization legislation that Congress had been trying to pass for months. However, Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) firmly opposed combining the two, and it was only after the issue was stripped from the defense bill and brought up in a stand-alone bill that both the repeal and the authorization bill moved forward.

Repeal of “don’t ask, don’t tell” is not effective immediately. Service members must remain “in the closet” until the 60th day after President Obama, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, all certify that the DoD is ready to implement the policy’s repeal. Until that time, the military can still discharge openly gay service members. In addition, issues related to health, retirement and survivor benefits must be hashed out to fully implement the new law.

DoD required to issue counselor recognition regulations

On Dec. 22, both the House of Representatives and the Senate passed legislation authorizing defense spending for the fiscal year. President Obama was expected to sign the legislation into law in the near future. Section 724 of the bill requires the DoD to issue regulations allowing independent practice of licensed professional counselors by June 20. This language is a significant accomplishment for the counseling profession and the culmination of many years of hard work by the American Counseling Association and our sister organizations the American Mental Health Counselors Association and the National Board for Certified Counselors.

Earlier in 2010, the Senate Armed Services Committee drafted a version of the defense authorization bill that included very detailed and restrictive language delineating which counselors could practice independently under TRICARE, which is the military’s health care system for service members, retirees and their dependents. For almost two decades, licensed professional mental health counselors have been the only widely recognized master’s-level mental health professionals required to operate under physician referral and supervision.

This past fall, ACA, NBCC and AMHCA worked jointly with staff from both the House and Senate Armed Services Committees to urge adoption of language that was more inclusive than that found in the original Senate bill. These meetings led to a consensus that the best way forward was to establish counselor requirements for independent practice in regulations issued by the DoD, instead of in a statute written by Congress. ACA, AMHCA and NBCC will encourage the DoD to adopt regulations that recognize all highly qualified counselors as capable of practicing independently within TRICARE.

If you have questions about passage of the defense authorization bill and its language referencing counselors, contact Scott Barstow at sbarstow@counseling.org.

Stopgap spending measure keeps lights on until March

Congress has passed, and the president has signed, a temporary extension to keep most government programs funded at Fiscal Year 2010 levels until March 4, 2011. The bill freezes federal civilian employees’ pay for two calendar years beginning in 2011 and maintains the Pell Grant maximum award at its FY 2010 level.

Although FY 2011 started this past October, the 111th Congress was unable to find enough common ground to pass any of the 12 annual spending bills. Thus, the 112th Congress that began in January will set spending levels for government programs for the rest of FY 2011. With many incoming congressional conservatives having vowed to cut government spending sharply and the new Republican majority in the House controlling the development of spending legislation in that chamber, negotiations between the House, the Senate and President Obama on appropriations bills will be highly contentious. Unfortunately, education and health-related programs frequently are first on the chopping block.

ACA is continuing to educate Congress and the administration on the importance of investing in school counseling services. For more information on current developments and how you can help, contact ACA’s Dominic Holt at 800.347.6647 ext. 242 or dholt@counseling.org.
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Embracing a passion for new experiences

Jaime Castillo lives and works in New York City. He originally wrote to me because he was interested in becoming a blogger for the American Counseling Association. I read his résumé and gave him a call to discuss his ideas. He reminded me of when I lived in New York City and met so many hardworking, intelligent and deeply creative individuals. He is among the best of the new breed of counselors.

Rebecca Daniel-Burke: What is your current counseling position?

Jaime Castillo: I am a mental health clinician at the YAI Center for Specialty Therapy. I provide individual psychotherapy and counseling to adults with intellectual/developmental disabilities living in residential group homes.

RDB: What does YAI stand for?

JC: When YAI first started, it was called the Young Adult Institute. It was named that because, initially, the individuals we served were in fact young adults moving out of their family homes and/or institutions. However, over the past few decades as our clients have aged with the agency, the name “young adult” no longer applied. Although YAI continues to provide services and programming for individuals ranging from 2 to almost 100 years old, the agency felt it was necessary to remove the official title of Young Adult Institute to avoid confusion.

RDB: What does YAI stand for?

JC: YAI, I have the freedom to be creative and really let my personality reflect on my work. Not only do I feel challenged each day, but I also feel that I make an impact in those individuals I work with. Because I am working with individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities, I am forced to approach my sessions, interactions and conversations with my clients differently, using innovative and aggressive techniques. This keeps me always on my toes!

RDB: What do you mean when you refer to aggressive techniques?

JC: The aggressiveness refers more to a state of mind than to a particular technique. With individuals who followed a normal pattern of development, in sessions we are able to relax a bit and listen for them to finish a thought or a story before we step in to clarify, summarize or identify themes. Those clients have the cognitive ability to connect multiple issues and see the common trends.

When working with individuals diagnosed with intellectual/developmental disabilities, I find you need to address the issues as soon as they are said. These clients already have a difficult time connecting a single emotion to an action, so if you wait for them to finish a story before stopping to address an issue, in their brain they’ve already moved on and you’ve missed that window. I find that to be most effective, you need to be aggressive and jump in to reframe a thought or belief quickly before they can move on to the next sentence.

RDB: Can you give me an example?

JC: For example, if a client says they had a disagreement with a peer in the residence and they yelled and slammed doors. I will immediately reframe this issue, clarify, then ask them to jump up right away and do a role play with me. These role plays are used to reenact the situation and practice better coping skills. We will continue to do these role plays until they understand the skills before moving to the next issue. This allows them to present an issue and then immediately pair it with an alternative coping strategy for that specific issue. If you wait too long, they will miss the connection.

It’s stop-and-go. It’s like when Indiana Jones has a short window to escape before that stone wall fully closes. If he doesn’t get out in time, he may be stuck there for a long time. Our clients need our guidance to get out of that room before that stone wall — the presenting issue — closes them off.

RDB: Interesting metaphor. OK, back to you. How did you determine what area of counseling you were passionate about?

JC: I wouldn’t say I am passionate about a single specific area of counseling. I would say, however, that I am passionate about experiencing areas in the field that are new to me and require me to apply my clinical and counseling knowledge to different populations. I’ve done group work with fifth-graders on bullying in central Pennsylvania, suicide and substance abuse work with teenagers living on Indian reservations in Montana and counseling with adults with comorbid diagnoses in New York City. I’m extremely passionate about each area I’ve experienced because it has required me to learn from different types of people, across diverse cultures, and apply counseling to distinct populations.

RDB: What a rich history of experience. When you work with these various groups, is there one theoretical orientation that you use more than others? Why?

JC: I utilize CBT (cognitive behavior therapy) and client-centered approaches regularly, though I believe having an integrative mindset is key to working with different clients. Recently, I’ve become increasingly interested in REBT (rational emotive behavior therapy), and
I am working on becoming more familiar with the theory in practice.

RDB: It sounds like you have been very inspired. Who inspired you? Was there someone in your life who saw something special in you early on?

JC: My parents have always been supportive of everything I do. From an early age, they found a way to let my sisters and me experience any areas of interest we had. In fourth grade, I became interested in ice hockey and, sure enough, my mom and dad found a league and took turns waking up at 4 a.m. on Saturday mornings to drive me there. They made sure we knew that we needed to pursue whatever we were passionate about because that was the secret to being happy. My younger sister has an amazing voice, and they encouraged her to not stop singing. Today, she sings and acts professionally. For me, when I said I wanted to go to graduate school, they were the first ones in the car to drive me to prospective campuses. I owe a lot to my parents.

RDB: You were certainly fortunate to have such devoted parents. Has becoming a counselor been transformational for you?

JC: Definitely. In the past couple years, I feel my intrapersonal awareness has skyrocketed. I feel more confident and comfortable with myself. I feel more comfortable with who I am as an individual. I have been transformed into a great listener and a more patient human being.

RDB: What mistakes have you made along your career path? And more important, what lessons did you learn?

JC: About a year ago, I was going through a professional identity crisis because I doubted my abilities as a counselor. I was mentally blocking myself. I felt out of touch with the counseling community. I felt I had passed the point of no return. Then I decided to take action. I became more involved in professional organizations, reconnected with colleagues and successfully crawled out of that hole. I have never looked back. I learned there will be times when we think we’ve hit a wall, but that is the time we really need to show our resilience and commitment not only to ourselves but to our profession. We need to have those lifelines in place that will help us bounce back.
RDB: Is there a saying, a book or a quote that you think about when you need to be inspired regarding your work?

JC: I love reading books by Irvin Yalom and feel I could read The Gift of Therapy a hundred times and it would never get old. The book is filled with tons of short anecdotes to get you off on the right foot as a clinician. I also recently read Samuel Gladding’s Becoming a Counselor—hilarious stories that are refreshing and insightful for days when you may feel down and need a reboot.

RDB: Your work is intense at times. What ways do you find to take care of yourself?

JC: I have a number of hobbies that keep my batteries charged. I try not to bring any work home. Keeping that physical separation is important to stay grounded. I play in a weekend soccer league, perform comedy, ski and run. Movies are relaxing for me as well, and I love watching The Office every week on TV. I also love to cook, so you can find me in the kitchen attempting to cook something delicious for dinner.

RDB: Is there anything else that you want our readers to know?

JC: For new counseling students, I would say to get involved. Become a member of local, regional and national organizations. Meet fellow counselors and see what work they are doing. Attend conferences, get on a Listserv, and learn what research is happening in your field. Maybe you’ll find a project you’d like to be a part of. Maybe you’ll be introduced to a field you had no idea existed. Whether it’s being a student member or a professional one, I think it’s very important to be involved in the counseling community to help establish your own professional identity and invite personal growth.

Rebecca Daniel-Burke is the director of professional projects and career services at ACA. Contact her at rdanielburke@counseling.org.

Letters to the editor: ct@counseling.org
The 2011 ACES Conference will be held October 26-30, 2011 at the Gaylord Resort and Convention Center in Nashville, TN. The Call for Proposals will be available in mid-fall, with the deadline for submissions in January 2011.

The 2011 Conference will have content sessions, a research-mentor preconference, and lots more. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend the ACES Conference in the Music City!

For more information about the Conference, please visit the ACES website at www.acesonline.net or contact Robin Lee, Conference Chair, at aces2011conference@gmail.com.

Also, please visit the Gaylord’s website to learn more about this wonderful environment. It is like no other hotel experience! www.gaylordhotels.com/gaylord-opryland
Following a two-prong marketing approach

Q: I am looking at starting my private practice and want to develop a marketing plan. What are all the considerations?

A: We couldn’t do this question justice in a single column, so we started exploring aspects of marketing this past December, when we addressed developing or reviewing print material. This month, we want to cover our “two-prong marketing” approach.

Developing an ongoing marketing plan is essential to any business, and counseling is no different. Not only do you need to launch a practice, but you also need to make that practice self-sustaining. Bob Walsh’s “8-Step Method” (see the next question) is an excellent example of a marketing plan that emphasizes public speaking as a main component for marketing our services. Although we believe public speaking is one of the most productive marketing strategies, a great marketing plan includes numerous other components. Common sense and a professional approach will help you market yourself directly to clients and referral sources.

A good marketing plan will directly market to clients (first prong) as well as to potential referral sources (second prong) that come into contact with potential clients. Marketing consultants will tell you that repetition is important. Do not just plan one or two big marketing projects. Instead, think about conducting smaller efforts more frequently.

As we mentioned, public speaking is a good plan for marketing directly to potential clients. Giving talks or presentations are excellent ways to promote yourself and your practice. Church groups, civic organizations, support groups, schools, associations, professional societies, and women’s and men’s groups are always looking for speakers for their meetings. Most of these groups will promote your speech in advance, especially if it is a free or low-cost event. After speaking, distribute your promotional pieces or provide a one-page handout with your name and number.

Other marketing efforts to consider include:
- Writing an article or column for your local newspaper
- Producing a newsletter
- Maintaining a website
- Getting listed on an online therapist directory (such as those maintained by Psychologytoday.com as well as many national and state professional organizations)
- Giving brown-bag speeches
- Serving as a source for media interviews
- Conducting support groups
- To market to potential referral sources, make a list of individuals, agencies and organizations that might have contact with the type of clients you want to treat. For example, if your niche is treating adolescents, you might wish to target:
  - Pediatricians and family physicians
  - Middle and high schools
  - School principals
  - School counselors and social workers
  - Employee assistance programs
  - Probation departments
  - Police departments
  - United Way agencies
  - Churches
  - Community mental health centers
  - Community centers
  - Parent support groups
  - Substance abuse treatment centers
  - Other therapists who treat only children or adults

Send these potential referral sources a letter of introduction along with your promotional pieces. Follow up with a phone call to confirm they received your information and try to schedule a meeting. With physicians in particular, make sure you send your business cards and brochure and follow up with a phone call. Make a periodic visit to the physician’s office to drop off your promotional materials and perhaps some flowers or lunch for the staff.

Q: I attended your workshop in December. In the materials that were covered, you listed resources and publishers to use in presentations that are free to the community. Can you provide me with any more direction in finding the materials you referenced?

A: Great question — and one that allows us to expand on the previous question. We are including a list of seminars and programs that can be used as practice builders. The idea is for you to plan and present a two-hour or half-day workshop. These workshops will be given for free to community members.

Why free? First, it is a way to serve the community. Second, local doctors, schools, clergy, libraries, newspapers, community centers and businesses will want to help promote your workshop because it’s a free and valuable service. The exposure and marketing you will receive in your practice community will be invaluable. This concept is outlined further in “The 8-Step Method for Starting or Expanding a Private Practice,” which is available for free to American Counseling Association members. Simply go to the Private Practice Pointers section of the ACA website (counseling.org) and click on topic No. 1, “Starting a Private Practice.” The method is also available in The Complete Guide to Private Practice for Mental Health Professionals (counseling-privatepractice.com).

Attendees might want to reserve times for individual counseling appointments during breaks at your workshop. Your presentation will increase their interest in your individual counseling services, so you should have your appointment book nearby.

An important consideration is deciding on a good seminar topic. Choose a topic that you feel most comfortable with and care about — something that is part of
your niche. Write your own presentation or explore packaged programs offered in counseling, psychology and social work catalogs. Several very good packaged programs are designed to work in groups. Google “CMTI Press videos” or visit steppublishers.com to review some possible resources. For parenting groups, there is Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (STEP) by Don Dinkmeyer. For marriage enrichment, there is Training in Marriage Enrichment (TIME) by Jon Carlson. Many other excellent programs come from ACA’s online bookstore. From the “Publications” section of the ACA website, click on “Bookstore,” and in the search template, choose DVDs under “Product type.”

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In addition, ACA is sponsoring free private practice consults during the conference by appointment. Schedule your appointment at counseling.org/sub/career/consultations.aspx.

ACA members can e-mail their questions to Robert J. Walsh and Norman C. Dasenbrook at walshgasp@aol.com and access a series of “Private Practice Pointers” on the ACA website at counseling.org. A free podcast on starting a private practice is also available to ACA members on the website.

Letters to the editor: ct@counseling.org

NEW!

Play Therapy: Basics and Beyond, Second Edition

by Terry Kottman

“This volume will be of great value to professionals entering the field, as well as to experienced play therapists expanding their scope of practice, teaching graduate classes, or looking for a good solid reference.”

—Risë VanFleet, PhD, RPT-S
President, Family Enhancement & Family Play Therapy Center

Written for use in play therapy and child counseling courses, this extraordinarily practical text provides a detailed examination of basic and advanced play therapy concepts and skills and guidance on when and how to use them. Kottman's multitheoretical approach and wealth of explicit techniques are also helpful for clinicians who want to gain greater insight into children's minds and enhance therapeutic communication through the power of play.

After a discussion of the basic concepts and logistical aspects of play therapy, Kottman illustrates commonly used play therapy skills and more advanced skills. Introduced in this edition is a new chapter on working with parents and teachers to increase the effectiveness of play therapy. Practice exercises and “Questions to Ponder” throughout the text facilitate the skill-building and self-examination process. 2011 375 pgs

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Please include $8.75 for shipping of the first book and $1.00 for each additional book.
Groups: Process and Practice, Eighth Edition

Group counseling offers many advantages, including providing support, motivation, harmony and diversity of opinion for its members. Therefore, incorporating group theory into practice is an essential skill to be mastered by many counselors and counselors-in-training alike. Groups: Process and Practice effectively captures the “what is” and “how to” of group counseling. With their combined expertise, the Coreys discuss the important aspects of group process, providing research-based examples, insights and guiding principles for application in a variety of settings and with diverse populations.

Chapter 2 explores the group counselor as a person and a professional, as well as the ability of the counselor to transfer theoretical orientation into practice. The journey to self-understanding can be challenging, especially for novice group leaders, so the chapter ends with exercises, a questionnaire, a self-assessment and a DVD/workbook to provide some additional pointers.

Chapter 3 discusses ethics in group counseling. The chapter covers areas such as informed consent, involuntary membership, freedom to withdraw, confidentiality and the premise of beneficence to all clients served.

Chapters 4 through 8 serve as the focal points of the text. In these chapters, the authors take readers from the beginning of group process to the end, providing detailed information on specific and general issues as well as the challenges of group practice along the way. Chapter 4 explains stages of group development, from recruiting and screening members to group size and the logistics of forming a group. Chapter 5 examines issues common during the initial stage of a group, such as building trust and addressing a hesitation to share. The chapter stresses the importance of gentleness and support versus confrontation. Chapter 6 equips the group leader with the knowledge and skill to resolve issues related to defensiveness and manipulation in the group process. Chapter 7 pictures the working stage of the group process, during which there is cohesiveness, caring, acceptance and universality as members take the risk to self-disclose and receive feedback. Chapter 8 discusses the final stage of group process and how to handle issues of termination and unfinished business in therapy.

Groups: Process and Practice will serve as a valuable resource for counselors who are striving to become competent in group counseling as well as already-skilled counselors who have a desire to evaluate their competency and gain additional insight.

Reviewed by Mary Ollor Onungwe, a clinical mental health counselor and doctoral student at North Dakota State University.

Happiness, Healing, Enhancement: Your Casebook Collection for Applying Positive Psychology in Therapy

This book represents a very well-assembled compilation of perspectives on positive psychology, effectively tapping into the combined knowledge of multiple contributors in the field. Happiness, healing and enhancement are raised up as the vehicles by which positive psychology principles are put into motion to facilitate change in clients. The book is also arranged in a way that is pleasing to the eye, transitioning between concepts and chapters on how to help clients live well-balanced lives.

Among the book’s bright spots is the reference table that quickly guides readers to specific clinical problems as well as strategies and interventions. This feature makes the book helpful far beyond the initial reading. In addition, at the end of each chapter, the “Putting It Into Practice” sections guide readers in how to incorporate the concepts directly into their work with clients, effectively bridging the gap between teaching and application.

Happiness, Healing, Enhancement is appropriate both for the experienced clinician and the beginning student seeking a better understanding of positive psychology and how to apply it. The principles learned in this book have applications for counselors in all settings.

Reviewed by Douglas R. Tillman, a third-year doctoral student at the University of South Dakota.

Case Studies in Counseling Older Adults

Larry Golden’s Case Studies in Counseling Older Adults provides compelling examples of the psychological challenges that individuals may face late in life. With an increase in U.S. life expectancy of nearly 30 years in the past century, a greater number of older adults are presenting for counseling
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Barry University’s PhD in Counseling program in Miami Shores and Orlando is accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs.
services. In this book, 18 therapists give readers insights and a personal sense of what it is like to work with older adults.

Golden uses a combination of humor and compassion as he presents examples of individuals who struggle as they discover that with age comes wisdom and maturity. Each account reflects the life of an older client whom the therapist has counseled. Some of the issues of aging that are dealt with include retirement, addiction, financial concerns, loss, spirituality and health decline. Through the experiences of the therapists and clients profiled, readers are given an opportunity to explore their own life progression with greater understanding.

From Kay, a client in her early 50s dealing with trauma while caring for her ailing mother, to Brenda, who lives in the nursing home and is striving to regain her independence at age 87, readers are introduced to rich illustrations of the later stages of life. Each story is filled with intimate details that create a sense of the client’s reality. The language is personal and offers insights into working with older clients. Golden also provides case studies that present creative and interesting ideas and innovative approaches that therapists may find useful in their own therapy practices.

The book focuses on the therapists’ most memorable cases (or, if you prefer, most unforgettable clients). Each case study introduces the client, offers an overview of his or her situation and then identifies the therapist’s intervention and outcome. The case studies conclude with reflections from the therapists on how they might have done things differently and what they learned from their particular experience. A summary of cases, organized into an easy-to-read table, precedes the introduction. Each case includes identifying information about the client, therapist, presenting problem and intervention used.

Recent books by ACA members

**Initial Interviewing: What Students Want to Know** by Tricia McClam and Marianne Woodside, Brooks/Cole Cengage Learning

A successful initial interview is the foundation for a successful helping process. This text, resulting from questions collected from students over a 10-year period, introduces the knowledge and skills for an effective first meeting between helper and client. Each chapter introduces a critical component of interviewing and provides both a cultural and ethical context for consideration. The text is accompanied by a DVD with video clips that illustrate important skills covered in each chapter.


Filled with case studies, learning activities and classroom exercises, this book presents extensive coverage of play therapy applications such as setting goals and treatment planning, methods for monitoring progress through stages and recommendations for family and systemic services that can be provided along with play therapy. It includes practical guidance on playroom setup, documentation and advice on working with parents, teachers and principals.

** Achieve Success in Spite of Stress** by Barbara Jordan, BookSurge Publishing

The topic of this book is helping leaders and busy professionals to achieve work-life balance. Containing up-to-date knowledge compiled from professionals with whom the author has worked in her professional coaching business, this practical guide is designed to help readers overcome the obstacles that block their success; find the keys to reduce their stress; change self-defeating thoughts; manage their time; deal with change productively; and achieve and maintain balance.

**Microaggressions and Marginality: Manifestations, Dynamics and Impact** edited by Derald Wing Sue, Wiley & Sons

This book discusses the manifestation, psychological dynamics and impact of microaggressions on the well-being of marginalized groups and examines the role of microaggressions in creating disparities in education, employment and health care. Every major racial/ethnic group as well as gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion and class is covered.

**Integrating the Expressive Arts Into Counseling Practice: Theory-Based Interventions** edited by Suzanne Degges-White and Nancy L. Davis, Springer Publishing

Although traditional “talk” therapies remain the foundation of counseling, the use of expressive and creative arts in conjunction with these methods can often deepen the healing process as well as expedite diagnosis, treatment and prevention. Accessible to students and practitioners alike, this book is designed to provide an understanding of the ways in which expressive arts counseling techniques can be productively integrated into the leading counseling modalities.

**A Counseling Primer: An Introduction to the Profession** by Mary Guindon, Routledge

This introductory, professional orientation text is intended for use by beginning counseling students and covers CACREP Standard One, Professional Orientation. The text orients readers to who counselors (and clients) are, what Henri Amiel reminded us, “To know how to grow old is the master-work of wisdom, and one of the most difficult chapters in the great art of living.” *Case Studies in Counseling Older Adults* is a valuable resource that provides many examples of courage and triumph as it imparts greater understanding of facing the final chapters of life. This book is an excellent resource for counseling professionals — or for anyone who wishes to attain the worthwhile goal of aging well.

*Reviewed by Irene F. Harper, doctoral student, counselor education and supervision program, University of South Dakota.*

**Bullied: A Student, a School and a Case That Made History**

DVD, 2010, Southern Poverty Law Center; Free

One of the things that draws many of us to the profession of counseling is...
The documentary film focuses on the experience of Jamie Nabozny, who endured horrific harassment at the hands of his peers throughout middle and high school. Despite his parents’ continued contacts with school administrators, nothing was done to assist him.

The film combines reenactments of segments of Nabozny’s story interspersed with commentary by those involved in the actual case. Nabozny, along with his mother, a teacher who tried to assist him, and the counselors and attorneys who worked with him along the way, provide emotional testimony about their experiences. Nabozny and his mother describe the feelings of helplessness they experienced when they asked school officials for assistance and were told, “Boys will be boys” and “If he is going to act so gay, he has to expect this will happen.” It is an inspiring story designed both to create empathy for the victims and to push bystanders to take appropriate action.

The video is approximately 40 minutes, making it the perfect length for an in-service for school personnel, an information session for parents and the community, or for use with a school-age population. It comes complete with a viewer’s guide that shares an overview of the film, suggestions for group viewing and suggested discussion questions. It is free and available through the Southern Poverty Law Center’s Teaching Tolerance website at tolerance.org/.

Reviewed by Resource Reviews editor Kelly Duncan.

Kelly Duncan is an assistant professor in the University of South Dakota Division of Counseling and Psychology in Education. Contact her at Kelly.Duncan@usd.edu.

Letters to the editor: ct@counseling.org

Counseling and Drama: Psychodrama a Deux by Marvin G. Knittel, Xlibris Publishing

This book covers the fundamentals of psychodrama and presents nine case studies as a succinct practical guide in the use of psychodrama as a one-on-one counseling method. This resource is unique to the counseling field and is an outstanding counseling tool both for professional counselors and counselors-in-training.

Homeopathy and Mental Health Care: Integrative Practice, Principles

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Writing tools for easy authoring

The summer after my elementary graduation, I attended an institute with the hopes of taking courses in science, as I had twice before. My new high school principal had other ideas. She knew I was destined to follow in my older sister's footsteps, whose interest was in biological sciences. And what skill does every scientist need to have when his or her brain is already full of science? Typing.

So, against my objections, I was enrolled in a touch-typing class. I spent two hours per day for five weeks keeping my head up and synchronizing my carriage returns with my left hand. I started at a slick 13 words per minute. While my classmates blossomed (30, then 40, then 50 words per minute), I struggled. By the end of the five weeks, using the touch-typing method, I was up to … 13 words per minute. The day of the parent open house, I was awarded the role of “classroom timer,” which consisted of holding the stopwatch and calling out “start” and “stop” for the demonstrations that day. The instructor wanted me nowhere near a typewriter when the parents were there.

In 35 years, my typing speed has increased by breaking all the rules. I type with four fingers of my left hand and one finger of my right hand (guess which one). And what I still lack in speed, I have made up for by using various digital writing resources. This month’s column focuses on tools that counselors can use to assist their writing, whether it be academic, clinical or personal.

Word processing software
Word processors have to fit like a comfortable pair of shoes, and everyone has their own preference for style. By the time I sit down, I have thought through most of what I am going to write, so I need a word processing program that opens fast and has minimal bells and whistles. Many of the commercial products for word processing contain options (sometimes called bloatware) that I will never learn and, I imagine, never use. I do not want to wait for updates or for long loads of support files, so I tend to prefer simple word processors with simple interfaces. That way, I can get to writing and worry about format details later. Changing word processors does not flummox me, but I have colleagues who stay with one type and version of word processing for the sake of familiarity, despite any problems they may encounter. Listed are some free alternatives to expensive word processing software.

- OpenOffice (PC): openoffice.org
- NeoOffice (Mac): neooffice.org
- Bean (Mac): bean-owc.com
- AbiWord (Mac/PC/Linux): abisource.com
- Jarte (PC): jarte.com
- Thinkfree (online): member.thinkfree.com
- Zoho (online): zoho.com
- Google Docs (online): docs.google.com

Writing distraction free
Computers have grown capable of communicating instantaneously through e-mail, Twitter feeds and RSS feeds, and all of these random distractions can interrupt your writing workflow because we have been trained to answer every buzzer, bell and ding that comes our way. Some writers like to listen to music as they write. I find lyrics and familiar melodies too distracting when I am composing words in my head, but I do like tonal noise for cutting out other household or office sounds. I use web-streamed music while I write, selecting ambient music or music from other cultures whose language I do not know. Thus, the melody and words do not get in the way of my composing.

Some people need to have a clear desktop when they try to write. There are inventive software methods that shut off notifications and fill the screen with nothing but a blank canvas for writing. Of course, Merlin Mann of the website 43 Folders eschews distraction-free writing software if the real issue is that the author does not care about the project.

- “First, care” (43 Folders): tinyurl.com/9dk9j6
- Tricks and tips for distraction-free writing: tinyurl.com/24sbqe
- Directory of distraction-free writing: tinyurl.com/7wrgly
- Web-based distraction-free writing: tinyurl.com/2d4kg8g
- WriteRoom: tinyurl.com/5b6cyo
- Dark Room: tinyurl.com/fgmnr
- JDarkRoom (multi-platform distraction-free writing): tinyurl.com/2fjlyb
- CreaWriter (customizable Mac distraction-free writing): creawriter.com
- OmninWriter (Mac): ommwriter.com

Text-completion software
Many word processors have text completion set for a word but not for longer strings of text. Are you tired of retyping a phrase that you commonly use over and over? In that case, look for an autotyper program to work with your word processor.

- TextExpander (Mac): tinyurl.com/25mgpm
- Typinator (Mac): tinyurl.com/3wuznl
- TextBeast (PC): asbware.com
- Texter (PC): texter.en.softonic.com

Autocorrect software
Autocorrect software will spell check and make preset corrections for commonly misspelled words. For example, I have a habit of mistyping “information” as “infomration.” After years of backspacing to correct my mistake, I installed an autocorrect program that saves me a lot of time and frustration. Autocorrect software comes with a database of frequent mistypes, and I have personalized it to include some of my most common errors.

- Typinator (Mac): tinyurl.com/3wuznl
- AutoText (PC): tinyurl.com/33vclnu
Autocorrect settings in Office: tinyurl.com/3xdshht
Autocorrect settings in Mac Snow Leopard: tinyurl.com/2e5g7c5

Thesaurus and dictionary
The need to keep a dictionary on my desk just to check the spelling of words has been eliminated by word processors’ built-in spell check programs. Built-in spell checks are occasionally incorrect, but a side effect is that they force me to take a good look at my writing.

If I want a clear definition of a word, I can go to a website, but this often results in long load times and navigating through a jungle of browser ads. Good dictionary and thesaurus software can cost a little, but it is robust and lacks the cumbersome adware. I often find myself overusing a few words as I write, and when I get stuck on a word, I use a thesaurus. My favorite is Visual Thesaurus, a stand-alone program that allows me to type in a word and receive a spider web-like javascript display of alternate words that I can click on for definitions.

Dicts.info applications: tinyurl.com/atsnvj
Dictionary software reviews: tinyurl.com/2f68fyc
Babylon Dictionary and Translations software (Mac): tinyurl.com/22rdl6
TheSage Dictionary and Thesaurus: tinyurl.com/254j7ac
Visual Thesaurus: visualthesaurus.com

Information managers
Information managers are software programs that allow you to save and organize materials for later use. When writing The Digital Psyway, I use an information manager to organize and hold websites and content that I draw on for the article. As I browse the Internet, I might run across an article that would be useful for a presentation I am giving months from now. With an information manager, I can save the website (or document, picture, presentation, pdf, video and so on), tag it, put it in a folder and store it until I need it. When it comes time to write the article or give the presentation, months of gathered information is all available for me to work with in a single place. Some services such as Evernote have both free and paid subscriptions. Others, such as Yojimbo, are stand-alone software that you purchase and use.

Evernote (Mac and PC): evernote.com
Yojimbo (Mac): tinyurl.com/2nqpw
VoodooPad (Mac): tinyurl.com/nhtj8
DEVONthink (Mac): tinyurl.com/5pmuw7
Microsoft OneNote (PC): tinyurl.com/5y5wou
Treepad (PC): treepad.com
Simplenote (online): simplenoteapp.com

Reference managing software
I miss the days of sitting in the library stacks, going from journal to journal as I chased down articles and references. What I don’t miss is typing those reference sections for manuscripts. Reference manager software can collect bibliographic information from library searches and organize it for easier review. After developing a reference database with most of my favorite sources, I can just check off the references I want to use, and the reference manager will output a formatted reference list. If your library search permits you to save pdf/html versions of full-text documents, the documents can be embedded in your reference software, eliminating the need for paper piles of articles. Because the database can be synced to your cloud storage (see the December 2010 Digital Psyway column), you can access your file cabinet of articles anywhere you hook into the Internet.

Reference Manager (PC): refman.com
Endnote (Mac and PC): endnote.com
Papers (Mac): tinyurl.com/3ya92v
RefWorks (online): refworks.com
Biblioscape (PC): biblioscape.com

I would encourage you to try some of these tools. Many are free, and the rest are low cost. See how adding digital support tools can help your professional writing.

You can find these and other links on The Digital Psyway companion site at digitalpsyway.net. Did we miss something? Submit your suggestions to the author at mjencius@kent.edu.

Marty Jencius is an associate professor of counseling and human development services at Kent State University.

Letters to the editor: ct@counseling.org
Mental health’s big white elephant

Bravo to the physicians for speaking against the upcoming cuts in Medicare reimbursements and the threat of refusal of accepting more patients in their medical practices. How come mental health professionals can’t follow this same pursuit? Our profession has a big white elephant in our presence for refusing to speak out against cuts in payments for providing mental health services to our clients. I will give you an example of what I am talking about.

Two years ago, one big, powerful health insurance company in central Massachusetts cut reimbursements from $55 to $50 for providing mental health services to their clients. There are two things wrong:

1) Why on earth are mental health professionals taking their clients for low pay?
2) Where is the threat from the profession to stop taking their clients when the rate dropped to $50?

I have more pet peeves with this provider. Last spring, they implemented a new conversion of billing claims with their contracted provider to pay mental health professionals. It has been a nightmare in getting paid on time. From June to November, I called the contact in provider relations to complain that I was not being paid for my services. Due to my constant telephone calling on a weekly basis, I was paid for one claim in October after I saw the client in April. In November, I was paid for two claims (after being overpaid twice) after I saw the client in June. As I write this blogpost, I still have not been paid for 10 claims between September and October due to their billing company losing the claims and my bookkeeper having to fax the claims to their supervisor.

Isn’t this ridiculous, and doesn’t it add insult to injury for fellow counselors?

Regarding low reimbursement rates, this health insurance company does not value the work that we do in our state. I am very disappointed with the leadership from both the mental health counselor and social work association for not speaking out on these two issues.

Regarding this horrible billing system, many complaints have been noted on their annual feedback form that the health insurance e-mailed to us to fill out this year.

You may ask why we continue to take their clients. There are two reasons:

1) In my area, many companies have switched from Blue Cross to this provider who has cheaper rates.
2) Getting private-pay clients is not happening. In fact, many working families are now on the state Medicaid system due to not being able to purchase an affordable health insurance commercial program.

What can we do about these issues?
1) The state social work and mental health counselor associations need to speak out against this insulting, low reimbursement rate.
2) They also need to meet with this provider to negotiate a high reimbursement rate to accept their clients.
3) If the above two tactics don’t work, then I advocate that the two associations call for a statewide boycott of accepting more clients from this provider.

I don’t know if the velvet glove approach will work.

Robbin Miller is a counselor who specializes in mindfulness meditation, positive psychology and cognitive behavioral therapies. She is also a volunteer cable access producer and cohost of her show, Miller Chat, in Massachusetts.

Rebecca Daniel-Burke oversees the ACA blog project. For questions and to find out how to become a blogger, contact her at rdanielburke@counseling.org. To access the ACA blog page, visit my.counseling.org/.

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Come meet your group’s newest member, the GEICO Gecko. ACA members could get an additional discount on car insurance.
Picture this: Somewhere, a counselor sits with a client who is struggling to make progress. Traditional talk therapy isn't moving the client forward. The counselor thinks, “I wish I were more of an artist because I’d love to try out a painting exercise with this client.” Substitute photography, dance, music or any other of the wide range of creative interventions for the word painting, and you’ll find the reason why so many counselors hesitate to fully embrace creativity in counseling — they think they have to be experts at the particular artistic enterprise themselves.

That idea couldn’t be further from the truth, says Heather Trepal, associate professor of counseling at the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) and president of the Association for Creativity in Counseling, a division of the American Counseling Association. “I think some people get afraid of creativity because they think it needs to be creative arts — that you need to be a van Gogh, be trained in an instrument or really be an expert in whatever you might try with your clients,” Trepal says. “Creativity can be anything. It can be any out-of-the-box moment that helps a client to therapeutically move.”

Thinking and working creatively as a counselor is key to finding an approach that’s right for each client, Trepal says. “Clients are as individualized as they come, and I don’t think there’s a one-size-fits-all approach to counseling. It’s so important to find what works and what speaks to our clients, and it’s not always traditional talk therapy.”

Suzanne Degges-White agrees. An associate professor of counseling and development at Purdue University Calumet who also works in private practice, Degges-White remembers one client who made significant progress after being introduced to the sand tray. The client, a 42-year-old woman, was struggling with her husband’s controlling behavior. So Degges-White invited her to create her world in the sand tray.

“She was a little surprised at first that the sand tray and figurines were not just for kids, but she moved easily to the shelves and began to contemplate the images represented,” says Degges-White, who coedited the 2010 book Integrating the Expressive Arts Into Counseling Practice: Theory-Based Interventions with Nancy Davis. “[The client] would pick up a figure, hold it in her hand and pause as she apparently was reflecting on the issues she was facing.”

After about 15 minutes of setting up the sand tray, the client began to share her life story. “She noted that she was a small, scared bunny trying to hide behind a shrub,” Degges-White says. “Her husband was the fierce lion standing on top of the mountain, able to see whatever she was doing wherever she went. Even her children were depicted by small animals cowering in fear.”

Although Degges-White primarily used talk therapy with the client during the next few months, the woman would often return to the sand tray on her own. “It was as if she was using it to acknowledge the progress she was making toward her goals and to make tangible her progress for her own sense of forward movement,” Degges-White says. As a result, the client made headway in initiating discussions and addressing issues with her husband, who was willing to change his behavior to maintain his relationship with his wife and children. “At our termination session, she asked to do a final tray,” says Degges-White, a member of ACA and ACC. “The main images had shifted dramatically from her first session with the sand. Here, she had her husband represented as a smaller lion standing beside the mountain — no longer did she feel that she was under his predator’s gaze.”

The client chose to represent herself with an elephant because she had grown to see herself as a stronger player in her relationship with her husband. She told Degges-White that although they often move slowly, elephants are powerful, which perfectly symbolized how she was now feeling. She said counseling had enabled her to “move carefully and deliberately through her world as she uprooted trees in her path.”

Adds Degges-White, “She acknowledged that the ability to ‘step outside’ of her problems and work with a metaphor or...
visual image had given her a perspective that helped her see how important change really was in her life and relationship if it was to continue.”

Bringing creativity into the counseling session is all about uncovering new perspectives and new solutions for issues that are plaguing clients, Degges-White says. “To encourage clients to exercise creativity is, in essence, to give clients permission and confidence to expand their current ways of thinking, believing and doing into more successful or productive processes. Creativity is about breaking out of the patterns or ruts that keep us from reaching our goals.”

Creative expression often serves as the pathway for unearthing feelings that were previously hidden beneath the surface, Degges-White says. “The arts, in brief, make the unconscious conscious. They bring light to the darker recesses of our psyches. Moreover, they do it in a nonthreatening way in which we frequently reveal hidden sides of ourselves [through] metaphors or visual representations rather than through a stereotypic, psychoanalytic talk-therapy way.”

The art of a science
Creativity has long been part of the counseling profession, says Stella Kerl-McClain, associate professor and codirector of the Community Counseling Program at Lewis and Clark College. “Counselors have been more creative than other mental health professionals,” says Kerl-McClain, a member of ACA and ACC. “Counselors have been less tied to the science. While we do have research, we’ve been more open to the art side of counseling since the profession started.”

She points out that creativity is particularly relevant to counselors because they cannot use the same standard protocol with all of their clients. Creative counselors let each session “emerge,” she says, following the client’s lead rather than mapping out a plan beforehand.

Creativity also goes hand-in-hand with counseling because creativity is primal, says Stacey Goldstein, who has worked as a counselor and supervisor with several nonprofit agencies over the past nine years and is now transitioning into private practice. “We are all creative beings,” Goldstein says. “It’s beyond function. Look throughout history. Look around us. Creativity is evident in many cultures throughout history with elaborate architecture, dress, jewelry, dancing, drumming, paintings, murals, imagery and, eventually, photography and other modern mediums. It continues to evolve. It documents history and shares a story.”

“Even if we don’t consider ourselves an artist, many things around us and about us are [artistic],” says Goldstein, a member of ACA and ACC. “We are the artists of our own journey. This is why it’s so important for counseling. The connection or relationship with clients is fundamental to counseling, and what better way to make that connection than by tapping into a spiritual place that has the potential for healing?”

Being creative as a counselor means more than simply incorporating expressive arts, says Victoria Kress, an ACC Board trustee and chair of ACC’s Graduate Student Committee. “Creativity in counseling is about clients and counselors creating and identifying new ways, paths and approaches,” says Kress, who is also a professor and director of the Community Counseling Clinic at Youngstown State University. “Creativity is about clients and counselors being more cognitively flexible, opening themselves to new ideas and experiences, tolerating ambiguity and garnering a sense of enthusiasm, energy and playfulness. This is the backbone of creativity in counseling. Expressive arts activities only serve as a vehicle for inspiring creativity.”

Creative approaches can work with almost any client, Trepal says, but they are especially useful with clients who are stuck in a rut and for whom talk therapy is ineffective. She emphasizes that creative interventions can take many different forms: shooting hoops while having a counseling session with kids or teens, encouraging survivors of domestic violence to make collages of what healthy relationships look like or using photos when working with older clients to spark memories and stories. “Creativity matters in counseling because different clients respond to different approaches,” she says.

“Creative techniques may be especially helpful when working with clients who have limited verbal ability, who are working with issues/experiences that are difficult or traumatic to verbalize, or who tend to get stuck in rationalizations or verbal circles in sessions,” Degges-White says. “Children, by nature, are creative beings. Inviting them to use visual arts, drama play, movement or music to express themselves in sessions arises very naturally.” Counseling may also seem less threatening or intimidating to adolescents when they’re able to engage in something other than talk therapy, she says.

“Some adults may be hesitant to engage in expressing their creative sides due to self-consciousness and a fear of judgment — by self or by the counselor,” Degges-White adds. “However, even with reluctant adults, a counselor can bring expressive modalities into session by proper introduction of the
Just as it does with almost all clients, creativity offers benefits to almost all counselors, Degges-White contends. “Any counselor in any setting could successfully incorporate the expressive arts into their work. Virtually all clients enter counseling because they are wrestling with an issue for which their current problem-solving skills are insufficient. Ergo, creative imagining and experiencing are ways in which new and innovative solutions may be found.”

Trepal echoes those sentiments and once again emphasizes that counselors shouldn’t shy away from creative interventions because of a lack of “expertise.”

“Everybody can be creative,” she says. “Don’t let your experience limit you. Even if you are not a trained photojournalist, you can still use photos in counseling.”

Therapy through a tape recorder

Kerl-McClain recalls a tense situation that she defused with a little creative thinking and an unorthodox counseling technique. At the time, she was working with clients in assisted-living facilities. She was called in when one couple kept engaging in repeated fights. The husband would try to explain something to his wife, who had Alzheimer’s disease, and she wouldn’t remember or would become upset. In turn, the husband would get angry and yell at her.

Kerl-McClain first tried to teach the husband to be kinder but soon realized that wasn’t working; whenever his wife got upset, so did he. So instead, Kerl-McClain had the husband speak kind and loving words into a tape recorder. Then, whenever the wife became agitated, she would put on the headphones and listen to her husband’s calming voice, which soothed her. When the wife calmed down, so did the husband.

The tape recorder and the sand tray are just two examples of creative interventions in counseling. Trepal notes the wide range of others — music, arts, play, photography, movement or dance, pets and even plants, to name just a few. Trepal finds music especially helpful in her work at a clinic at UTSA, where she teaches a practicum.

Many of the teen clients are mandated to come to the clinic by the court system and find nothing wrong with sitting through an entire counseling session without saying
a word. Instead of forcing them to talk or just sitting in silence, Trepal often tries connecting over music. She might ask clients about their favorite singer and what speaks to them about that performer’s music. Sometimes, Trepal and a client will play the music or write down lyrics and then talk about how it connects to the client’s life. “It’s interesting how different things speak to different people,” she says.

For counselors just beginning to integrate some creativity into their sessions, Degges-White suggests the addition of dramatic role play. “Clients may be willing to try out new responses and patterns of interaction within the safe environment of a counselor’s office, and as the counselor grows more comfortable with encouraging dramatic role play, they may begin to encourage greater explorations of playing out different parts by the client.”

Another easy step is adding visual arts, she says. “One activity might include using a body outline to represent the inner turmoil, pain or past traumas that may currently be negatively influencing the client’s life. These can be life-sized actual outlines drawn of the client or smaller, photocopied, simple outlines. The client can be led through a body scan guided visualization and then asked to use art materials — colored pencils, crayons, markers, paints, magazines for collages — to tell their ‘embodied story’ via creative expression. This can be a very powerful experience. Counselors, as in any setting in which deep and significant trauma is addressed, must be ready to provide support and emotional triage if needed.”

When teaching counseling students about how to integrate creativity, Kerl-McClain often uses the example of musical chronology, an idea developed by Thelma Duffey, founding president of ACC. The exercise asks clients to go through their life and identify the different songs they connected with during each time period. “The songs access all kinds of things, including a sense of identity that you might not otherwise be able to reach,” Kerl-McClain says. (For more on this creative technique, read “A Musical Chronology and the Emerging Life Song” on page 32.)

Another idea is encouraging clients to try out yoga poses or other movements. Degges-White says this helps clients “be in their bodies” in ways they don’t normally experience. “Helping clients get back in touch with their physical presence and the space that they claim in this world can be truly enlightening for those who move through life in a stilted or shrinking manner,” she says.

Another gentle way to introduce creativity is through photography, Degges-White says. “Inviting a client to use their cell phone or a camera to take a digital diary of their day can be a powerful awakening in many instances. If they are struggling with depression and seldom leave their home, the digital imagery will illustrate how they are limiting their lives. If they are engaging in risky behaviors or dealing with codependency or adolescents being in places that are poor choices, the digital diaries can bring these situations to light.”

Goldstein agrees. She grew up with photography — her father is a professional photographer, and her mother is a professional videographer. “Watching my family connect with others through the lens of a camera and the art of memories has ingrained in me the innate ability to blend the arts as a medium for connection, engagement, communication and healing for myself as well as others,” she says. “Utilizing my life experience with imagery and my life’s work in the helping profession, I have chosen to fuse my practices and my experience to integrate a creative, holistic approach to healing and counseling.”

Goldstein offers a handful of ways to incorporate photography into counseling. One way to increase mindfulness with clients is to ask them to walk through a park or someplace else of interest while taking photos of what they see. In session, the client and the counselor can explore what the person noticed and what feelings came to the surface. Other ideas Goldstein suggests include incorporating role play by having clients act out their feelings or perceptions of what was taking place in family photos, adding a photo to the empty chair technique or, in a group setting, asking members to bring in pictures or magazine clippings of things they want to let go of and then staging a virtual bonfire.

“Photography is a powerful tool,” Goldstein says. “It’s in effect a third eye or a unique perspective. When using a camera, you look through the lens and see things you may not have considered, or you may find something in a photograph otherwise unnoticed. When looking at a photo, everyone sees something different and unique. It’s your own journey.”

Goldstein adds that photography is particularly practical because it can be used with a variety of counseling theories and techniques. Plus, cameras are fairly affordable, even if clients just use disposable models. “Most anyone can use [cameras] without a lesson, but at the same time, they can become an ‘artist,’” she says. “I think this can be very empowering.”

**Hungry for hints**

ACC was founded in 2004 to offer a “divisional home” to counselors wishing to focus on creative, diverse and relational approaches across all theories and types of counseling, Trepal says. Although creativity has always been a part of counseling, she says, it wasn’t until ACC’s inception that counselors implementing creativity in all kinds of counseling theories could come together and connect.

“Counselors are hungry for how-tos, resources and examples,” Trepal says. That need was evident at the 2010 ACA Annual Conference & Exposition in Pittsburgh, where ACC hosted a creative Day of Learning. Even at 7:30 in the morning, one session was standing room only, Trepal points out. In addition to conference presentations, Trepal says ACC tries to meet the need for practical information with the *Journal for Creativity in Mental Health*, which details the many ways counselors are using creative interventions in their work.

Counselors might be especially hungry for information on working creatively with
Ten tips for increasing creativity

Counseling Today asked several counselors for their lists of do’s and don’ts when it comes to integrating creativity into counseling work.

■ “Don’t limit yourself by thinking, ‘I am not a good artist, I’m not a photographer, I don’t do yoga, I don’t have an herb garden,’” says Heather Trepal, president of the Association for Creativity in Counseling. “Remember, it’s about the process, not the product.”

■ “Do invite clients of any age to exercise their creativity,” says Suzanne Degges-White, associate professor at Purdue University Calumet. “No matter what age we are, we can be stuck in our typical ways of solving our problems — ineffective or not!”

■ “Do seek supervision, research and consult on the appropriateness and effectiveness of your method,” says Stacey Goldstein, a counselor transitioning into private practice.

■ “Do ask clients to try only those activities or experiences that you, yourself, feel comfortable experiencing,” Degges-White says.

■ “Do be aware of the depth that the creative process may lead a client to experience,” Degges-White says. “Always make sure you leave time at the end of the session to help your client transition from the creative world back into everyday reality.”

■ “Do tie creative interventions to evidence-based practices and be sure to have a solid case conceptualization,” says Victoria Kress, ACC Board trustee and chair of the ACC Graduate Student Committee.

■ “Do seek out resources,” Trepal says. “They’re out there to help you.”

■ “Do not in any way judge or assess clients’ work,” Degges-White says. “It is important that you take on the role of witness, not critic, when clients engage in the creative arts.”

■ “Do not force any clients to ‘create’ if they are not ready or invested,” Degges-White says. “Even children should be able to make choices about their therapy time.”

■ “Don’t underestimate your own creativity and ability to develop creative interventions,” Kress says.

— Lynne Shallcross
in supervision or to practice with another counselor, she says.

Degges-White also gives a nod to the idea of practice. “Counselors must work through their own resistance,” she says. “We must be willing to engage in the activities that we would like to encourage clients to experience. I think many of us are hesitant to try out new activities for the same reasons our clients might be — the inner critic! We, as counselors, may wrestle with the same fear of judgment or looking foolish that our clients hold. However, if I personally had not experienced my own feelings of trepidation and clumsiness as I first used dramatic role play or movement activities myself, I would feel like a fraud as I invited clients to try these things for themselves in session.”

Degges-White says counselors who feel the need to come off as the “expert” to clients must let that notion go. “We need to remember that our role is to facilitate solutions, not manufacture them,” she says. “Personal growth and development are what clients seek when they show up in our offices, but these are both processes that clients must move through at their own speed. Using the expressive or creative arts allows many clients to let go of their quest for answers and allows solutions and new ways of being to emerge as they experience the process of creative engagement.”

An additional ACA resource for counselors interested in using creativity in their work is The Creative Arts in Counseling, fourth edition (order #72909) by Samuel T. Gladding ($29.95 for ACA members; $48.95 for nonmembers). To order, visit the ACA online bookstore at counseling.org/publications or call 800.422.2648 ext. 222.

In addition, ACC will be hosting a Day of Learning focused on creativity in counseling on March 26 at the ACA Conference in New Orleans.

This informative DVD presented by Ken Rigby, an international expert on peer victimization and author of several books on bullying, gives clear, practical guidance on how to prevent and respond to bullying in high schools. Using actors and role play, the DVD features a typical bullying scenario and then demonstrates how the following six methods can be applied to the situation: the Disciplinary Approach, Restorative Practice, Strengthening the Victim, Student Mediation, the Support Group Method, and the Method of Shared Concern. By showing the advantages and weaknesses of each method, the counselor or teacher can see how each possible solution might work when handled with confidence and skill.

As well as being an empowerment tool, the DVD is entertaining and will be an invaluable resource for training school personnel in how to deal with this common and insidious problem. The disc includes a PDF booklet by Dr. Rigby with a summary of important information and discussion guidelines.

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Have you ever been driving along in your car, listening to the radio, and heard a song that completely took you back in time? All of a sudden, you remember what you were doing, how you were feeling and who you were with.

That seems to be a common experience for many people. In fact, just listening to a song can take many of us back to old sensations, excitements, fears and hopes. With a click of a button, we’re there.

Music is a medium long used by educators, counselors and other mental health professionals when working with children, adolescents, individuals, groups and couples.

Thelma’s experience

For as far back as I can remember, music has been an incredibly wonderful form of entertainment, comfort and fun for me. Many of my memories and associations are recalled simply upon hearing a song that was playing at another point in time. Some of my favorite pastimes involve listening to live music, both in large and small venues, and spending a day at home with my music or the radio. I enjoy all sorts of music and feel especially connected to people when music is part of our shared experience.

Professionally, I have used music in my counseling practice for more than 20 years with people of all ages, and I regularly introduce its use to graduate counseling students at our university. However, I first started using music in my work more than 30 years ago in an area where many children identified as “at-risk” faced unique educational, cultural, economic and social challenges. At the time, I was a Title I teacher in a junior high school where a number of 14- to 16-year-old students were reading below a third-grade level. In addition, many were challenged by intergenerational culture clashes, English-as-a-second-language issues and poverty. Others struggled with the effects of gang violence and the untimely deaths of siblings, parents and other family members.

Unfortunately, the books appropriate for these students’ reading levels were far more elementary than the students’ experiences or worldviews. Finding resources that could simultaneously engage students, inspire their interest and afford them dignity was challenging. As a culminating project for my master’s degree, I developed a reading resource manual that used popular music to help the students develop literal, inferential and evaluative reading skills. We’d work in small groups and listen to the songs. Using the manual as a guide, each person would respond to a series of developmentally aligned questions and engage in readings and discussions based on the music.

We had such fun using music they had selected — music that was important
to them. Using this method, a number of the students developed reading skills they could then transfer to their work in the content areas. Interestingly, a valuable by-product of this work was the cognitive and emotional processing that took place. It was apparent the music helped students connect with one another and helped bring context to difficult life experiences.

Later on, through my work with children with chronic and terminal illnesses and their families, I was again reminded of how fragile life is and how wonderful it can be when people connect with music that inspires, comforts, entertains or relays feelings for which we may not have words. That was when I first began developing an intervention I refer to as A Musical Chronology and the Emerging Life Song.

Shane’s experience

I have been a musician for the past three decades, so music has been central to my self-expression as well as to my connection with others. In my professional life, I have done a good portion of my clinical work in addiction treatment centers. There I discovered that music was a powerful tool for expression, communication and connection among the clients.

In my journey of playing music with others, I have found that the experience can transcend individual performances to create powerful moments. Other times, playing music can feel frustrating and stilted. It is in these moments when, despite my best efforts, the music feels flat and empty.

When artists are able to create musical works that connect with the human experience, those are the songs that resonate with us. I think the best songs — the ones with which we connect — speak to our inner experiences. When performed with authenticity, these songs seem to capture the subtle textures and profound moments in our lives, encapsulating and preserving powerful moments. The musical chronology speaks to these moments.

With today’s availability of libraries full of music, clients can easily access songs that are representative of their pasts, presents and futures. A few years ago, Thelma introduced me to the musical chronology, and I have used it in my practice, particularly with adolescents. I find that most clients are eager and excited to share this aspect of their lives. When listening to songs and sharing their chronologies with me, they express their experiences, losses and hopes more fully.

What is a musical chronology?

A musical chronology is akin to a musical scrapbook. The chronology uses meaningful music to help clients connect with feelings, thoughts and memories, identify relevant life experiences and bring perspective to these experiences. One goal of the chronology is to help clients appreciate the good they have experienced, while also coming to terms with experiences or situations they have left unreconciled. The hope is that by remembering the good, clients can give context to their experiences, and by coming face-to-face with difficult hurts while accessing a more realistic and compassionate lens, they will be better able to put those hurts to rest.

We have used music as a chronology with individuals, couples and groups in our practices, and we have presented variations of this process at conferences and workshops that address issues of grief and loss, addiction and intimacy development. We have also used music in this context with reminiscence, people invested in creating meaningful life reviews and older adults — in particular those seeking perspective on life events.

More recently, Catherine Somody, a longtime counselor and educator, conducted a phenomenological study, “Meaning and Connections in Older Populations: A Phenomenological Study of Reminiscence Using A Musical Chronology and the Emerging Life Song.” Participants ranged in age from 74 to 88. In describing her experience with the chronology, one participant said, “It helped me live a little better with missing my sister. … She and I sang together. We were four years apart; we sang together when we were kids. In fact, just this morning I was talking to her out my kitchen window. I can actually do that now.”

“The power of music and the chronology to evoke emotion was

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expressed by all participants,” Somody noted when discussing her research. “All reported increased self-awareness and reconnection with many important memories and values.” She went on to add, “The recall of happy memories added to the enjoyment of the process. Recall of hardships contributed to feelings of pride and accomplishment. Some participants connected with feelings of regret.” And consistent with the chronology mission, “Many connected with the experience of forgiveness and ‘opened the door to hope.’”

The chronology process

Stage 1: Have clients select music that speaks to them or has been meaningful to them throughout time, and then have them arrange the order chronologically to illustrate their personal story or “life themes.” The counselor and client discuss the use of music to revisit historical events and experiences. The counselor explains the process and, together with the client, determines the structure for its use in counseling. This includes discussing the number of songs per session, session length and format. The process is flexible and can be adapted to client needs and levels of development. Clients create their anthology using CDs, audiotapes, flash drives or iPods/iPhones. They may also include lyrics. The counselor can assist with any of the steps in this process. We generally do.

Stage 2: The second step involves using the musical selections as vehicles to revisit clients’ experiences. In conjunction with a counselor, clients can reconsider limiting belief systems or perspectives that interfere with their ability to reach their goals. The chronology provides opportunities to revisit attitudes born from difficult experiences — attitudes that influence or reinforce our expectations of life, ourselves and one another.

Stage 3: After compiling the music, clients select a song that represents their current life experience. This song serves as a reality check, one designed to help cut through denial, bargaining or other protective strategies. Although most of us can “move on” in life after difficult experiences, it is more challenging for us to move forward, meaning to carry with us a humble respect for and understanding of our humanness and the humanness of others, regardless of the outcome of our efforts. During this step, clients can begin to consider their experiences from an alternative, more compassionate and productive perspective. It is here that clients consider possible adjustments, try them on and begin to come to terms with life as it is.

Stage 4: The fourth step involves selecting a song that represents what clients hope to experience in their futures. This song (or songs) serves as a metaphor for their counseling goals.

Speaking volumes

Music speaks of our world and communicates our unique mix of cultural and personal experiences. While we may identify with important music from a particular genre, many of us also connect deeply with music from different generations and cultures. Abel, 52 years old, relayed that bands such as Air Supply, Creedence Clearwater...
Revival and The Guess Who brought back memories of his youth spent in a small Guatemalan village. Despite his current struggles with medical and financial problems, he recounted the classic rock of his youth with a soft smile and a twinkle in his eye. For a moment, he was 17 again. When we connect through music, we can know each other better because of it.

On the horizon, exciting links appear to exist between listening to music, brain functioning and expression of emotions. One example involves using the musical chronology with neurofeedback training. Neurofeedback, a form of biofeedback, uses real-time electrical signals from the brain, known as electroencephalography (EEG), to address problems associated with EEG frequency dysregulation. “The theory behind neurofeedback suggests that too much or too little of these EEG frequencies, like beta waves, can lead to maladaptive behaviors,” advises counselor and neurofeedback consultant Julie Strentzsch.

Combining neurofeedback with the musical chronology may help counselors and clients work through past losses. Neurofeedback data could be used while processing the emotions associated with clients’ musical selections. We are excited about using these modalities in combination to harness the power of music and modern technology.

At the same time that Gordon Lightfoot’s “Carefree Highway” speaks to the experience of looking back to the people and places we used to know, Abba sings “Thank You for the Music.” And for the time when we appear to be traveling, like the Wallflowers sing, with “One Headlight,” our music can help us revisit past experiences more thoughtfully. Bob Dylan, Johnny Cash, Bob Seger, Bruce Springsteen and countless other music artists tell stories to which many of us can relate — stories we can have fun with and borrow from as we integrate our own circumstances. And for those of us who simply like music, at the end of the day, and in the words of Billy Joel, “It’s Still Rock and Roll to Me.”

Thelma Duffey is professor of counseling and department chair at the University of Texas at San Antonio. She was the founding president of the Association for Creativity in Counseling, serves on the American Counseling Association Governing Council and serves as editor for the Journal of Creativity in Mental Health. Her book, Creative Interventions in Grief and Loss Therapy: When the Music Stops, a Dream Dies, is published by the Haworth Press. Contact her at Thelma.Duffey@utsa.edu.

Shane Haberstroh is associate professor of counseling at the University of Texas at San Antonio. He is past president of the Association for Creativity in Counseling and associate editor for the Journal of Creativity in Mental Health. Contact him at Shane.Haberstroh@utsa.edu.

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A summons calling a counselor to court brings with it enumerable questions and anxieties. What should you say to the judge? How should you present your credentials? Is it ethical to answer the opposing attorney’s questions? These concerns are enough to make some counselors avoid the court system altogether. But others have found that providing expert witness testimony complements their skill set and ignites their curiosity even as it helps to build their bank accounts.

The evolution from feeling fearful of the legal field to being fulfilled by its many opportunities is likely to include specialized training, anecdotal research and good old trial and error. Most counselors who have spent a significant amount of time in court as an expert witness will attest that the latter has a strong effect.

“My first court experience was a sex abuse case,” says Richard Stride, a psychologist and licensed professional counselor in Wenatchee, Wash. “The attorney that asked me to help didn’t prepare me at all. In Colorado at the time, in order to be qualified as an expert witness, the attorneys had to ask you questions, cross-examine you and then agree. I had no idea that that process was happening. There were six attorneys on the opposing side. It was a grueling process.”

As a result, Stride, who has specialized in forensic mental health since 1995, always brings what he calls a “court notebook” that includes his résumé, transcripts and validity and reliability data concerning any psychological test he has administered in the case. “I have all that information at my fingertips because I came in for my first experience very unprepared,” he says. “I couldn’t remember every class I’d ever taken — and they do ask those questions to disrupt your testimony and disqualify you.”

Which kind of witness?

Betsy Neely, an American Counseling Association member who teaches in the Forensic Psychology Department at Argosy University in Atlanta, has developed a workshop to help counselors understand their role in legal proceedings. “When someone from the helping professions enters the courtroom, they are entering a different culture,” she notes. “They don’t understand why the questions they would like to answer have not been asked, or why the questions they have been asked are not the ones they’d like to answer. It can be very frustrating.”

In Georgia and many other jurisdictions, Neely explains, a significant difference exists between expert witnesses and “lay witnesses” or “witnesses of fact.” Mental health experts must be qualified as “legal experts” and demonstrate a mastery of the research in all the areas in which they are testifying. As such, these expert witnesses can draw conclusions about a case, but often they have little personal connection to the complainants and defendants in a case. In contrast, mental health lay witnesses commonly are in direct contact with the members of the case, frequently serving as their counselors well before the legal system became involved. These witnesses are not allowed to draw conclusions and must rely only on the facts of their interactions with their clients.

Neely offers the example of a fictional child custody case. “If you’re just being a fact witness, a caseworker or case manager, then your testimony is going to be limited to whether there’s food in the fridge, if the house is clean, if the mother’s eyes were red. You can only say, ‘These were things that I observed.’”

Anne Marie “Nancy” Wheeler, an attorney who operates the ACA Insurance Trust’s risk management helpline, says she frequently gets questions from counselors about serving as witnesses in court cases. “Perhaps someone’s being harassed on the job and that client comes to you because she’s having trouble dealing with it all. Later on, her attorney wants you to testify, and he will label you as an expert witness,
asking you to render an opinion about the situation,” explains Wheeler, coauthor of The Counselor and the Law, published by ACA. “If it’s truly in your client’s best interest for you to testify, it makes more sense to be a witness of fact, and not an ‘expert,’ which implies that you’re neutral. How can you be neutral when you’re really doing it for your client?”

“The role of an expert presumes there’s a non-bias that the court can rely on to make a decision, but I think a lot of attorneys confuse the roles,” she continues. “The expert witness’s job is almost like a teacher in court — to inform the court, to help the court resolve some kind of issue. The person doesn’t act as a client advocate but as someone who lends experience to the court. Many counselors fall into this role and end up feeling battered and abused by the process.”

One effective way for counselors to avoid feeling abused during legal proceedings is to educate themselves on the process before they are called into court. “I think it’s to educate themselves on the process — the court resolve some kind of issue. The person doesn’t act as a client advocate but as someone who lends experience to the court. Many counselors fall into this role and end up feeling battered and abused by the process.”

Getting prepared

Neely notes that talking to others who have spent time in the court system — counselors and other professionals alike — can be useful in helping counselors relieve anxiety and prepare themselves. She also recommends reading and rereading texts about clinicians involved in court proceedings.

Stride agrees 100 percent. “We know we live in a ‘credentialed’ society. You can’t possibly foresee every question. Even though a lot of them are typical, many are aimed at disrupting you or discrediting you in the eyes of the jury. Of course, it’s OK to say, ‘I don’t know,’ but one of the things that has helped me is getting the credential as a Certified Forensic Mental Health Evaluator through the National Board of Forensic Evaluators [NBFE].”

ACA has partnered with NBFE since 2004 to advance the forensic evaluator credentialing process. The NBFE’s certification requires a significant amount of footwork, including both written and oral exams. “It’s grueling from the fact that you have to have so much experience, be licensed for a certain amount of time, have worked in the court system, have referrals, do a workshop, take exams and so on, but it’s important because, traditionally, it’s only been psychiatrists and psychologists whom the courts felt were qualified to be witnesses,” Stride says. “We know that mental health counselors are just as qualified, so having a certification from a national board looks good.”

Becoming an expert witness can also help counselors build another revenue base. “I require a retainer upfront, and the amount can vary from $1,500 to $5,000, depending on the case. It can be very lucrative if you do three or four cases per month.” Marketing yourself is an important part of building a niche in this field, Stride says. He recommends that counselors maintain websites devoted to their courtroom experience and invest the time to get listed in the various expert directories.
Maryann Lucy, a counselor and ACA member in San Benito, Texas, is also certified by NBFE. She says her main motivation in serving as a witness in court cases remains using her expertise to help those in need. She explains that jurors face complicated, difficult decisions when it comes to child-related cases. “They need to have clear and concise information to assist them in understanding the nature of child responses and behaviors within the context of the developmental information that is available to us,” Lucy says. “They need witnesses to educate them on such topics as symptoms of abuse and delayed outcry.”

Lucy recommends finding a professional who can serve as a courtroom mentor. “Discuss your fears, plan rehearsal scenarios that will serve to educate you, and work on affirmations to overcome fear,” she says. “You are the professional. You know the part you played in this [client’s] experience. After testimony, process your experience and evaluate it with your mentor.”

**Do’s and don’ts in court**

Lucy describes her first court appearance as terrifying. “I had never done anything like this before and never experienced cross-examination,” she recalls. “I felt very intimidated but tried to keep the image of the child victim before me. I left believing I had ruined her case, only to find out that her perpetrator had been judged guilty.”

The experience made Lucy realize that she would need to “toughen up” to better serve her clients. Today, she emphasizes the importance of working with the lawyers involved ahead of time. “If I don’t hear from them after a subpoena, I start calling,” she says.

Stride says the most important thing for counselors to do is to go over questions in advance that the attorney will ask and to get input concerning potential cross-examination questions. He also emphasizes that counselors should work hard to present their information in a non-defensive manner. “When they challenge your credentials, certainly don’t embellish,” he says. “It’s OK to agree with them and say, ‘I don’t have a lot of experience in that. However, according to my evaluation …’ Sometimes, you have to keep repeating yourself. Stick with your results, and certainly don’t change your mind on the stand.”

George Cyphers, an ACA member and rehabilitation counselor education instructor at Kent State University, agrees that advance preparation is key. Cyphers, who also runs a private consulting business, built a career around employee disability assessments, serving as an expert witness in 14 states.

“I have learned over the years that this is a serious business because it involves a person’s life. You cannot afford to hold yourself out as an expert unless you are willing to invest time and effort to prepare thoroughly for the challenge of cross-examination,” he says. “You must be thoroughly grounded in their field. In addition to being a subject-matter expert, you must be aware that the framing of opinions is a skill, as [is] the articulation and defense of an opinion in the stress of cross-examination.”

Cyphers also notes the distinction between courtroom and deposition testimony. “Courtrooms are the theaters in which trials take place. … Depositions are much harder work. Court testimony takes place in front of a judgmental audience — a jury, with a referee — a judge. Depositions are much more open to being turned into a free-for-all, and there is no one to admonish the bad behavior that attorneys can sometimes engage in.”

Among Cyphers’ additional pieces of advice for counselors serving as witnesses: dress modestly; speak clearly; only answer the question that was asked; and refrain from humor during testimony. “When serving as an expert witness, remember that none of the attorneys involved is your attorney,” he says. “They all represent someone else, and they all have as an agenda to vigorously prosecute their particular point of view.”

Richard Knowdell is a nationally certified counselor and longtime ACA member whose San Jose, Calif.-based career counseling firm offers vocational evaluations of those going through no-fault divorce proceedings. It’s beneficial for counselors to know ahead of time that the courtroom experience is nothing like the old *Perry Mason* TV show, Knowdell says. He recommends that counselors spend time in a courtroom to observe the real-life behavior of judges, attorneys and witnesses.

Knowdell emphasizes the importance of counselors having a clear opinion backed up by solid facts. He also suggests that counselors be prepared for the legal system’s slow pace. “You need to be patient, as most of the time your 9 a.m. case will not actually be called by the judge until 11 a.m. But keep in mind that your ‘meter is running.’ As an expert witness, your chargeable time starts the minute you leave your office and continues until you return to the office.”

K. Joe Heard, an ACA member in private practice in Benton, Ark., has testified in more than 100 court hearings. He stresses the importance of obtaining documented consent from all parties so the counselor can communicate freely with the attorneys and judge. He adds that counselors should turn off their cell phones.
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in the courtroom, dress professionally and remember to address the court politely using “sir,” “ma’am,” and “Your Honor.”

“It is OK to take notes in with you and ask the court if you can refer to them. Just be aware that anything you carry into court is subject to review,” Heard says. “Be objective on the side of truth rather than being biased. … Realize that you are a highly trained professional with a license. Do not allow attorneys to intimidate you.”

After testifying, counselors can ask the court if they can be excused, Heard points out. That way, they won’t end up spending the entire day in court.

What kind of person willingly signs up for this kind of experience? Stride says it helps to be someone who enjoys the debate. “There are some counselors who would rather do therapy, but there are some individuals who like the stimulation of going into court and debating with the attorneys. That type of person usually does very well in the court setting,” he says. “[It’s also] having the desire to do an in-and-out sort of thing. In forensics, you aren’t the person’s therapist or counselor. You are there to do an evaluation only, and that appeals to some counselors.”

Stride notes that attorneys on both sides might attempt to get the counselor to offer an opinion rather than a statement based on facts alone. “Sometimes, the attorney will say, ‘Well, if you knew that this person had a DUI 10 years ago, would this change your opinion?’ You must say, ‘No, according to the information I had at the time, I would not change my opinion.’ Or they say there’s an expert who said something else, and would you defer to him because he’s an expert. You have to say, ‘No, according to the information I had at the time of the evaluation, I would not change my opinion.’”

“No speculation,” Stride emphasizes. “Stick to the facts.”

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Letters to the editor: ct@counseling.org
Working Outside the Box

1. According to Heather Trepal, the most successful counselors at complementing the traditional talk therapies with creative interventions are those already accomplished in areas such as painting, photography, dance, music and other forms of creative expression.
   - True
   - False

2. The ACA division offering a home to counselors wishing to focus on creative, diverse and relational approaches across all theories and types of counseling is the:
   - Creative Counselors of America
   - Association for Creativity in Counseling
   - Creativity in Mental Health Society
   - Alliance for Creative Mental Health Practitioners

3. Using musical chronology in which clients are asked to trace their lives and identify different songs they connect to at a specific time period is an idea developed by:
   - Stacy Goldstein
   - Suzanne Deggis-White
   - Thelma Duffey
   - Stella Kerl-McClain

Your Witness

4. Attorney Nancy Wheeler states that when counselor testimony in legal proceedings is deemed to be in the best interest of the client, that role should be viewed as:
   - An expert witness
   - A witness of fact
   - A lay witness
   - None of the above

5. Which of the following organizations has developed and administers the Certified Forensic Mental Health Evaluator credential?
   - American Mental Health Counselors Association
   - National Board for Certified Counselors
   - American Bar Association
   - National Board of Forensic Evaluators

6. The counselors referenced in the article pointed to what factor as a critical element in one’s success in serving as a witness in legal proceedings?
   - The advance preparation by the counselor-witness
   - The counselor’s experience and length of service
   - The counselor’s legal background
   - The counselor’s credentials

Ensuring College Access for All

7. The authors of this opinion piece propose that school counselors claim which of the following as a dominant knowledge and skill domain?
   - Student study skills
   - Lifestyle development
   - Improved test-taking skills
   - College and career readiness

CACREP Perspective

8. The 252 institutions with programs currently accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) represent what portion of the counselor education programs in the United States?
   - Approximately one-fourth
   - More than one-half
   - Approximately three-fourths
   - More than 90 percent

9. What issue has been identified by the 20/20 Initiative as its number one priority?
   - Innovative counseling approaches
   - Evidence-based research
   - Licensure portability
   - Advocacy of the counseling profession

Private Practice in Counseling

10. The column writers suggest which of the following for private practice counselors to use as a strategy in marketing directly to potential clients?
    - Posters in public venues
    - Telephone book advertising
    - Public speaking
    - Newspaper advertising

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Ensuring college access for all: A call to the school counseling profession

Current education reform initiatives and reports are fueling new debates among national and state education leaders and policymakers about the viability of U.S. schools and solutions to pervasive education problems. Initiatives such as the U.S. Department of Education’s Race to the Top program and President Obama’s Blueprint for Reform of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act focus on four core areas:

- Enhancing and rewarding principal and teacher effectiveness
- Building data systems that inform parents and educators about student achievement while also guiding instruction
- Developing college- and career-ready standards as well as assessments aligned to those standards
- Implementing effective interventions that will improve academic achievement in the lowest-performing schools

These initiatives are transformative in nature, but documents associated with these initiatives do not mention school counseling as a means to transform education, nor do they mention school counselors as essential to increasing student achievement or strengthening college and career readiness.

Although these aforementioned initiatives do not mention school counseling, school reform groups have been increasingly critical of school counseling services. For instance, the 2010 Public Agenda report done for the Gates Foundation, “Can I Get a Little Advice Here?” highlighted young adults’ perceptions of school counselors during their college-going process. The report indicated that between 54 percent and 67 percent of young adults rated school counselors as “poor” or “fair” when it came to helping them find ways to pay for college (such as financial aid and scholarships), decide what school was right for them and think about different careers, as well as in explaining and helping them with the college application process.

Almost 50 percent of the young adults surveyed felt school counselors merely saw them as “just another face in the crowd,” while 47 percent thought school counselors made an effort to get to know them as individuals. In response, the American School Counselor Association asserted that the report “illustrates what can go wrong when there are not enough school counselors to support students and when school counselors are placed in positions preventing them from performing the functions they were trained and hired to do.” Although student-to-counselor ratios are high and school counselors have many non-counseling-related responsibilities, the Public Agenda report joins a body of research and literature that highlights school counselors’ lack of attention to the college search, application and enrollment process (for example, see “Higher Education Access for Undocumented Students: Recommendations for Counseling Professionals,” written by William Perez for the Winter 2010 Journal of College Admission).

Given the rise of educational reform as a major priority among education policymakers and the absence of school counseling in those policies, we believe that a knowledge and skill shift in the profession is warranted to ensure our viability. As such, we are proposing that school counselors claim college and career readiness as a dominant knowledge and skill domain. We are not advocating for less counseling or a non-counselor professional identity. In fact, we are advocating for a stronger school counselor identity that includes career and college readiness counseling as a dominant focus of practice and research.

Practice recommendations

We would like to offer the following school counselor practice recommendations that, if implemented, would create more school counselor engagement in educational reform, particularly in regard to college and career readiness.

Recommendation #1: Make school counseling central in district organizational structure. In many school districts, the placement of school counseling is often within departments or divisions of student personnel services, student support services or, in some cases, special education. Although such positioning might seem appropriate, these placements render school counseling as an ancillary service rather than central to the academic mission of schools. If school counselors are to be a foundational part of schools, these professionals need to be in a position that engenders centrality.

Recommendation #2: Make advocacy/outreach a major role of school counseling. School counselors need to understand and implement advocacy. This means actively seeking out families to assist rather than waiting for families to approach school counselors. We believe the college and career readiness of all students can be increased when school counselors reach out to parents and create a school community that extends beyond the walls of a school building.

Recommendation #3: Use a systems perspective. From a systems perspective, school counselors must view the school community as their client, grasping both the big picture and each interrelated part of the system and its impact on individuals, especially those who are most often underserved.

Recommendation #4: Use school counseling methods and delivery systems that ensure that all students are college ready. School counselors fill an important role when they assist students with the completion of college and federal student financial aid applications. However, college and career readiness is a P-20 (preschool through graduate school) process that involves increasing student aspirations, linking aspirations and academics, increasing on’s social capital, engaging in academic and life planning, encouraging civic engagement (for example, service learning) and
developing personal responsibility. School counselors must also examine how current practices contribute to the disparities in college access and begin to make needed changes without blaming caseloads, administrators, parents or the community.

**Training recommendations**

We also believe training school counselors so they will have the knowledge and skills to increase college/career readiness should be a primary goal for the next generation of counselor educators. We believe this can be accomplished by implementing the following recommendations.

**Recommendation #5: Develop admission criteria aimed at performance required in the field.** Recruiting and selecting assertive, culturally competent and social-justice-minded individuals who can readily address difficult educational issues with courage and integrity is essential for the future of school counseling. Among the possible admission requirements that would increase faculty members’ insights into an applicant’s readiness for enhancing all students’ college and career readiness are extensive individual and group interviews, writing samples on critical school-reform issues and opportunities to speak about opportunity gaps in education.

**Recommendation #6: Counselor educators must teach in ways that will result in performance that can be measured in schools.** We must monitor the ability of graduate students to deliver outcomes (for example, increased numbers of students who are college ready) in “real-world” schools, particularly the lowest-performing schools.

**Recommendation #7: School counselor training programs should engage in interdisciplinary training with teacher and principal trainees to ensure that teaming and collaboration skills are acquired prior to graduation.** Some may argue that this type of training would diminish the professional identity of the school counselor. We think it would do just the opposite. The power of an interdisciplinary team approach to training is that it allows trainees an opportunity to learn different perspectives, knowledge and skills. This type of training would require school counselors to clearly identify which skills and knowledge are shared and which are distinctly the domain of counselors.

**Recommendation #8: Counselor educators must build a college and career readiness knowledge base.** Currently, college and career readiness counseling is not a training requirement prescribed by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs. We believe that not only should it be a requirement, but counselor educators should be highly engaged in professional development to gain the knowledge and skill necessary to teach, train and supervise for college and career readiness counseling.

**Recommendation #9: Actively integrate college and career readiness concepts and knowledge into existing school counseling curricula.** In doing this, counselor educators must seek out professional development and partnerships to build their capacity and knowledge in this area of training.

**Recommendation #10: Counselor educators, in collaboration with school districts, should build partnerships with community colleges and universities so that large district, state and national policies about college and career readiness can be addressed collaboratively.** In addition, building partnerships with community action groups, foundations and education reform organizations can invite different perspectives and ideas that will significantly strengthen a school community and allow for greater impact on federal policy related to college and career readiness.

**Recommendation #11: Counselor educators need to engage in research that demonstrates the efficacy of training and practice in college and career readiness counseling on student outcomes.** We believe school counselor training programs should be held accountable by demonstrating that program graduates engage in effective practice after they become employed in schools.

**Summary**

We believe that school counselors can no longer afford to be disconnected from educational reform initiatives. We further propose that ASCA, the American Counseling Association and other education reform and college readiness organizations such as the National Association for College Admission Counseling, The Education Trust, Achieve and The College Board continue to work together to promote an extensive network of professional development for practicing school counselors who have little to no training in college and career readiness. Through this increased collaboration, we would hope that more research and funding opportunities would evolve for counselor educators and researchers. We believe school counseling researchers are in the best position to conduct rigorous studies related to the effectiveness and practice of school counselors in relation to college and career readiness.

School counseling is at a critical crossroads. More than ever before, students need school counselors who are trained to provide them with the necessary skills and knowledge to be successful in life. At the same time, school counselors are being criticized for not doing enough to get students ready for their futures. We believe school counselor skills in college and career readiness are key to closing gaps in student achievement, bringing positive reform to schools and preserving our profession’s positive future. 

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Popping some sizzle into study skills

More than ever, school counselors face the need to be accountable for their services to students. Because of a besieged economy, job security has emerged as a serious problem for formerly vital school staff. One way to better the odds that your school holds onto you is to convince those in power that what you have to offer is indispensable. To school principals, that usually means entrenching yourself in efforts to improve academics.

If you are a school counselor, your first thought probably is that you already address academics. You offer a lesson or two on study skills through guidance sessions, and you counsel individual students seeking your help with failing grades. You might also coordinate parent conferences and offer study skills groups for small numbers of struggling students. With all your responsibilities, you cringe at the thought of finding time to do one more thing. But that might be exactly what is called for.

I knew for certain that I needed to do still more when midyear grade reports indicated that a large number of students were failing classes at my high-achieving school. How could I punch up my emphasis on academics beyond the hourlong guidance lesson on study skills? I took a long look at the schedule. At the end of the day sat our short period called Venture, similar to an adviser/advisee group. After students visited their lockers and listened to announcements, there were only 18 to 20 minutes left with which to work. Sometimes, the character education lessons and study halls that were slated morphed into social time. I decided to commandeer two days of Venture to present fine-tuned academic tips, giving up a slice of time I'd formerly devoted to individual counseling. (If your school has no such period, perhaps you could use lunchtime.) Recognizing that it was the end of the day, I knew I'd have to create catchy, fast-paced sessions to hold students' attention. The last thing they needed was to be bored into misbehavior, so I was determined to make it fun.

With great enthusiasm, I set up a calendar covering two days per week from October through April, offering four separate lessons on motivation, time management, memorization tips and test taking. When I posted a sign-up sheet in the teacher workroom, it filled up pronto. Some teachers wanted only two sessions for their students, while others wanted all four. Several teachers lamented that the list was full by the time they saw it. I hadn't anticipated that the sessions would be such a hit.

Although I am providing detailed how-to information concerning these sessions, you should feel free to put your own stamp on such an initiative. My expertise is with middle school students, but these lessons could be adapted for upper elementary or high school as well. Any of these sessions could expand to fill a whole hour. However, a large part of the appeal is maintaining such an upbeat tempo that students don't have time to turn off and tune out.

**Motivation**

For the lesson on motivation, I brought a graduation cap and gown and asked for a student volunteer to wear them. The gowned student stood by me as a showpiece, while the others counted off in threes. I then turned on an old tape recorder (yes, they still exist) and played “Pomp and Circumstance” while asking the students to march in place. Most joined in with no pressure. After 20 seconds, I stopped the tape and asked the No. 1s to sit down. I distributed a fake $100 bill (Monopoly money) to each member of this group and informed them they had dropped out of high school and gone to work. I turned the music on again and had the remainder of the class march a few more seconds. Then I asked the No. 2s to sit and handed them two $100 bills while informing them they had finished high school. Finally, only the No. 3s were left to march. When they finished, I handed each a $500 bill because they represented college graduates. I explained that our activity reflected approximate percentages of students in our state who had dropped out, finished high school and graduated from college. I asked them to generate reasons for students dropping out, and then I stressed that all of those students could probably still finish high school if they were truly motivated.

After defining motivation, I asked if anyone knew the story of famed basketball star Michael Jordan. Invariably, someone recalled that Jordan had initially been cut from his high school team. I noted that instead of giving up, he was motivated to become an even better player. Then I listed others who had overcome serious obstacles to find success, including Albert Einstein, Thomas Edison, Walt Disney and Lance Armstrong.

I next held up two books: a serious-looking volume on motivation and the children’s story *The Little Engine That Could* by Watty Piper. I asked the students which they wanted to read and, of course, they always chose the latter. I sought volunteers to read one page each, starting the book in the middle because of time limits. You wouldn't believe how much the middle-schoolers enjoyed reading “Puff, puff, chug, chug” and other childish phrases. At the end of the session, I once again asked all the students to march to the music as they repeated in unison, “I think I can, I think I can.”

**Time management**

The lesson on time management began with setting a simple kitchen timer so that it would ding near the end of the period. I suggested the students use a timer to remind them when to stop an activity such as playing computer games, just as it would signal me to end our session. I noted that everyone has 24 hours each day, even though it sometimes seems as if others have more time. I drew a pie chart on the board,
marking off one-third for school and one-third for sleep. I asked the students to volunteer suggestions for what filled up their remaining hours and added those activities to our list. I then emphasized the importance of knowing how long they took to complete certain tasks. For instance, did they shower for five minutes or for 20? Text friends for one hour or for three? I suggested they draw up their own pie charts at home.

Next, I chose a volunteer to share the times he normally arrived home from school, ate dinner and went to bed. I wrote those times on the board, then added in soccer practice and several homework assignments. I asked the student to choose the order in which he’d complete the tasks and roughly how long it would take to do each. Other students piped in that it wouldn’t take them that long to do the math or reading, so I stated that everyone’s times would look different. Then I asked how they would revamp the schedule if an unexpected event occurred, such as Grandma being rushed to the hospital. Usually they reported that soccer could be omitted. Someone always added that the student could take some homework to the hospital.

In concluding the session, I advised the students to make a daily time management plan on the ride home from school, noting the uniqueness of each day. About that time, the timer would ring, and I would depart the classroom.

**Memorization**

The memorization tips lesson was my favorite. Once the students settled, I asked them to sing “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star.” Most belted it out with hearty enthusiasm, while a few remained silent, perplexed. I pointed out how the words to the song had remained fast in their memories since their toddler days. Then I asked if anyone knew another song with the same tune. Someone always shouted, “The ABC Song.” I asked the students to sing it and, again, most of them were totally into it, ready for a light moment at the end of the school day. I emphasized the cleverness of the songwriter, taking a tune familiar to preschoolers and transforming it into a teaching tool. I then suggested the students make up their own songs for material they needed to memorize.

The next tip was to break a long list of facts into several smaller lists. I commented that the students did not memorize the 54 countries of Africa all at once, but instead learned them region by region. To heighten the fun factor, I suggested studying bits of material in odd locations. For example, learning 10 vocabulary words by studying three under the kitchen table, two inside a closet (perhaps with a flashlight), three in the backyard and two standing in the bathtub (fully clothed, of course). I promised they’d be able to connect certain material with where they had learned it, thus enhancing mastery.

The next tip involved using mnemonics. I gave the example of memorizing the order of the planets by using the phrase “My Very Educated Mother Just Sent Us Nothing” (remembering to omit Pluto). Someone else would always volunteer the mathematics order of operations: “Please Excuse My Dear Aunt Sally.” I encouraged the students to create their own. For example, on the map of Africa, the countries Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Chad are side by side. I asked if anyone in the class had a name beginning with “M,” and so on. The students were then able to picture their classmates Miguel, Monique, Nicole and Cameron standing in a row, representing those countries.

Next, I distributed a list of 10 wildflowers, all of which were at least two words long: Skunk Cabbage, Evening Primrose, Jack-in-the-Pulpit and so on. I asked the students to independently study the names of the wildflowers for a few minutes and then to raise their hands when they felt ready to recite all 10 aloud without looking. Soon, a couple of hands shot up. It became a game, with most students quite open to competition. Someone usually managed to repeat all 10, garnering much applause. I was amazed at the student’s attentiveness when others attempted the feat. Some even asked to try a second time. In concluding, I pointed out that, if they could memorize unfamiliar flower names in a few minutes, it should be easy for them to learn material that their teachers presented for multiple days.

**Test taking**

I introduced the test-taking lesson by stating that the students would have tests and more tests as they moved through school. The driving test (both hands-on and written), the SAT and ACT and, eventually, career-related tests would all come their way. Some were surprised to learn of a test to enter the military. I mentioned other tests for lawyers, firefighters, realtors and teachers.

Next, I presented tips for before, during and after exams. To keep it interesting and within our time frame, I stayed away from standard suggestions and focused on less common ones. I pushed studying with a friend, splitting the time between playing around and making up tests for each other. I suggested wearing something they liked on the day of the test to boost confidence. I presented amusing personalized sample questions in multiple choice and true/false formats and gave them pointers for deciphering answers when they had forgotten (or neglected) to study. I also emphasized the value of developing and using common sense.

I then brought up test anxiety, handing out a questionnaire for each student to mark as I (or volunteers) read it aloud. I collected the questionnaires so I could set up further interventions with those students who exhibited serious test anxiety. I didn’t tell them my plan, however, because I didn’t want to skew their answers. Afterward, I went over tactics to help reduce test anxiety.

**Summary**

These four lessons were mere suggestions for boosting your presence in the academic arena at your school. Above all, school counselors need to demonstrate a credible interest in the academic achievement of their students instead of just paying lip service to the cause. We need to step up our visibility in academic interventions to avoid the risk of being dismissed at a time when students need our nurturing and understanding more than ever. It’s too dicey to wait — pop onto the scene with some snappy study skills lesson today.

Debra Madaris Efird has been a school counselor and a member of ACA for more than 20 years. She is employed at CC Griffin Middle School in Concord, N.C., and is a member of the North Carolina Writers’ Network. Contact her at debra.efird@cabarrus.k12.nc.us.

Letters to the editor: ct@counseling.org
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**ACA BOOKSTORE**
March 24, 4:30 pm – 7:00 pm – Welcome Reception
March 25, 10:30 am – 6:00 pm • March 26, 10:00 am – 4:00 pm

**KEYNOTE BOOK SIGNINGS**
Soledad O’Brien
March 25, 10:30 am – 11:30 am
Judith Beck
March 26, 10:00 am – 11:00 am

**ACA AUTHOR BOOK SIGNINGS**
March 24, 5:30 pm – 6:30 pm • March 25, 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm

**New Releases From ACA!**

- *ACA Advocacy Competencies* edited by Manivong Ratts, Rebecca Toporek, and Judith Lewis
- *Clinical Supervision in the Helping Professions, Second Edition* by Gerald Corey, Robert Haynes, Patrice Moulton, and Michelle Muratori
- *Counseling and Psychotherapy: Theories and Interventions, Fifth Edition* edited by David Capuzzi and Douglas Gross
- *Creating Your Professional Path: Lessons From My Journey* by Gerald Corey
- *The Creative Arts in Counseling, Fourth Edition* by Samuel Gladding
- *Cyberbullying: What Counselors Need to Know* by Sheri Bauman
- *Developing Clinical Skills for Substance Abuse Counseling* by Daniel Yalisove
- *Ethics Desk Reference for Counselors* by Jeffrey Barnett and W. Brad Johnson
- *Experiential Activities for Teaching Multicultural Competence in Counseling* edited by Mark Pope, Joseph Pangelinan, and Angela Coker
- *The Handbook of Counselor Preparation* edited and cowritten by Garrett McAuliffe and Karen Eriksen
- *Integrating Spirituality and Religion Into Counseling, Second Edition* edited by Craig Cashwell and J. Scott Young
- *A Job Search Manual for Counselors and Counselor Educators* by Shannon Hodges and Amy Reece Connelly
- *Licensure Requirements for Professional Counselors 2010* by the ACA Office of Professional Affairs
- *Play Therapy: Basics and Beyond, Second Edition* by Terry Kottman
- *The Professional Counselor, Fourth Edition* by Dennis Engels, Casey Barrio Minton, Dee Ray, and Associates
- *Terrorism, Trauma, and Tragedies, Third Edition* edited by Jane Webber and J. Barry Mascari

**American Counseling Association, Booth #301**
Thursday, March 24 • 5:30 pm – 6:30 pm
- Sheri Bauman, Cyberbullying: What Counselors Need to Know
- Gerald Corey, Creating Your Professional Path and Clinical Supervision in the Helping Professions, Second Edition
- Barbara Herlihy, ACA Ethical Standards Casebook, Sixth Edition and Boundary Issues in Counseling, Second Edition
- Patricia Moulton, Clinical Supervision in the Helping Professions, Second Edition
- Manivong Ratts, Rebecca Toporek, and Judy Lewis, ACA Advocacy Competencies
- Anne Marie “Nancy” Wheeler and Burt Bertram, The Counselor and the Law, Fifth Edition

Friday, March 25 • 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm
- David Capuzzi, Counseling and Psychotherapy, Fifth Edition and Suicide Prevention in the Schools, Second Edition
- Craig Cashwell and J. Scott Young, Integrating Spirituality and Religion Into Counseling, Second Edition
- Richard Halstead, Dale-Elizabeth Pehrsson, and Jodi Mullen, Counseling Children: A Core Issues Approach
- Shannon Hodges and Amy Reece Connelly, A Job Search Manual for Counselors and Counselor Educators
- Garrett McAuliffe, The Handbook of Counselor Preparation
- Jane Webber and J. Barry Mascari, Terrorism, Trauma, and Tragedies, Third Edition

ACA Bookstore • Booth 301 • New Orleans Convention Center
March 25, 2011

7:30 am – 8:30 am • Program ID #110
**The Creative Arts in Counseling**
Samuel Gladding
This session will focus on how the creative arts (music, literature, drawing/painting, dance/movement, and humor) can be used effectively in a variety of settings to help clients gain insight into problems and negotiate solutions to situations they bring to counseling.

11:00 am – 12:00 pm • Program ID #151
**Counseling Children: A Core Issues Approach**
Richard Halstead, Dale-Elizabeth Pehrsson, and Jodi Mullen
This session will teach you about the nature of client core issues, how to conduct a core issues assessment, and how to implement counseling interventions that help children address the core problem and establish lasting change.

2:00 pm – 3:30 pm • Program ID #213
**The Essentials of Tough Kids, Cool Counseling:**
John Sommers-Flanagan and Rita Sommers-Flanagan
Four culturally diverse cases will be reviewed and analyzed to illustrate effective counseling practice; collaborative disclosure, goal-setting, and agenda making; rolling with developmental autonomy; and playful therapeutic activities.

3:45 pm – 4:45 pm • Program ID #276
**Clinical Supervision in the Helping Professions**
Patrice Moulton and Gerald Corey
The presenters’ will discuss roles and responsibilities of supervisors, the importance of the supervisory relationship, multicultural competence in supervision, ethical issues in supervision, legal and risk management issues, evaluation in supervision, and becoming an effective supervisor.

5:00 pm – 6:00 pm • Program ID #318
**A Job Search Manual for Counselors and Counselor Educators: How to Navigate and Promote Your Counseling Career**
J. Shannon Hodges and Amy Reece Connelly
The authors of this new book will present helpful information job seekers in the counseling profession should know before they commence their search. Topics to be discussed will include writing effective résumés, CVs, and cover letters, as well as employment trends, interviewing tips, and managing disappointment.

March 26, 2011

7:30 am – 8:30 am • Program ID #340
**Cyberbullying: What Counselors Need to Know**
Sheri Bauman
This session will provide current information about cyberbullying and cyberaggression and will offer prevention and intervention strategies for technology users across the life span.

10:30 am – 12:00 pm • Program ID #381
**Creating Your Professional Path: Lessons From My Journey**
Gerald Corey
Dr. Corey will discuss turning points in his personal and professional journey, the counselor as person and professional, developing a personal perspective on counseling theory and group work, becoming an ethical counselor, being mentored and mentoring others, creating a career in counseling, becoming a writer, and self-care.

2:00 pm – 3:30 pm • Program ID #442
**Experiential Activities for Teaching Multicultural Competence in Counseling**
Mark Pope, Joseph Pangelinan, and Angela Coker
This interactive session will highlight creative, thought-provoking, and challenging multicultural activities designed to increase students’ awareness, knowledge, and skills regarding human diversity.

3:45 pm – 4:45 pm • Program ID #503
**Terrorism, Trauma, and Tragedies: A Counselor’s Guide to Preparing and Responding**
Jane Webber and J. Barry Mascari
The two coeditors of *Terrorism, Trauma, and Tragedies* share inspiring stories and photos that illustrate meaning-making; healing; and posttraumatic growth from Haiti, New Orleans, Virginia Tech, September 11, and the earthquake in China.

5:00 pm – 6:00 pm • Program ID #524
**Integrating Spirituality and Religion Into Counseling: A Guide to Competent Practice**
Craig Cashwell and J. Scott Young
The presenters will discuss the recently revised spirituality competencies, the history of the competencies, how the new competencies were developed, and clinical applications of each competency. In addition, new chapters from their book, including chapters on mindfulness, 12-step spirituality, feminine spirituality, prayer, and ritual will be highlighted.
CACREP Perspective - By Martin Ritchie and Carol Bobby

CACREP vs. the Dodo bird:
How to win the race

In Lewis Carroll's whimsical story *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Alice encounters many memorable characters. One of those characters is the Dodo bird. The Dodo proposes that everyone run in a Caucus race or, in simpler terms, a race with no rules. Thus the race starts, and the participants run in every direction for whatever distance they want. At the end of the race, a confused Alice asks who won. The Dodo replies, “Everybody has won, and all must have prizes.”

Thirty years ago, the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs was established to advance counselor education by promoting and administering an accreditation process for graduate-level programs in the field. When it created CACREP, the profession understood that in order to grow and be recognized as legitimate, it had to develop national training standards that clearly articulated the knowledge and skill sets that every counselor should possess before entering professional practice. Having a set of national counselor preparation standards was considered an important step in protecting the health, safety and welfare of the public.

CACREP owes much to the visionary thinkers of the 1970s who laid the groundwork for its creation. Members of the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision formed a national committee to develop the first standards. Individuals such as Robert Stripling, George Hill, Pete Havens, Jerald Forster and Tom Sweeney, to name just a few, realized that if states were going to recognize counselors for licensure, they had to be able to rely on some minimal standards of training to ensure the competence of practitioners and to protect the public. These individuals understood that standards had to be set high enough that these goals would be accomplished and, simultaneously, low enough that most preparation programs could meet them. They also knew the standards would need to be adopted nationally to ensure some uniformity across programs if licensure reciprocity was ever to be considered.

Thus, the first CACREP Standards were actually adopted by ACES and, subsequently, by the American Personnel and Guidance Association (as the American Counseling Association was then known). From the very beginning, the CACREP Standards were seen as minimal national standards, and this has remained the case with each of the four revisions to the standards. Each revision has represented an effort, with input from counselors and counselor educators, to set standards that continue to ensure minimal competencies commensurate with changes in the profession and recognized best practices. The 2009 CACREP Standards are, therefore, the recognized national standards for the preparation of counselors in the United States. In addition, CACREP’s accreditation process has received national recognition from the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). This external recognition was sought as soon as CACREP came into existence, with members of CACREP’s original board of directors applying for review and recognition from CHEA’s predecessor, the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA). That recognition was attained in 1987 and has been maintained continuously since that time.

Because the standards were new in 1981, the accreditation process offered by CACREP was voluntary. The hope was that programs that met the standards would seek accreditation, while programs that did not meet the standards would make the necessary modifications to meet them in the near future. In the early years of CACREP, there was no way to know whether the standards would be accepted by counselor preparation programs and supported by institutional administrators. Either programs would recognize the importance of minimal national standards and apply for accreditation or they would not. If an increasing number of programs sought initial accreditation and maintained accreditation, it would count as clear evidence of the acceptance of the standards.
As evidenced by the accompanying graph, an unceasing, steadily increasing number of programs have attained CACREP-accredited status. Although it is difficult to determine the exact number of counselor education preparation programs in the United States (not including counseling psychology programs or marriage and family therapy programs that fall under the American Psychological Association and the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, respectively), by conservative estimates, the 252 institutions with programs currently accredited by CACREP represent more than one-half of all such programs.

Despite the evidence, some still depict CACREP as an exclusive club of elite programs that are not representative of counselor education today. CACREP often hears comments about the many excellent programs that are not CACREP accredited. Which programs might these be, and by whose standards are they considered excellent? CACREP is not an exclusive country club with invitation-only membership. The CACREP Standards are readily available to anyone, and CACREP’s staff is on call to answer questions and assist programs in meeting the standards. CACREP also hears comments that the standards are out of the reach of some programs and, therefore, not relevant or necessary. These comments are easily challenged when one simply takes the time to look at the actual programs listed in CACREP’s Directory of Accredited Programs. If you go to CACREPOrg and click on “Find CACREP Programs,” you will see accredited programs of all kinds — large, small, doctoral, master’s-only, public, private, faith-based and online. Programs accredited by CACREP are truly representative of counselor preparation programs nationwide.

So, what is the goal of CACREP? Is CACREP seeking a monopoly on accreditation? World domination? Hardly.

In describing the Dodo bird’s race, Lewis Carroll was showing his disdain for the political caucus system’s lack of clear rules and its inability to make decisions based on clear and understandable information. CACREP’s goal is to not only understand the rules of the race but to help set them for the good of the public. CACREP believes that when minimal standards are established at a national level, public understanding of who counselors are, what they know and what they can do is increased. Knowing the minimal requirements for entry into the counseling profession further recognizes the profession and opens doors for practicing professionals. It has already led to counselor licensure in all 50 states, with some of those states regarding graduation from a CACREP-accredited program as evidence of meeting most or all of the educational requirements for licensure eligibility.

Both the American Association of State Counseling Boards and ACA have recognized that a lack of common standards hinders the goal of license portability and fragments the profession. Thus, the 20/20 initiative, cosponsored by these two organizations, has identified licensure portability as its No. 1 priority and is looking at establishing a common title, scope of practice and training standards.

Why not look at CACREP? Adopting the CACREP Standards for this purpose would greatly enhance reciprocity and portability for counselor licensure and further unite and strengthen the profession. Most other health-related licensure boards — pharmacy, dentistry, physical therapy, medicine and others — already require graduation from an accredited program for licensure eligibility. Perhaps it is time for the profession to embrace the utility of recognizing the CACREP Standards.

Recently, the Department of Veterans Affairs saw the value of recognizing CACREP Standards as the minimal training requirements by including graduation from a CACREP program as a requirement for hiring eligibility for counselors. In the future, the CACREP Standards might also be recognized as the necessary training standards for practitioners in the TRICARE system.

The race is happening all around us. It’s important to know how to move toward the finish line rather than wasting our time running around in circles. Perhaps it is time to consider the value of CACREP accreditation.

Martin Ritchie is a professor at the University of Toledo and chair of the CACREP Board.

Carol Bobby is president and CEO of CACREP.

Letters to the editor: ct@counseling.org

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Ethics Desk Reference for Counselors
Jeffrey E. Barnett and W. Brad Johnson

This pocket guide will help you interpret and apply the ACA Code of Ethics in order to prevent and resolve ethical dilemmas. In Part I, the authors provide an easily understood translation of each Standard of the Code, followed by a discussion of common challenges associated with the Standard and a list of recommendations for maintaining ethical, preventive practice in the topical area. Part II contains an ethical decision-making model and specific, practical strategies for responding to frequently faced concerns surrounding culture and diversity, confidentiality, suicidal clients, boundary issues and multiple relationships, competence, supervision, managed care, termination, and responses to subpoenas. 2010 224 pgs
Order #72893 ISBN 978-1-55620-298-8
List Price: $44.95 ACA Member Price: $32.95

A Job Search Manual for Counselors and Counselor Educators: How to Navigate and Promote Your Counseling Career
Shannon Hodges and Amy Reese Connelly

This handbook presents how-to tips for counselors seeking positions in counselor education, college and community college counseling, schools, and community agencies. Whether you are trying to land your first job, changing career paths, or launching your own private practice, this book demystifies the process and highlights what you need to know to find fulfilling work. Topics include tapping into the hidden job market, developing a résumé/vita, writing winning cover letters, using job search planning tools, enhancing networking skills, interviewing with search committees, handling rejection, and moving from one counseling setting or specialty to another. 2010 200 pgs
Order #72894 ISBN 978-1-55620-297-1
List Price: $24.95 ACA Member Price: $19.95

Developing Clinical Skills in Substance Abuse Counseling
Daniel Yalisove

In Part I of this handbook, Dr. Yalisove discusses counselor roles and the principles of substance abuse counseling. He then provides a synopsis of several key substance abuse theories as well as his own Building Session Goals and Strategies method and the Eight Stage Process of Counseling approach, all of which are practical, compatible means for learning and mastering clinical counseling skills. Part II illustrates applications of these approaches in clinical situations using experiential exercises, role-plays, and clinical scenario examples. Chapters on group work, counseling clients with dual disorders, family counseling, and working with diverse client populations follow, with a helpful chapter on creating client treatment plans and writing clinical reports rounding out the book. 2010 232 pgs
List Price: $44.95 ACA Member Price: $29.95

ACA Advocacy Competencies: A Social Justice Framework for Counselors
edited by Manivong J. Ratts, Rebecca L. Toporek, and Judith A. Lewis

Experts discuss how counselors, counselor educators, and students can use the ideals in the ACA Advocacy Competencies with diverse client populations, across various counseling settings, and in multiple specialty areas. Examples in each chapter provide guidance as to when individual empowerment counseling is sufficient or when situations call for advocacy on behalf of clients or their communities within the public arena or political domain. Thought provoking and engaging, this book is an invaluable resource for teaching and course work and a call for all counselors to participate in social justice and systems change. 2010 264 pgs
Order #72896 ISBN 978-1-55620-293-3
List Price: $64.95 ACA Member Price: $46.95
ACCA offers webinar, Day of Learning
Submitted by Sylvia Shortt
sshortt@westga.edu

There are some exciting things afoot at the American College Counseling Association. We will host our second webinar with Paper-Clip, titled “Parent Involvement: Five Legal and Practical Issues When Including — and Not Including — Parents in Higher Education.” Attorney Carolyn Wolf and Brian Van Brunt will present this program. For more information, visit collegecounseling.org.

ACCA will also host a Day of Learning at the American Counseling Association Annual Conference & Exposition in New Orleans. Scheduled for Friday, March 25, the day will offer four programs, each designed to provide college counselors and educators a foundational overview of our field. These programs will be useful for graduate students, clinicians new to the college setting, clinicians looking to improve their chances in a job search and college clinical staff seeking professional development.

A certificate of completion will be given to those who complete the following four sessions:

- 7:30-8:30 a.m., “College Counseling in the Campus Setting” (ID #107)
- 11 a.m.-noon, “Clinical Foundations in College Counseling” (ID #148)
- 3:45-4:45 p.m., “Student Development Theory and College Counseling” (ID #273)
- 5-6 p.m., “Outreach Programming in College Counseling” (ID #315)

ACCA will also host its first “10 Ideas of Awesomeness” session (ID #210) on March 25 from 2-3:30 p.m. This will be a “conference in a box,” with 10 five-minute programs covering creative, exciting ideas that are being put in place across the nation. These programs will include a digital copy of more than 200 waiting-room wellness slides, copies of our new “PAPA” papers, a design for a counseling center relaxation room and other forward-thinking programs. This is an event you don’t want to miss.

ASERVIC announces 2011 initiatives
Submitted by Jennifer Curry
jcurry@lsu.edu

This month, we would like to remind Association for Spiritual, Ethical and Religious Values in Counseling members to check our website (aservic.org) as we continue to update information about ASERVIC and all our initiatives for this year. Currently, we are planning events for the ACA Annual Conference. Find the event schedule on our website.

Of special importance, we want to remind members to purchase their ASERVIC luncheon ticket. This year’s lunch will be held on Friday, March 25, and our speaker will be author Ann Trousdale, a specialist in children’s literature. We also want to encourage our members to use our website to look up information on the Spiritual Competencies (2009), ASERVIC awards nomination information, bylaws review, the upcoming Spiritual Journey and more.

This month, we want to let the entire counseling community know about a

DID YOU KNOW?

ACA members can download complete issues of Counseling Today from the website.

Visit counseling.org, click on “Publications,” then click on "Counseling Today."
AADA to give back in New Orleans

Submitted by Catherine Roland
rolandc@mail.montclair.edu

The Association for Adult Development and Aging will host two activities at the ACA Annual Conference to benefit the community organization NO/AIDS Task Force. At the AADA breakfast, to be held at the Hilton on Saturday, March 26 at 7:30 a.m., we will have guest speaker Noel Twulbeck, executive director of the NO/AIDS Task Force, accompanied by Mary Ellen Harwood, director of NO/AIDS mental health and counseling services. Come support us! Don’t have a ticket yet for the breakfast? Call ACA Member Services at 800.347.6647 to purchase tickets, or contact AADA President Jane Rheineck at jrheineck@niu.edu.

AADA will also sponsor a fundraiser for the NO/AIDS Task Force on March 26 from 7-9 p.m. at a French Quarter bar. Come for music, friends and networking. All cover charge money collected will go directly to the community organization. Bring your thirst, your quest for a good time and your generosity. Warning: Dancing will take place!

NO/AIDS Task Force, the oldest HIV/AIDS service organization in the Gulf South, includes programs for medical treatment, case management and counseling, meal delivery and Food for Friends, as well as HIV antibody testing and counseling, a statewide HIV/AIDS hotline, housing coordination and support groups. Since Hurricane Katrina, the need for mental health services has increased greatly, including:

- Individual, couples and family therapy
- Psychoeducational support groups
- Psychiatric medication management

Programs providing substance abuse treatment to people living with HIV

The Food for Friends facility, which housed the food bank, was badly damaged by Katrina and remains unusable. The program has operated from a staff member’s home, with help from local organizations. In the past year, 24,724 meals were delivered and 4,732 bags of groceries were distributed.

Contact Les Kooyman at kooymanl@mail.montclair.edu or Catherine Roland at rolandc@mail.montclair.edu with questions about these events. You’re invited to experience New Orleans. Join us and wear the Mardi Gras colors of purple, green and gold. Wait until you see what’s on your breakfast table … We’ll see y’all there!

NECA offers scholarship to New Orleans

Submitted by Kay Brawley
kbrawley@mindspring.com

You can attend ACA’s Annual Conference in New Orleans and be a presenter at the National Employment Counseling Association’s Day of Learning on Friday, March 25, by winning NECA’s $1,000 professional scholarship. Winners will also have the chance to be included in the NECA e-book, which will be published at a later date.

All contestants must be NECA members in good standing (yes, you can join now). Proposals must consist of a 500-word minimum summary of the presentation that you’ll deliver at the Day of Learning. The presentation will total 30 minutes with a 10-minute question-and-answer session to follow. The presentation should cover material not previously presented at NECA and must tie into the theme of “Resilience During Disaster or Challenging Times.”

Techniques that address new approaches for handling anxiety and despair are especially welcome.

To apply, e-mail your 500-word presentation proposal to NECA past president Bob Chope at rcchope@sfsu.edu by Feb. 15. Best wishes, and we’ll see you at the NECA Day of Learning in New Orleans.

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- The DBH is provisionally accredited through the National Institute of Behavioral Health Quality (NIBHQ). [www.nibhq.org](http://www.nibhq.org)

**Visit our website at** [www.dbh.asu.edu/ACA](http://www.dbh.asu.edu/ACA)
COMING EVENTS

SCCA Annual Conference
Feb. 3-5
Myrtle Beach, S.C.

The annual South Carolina Counseling Association Conference will be held at the Myrtle Beach Marriott Resort and Spa at Grande Dunes. The Dancing Moose Productions group will present “Ethics: A Musical Comedy,” a three-hour show conveying the depth and seriousness of professional counseling ethical codes through laughter and humor. For more information, visit the SCCA website at scounselor.org.

OCA Annual Conference
March 3-5
Norman, Okla.

“Healing Ourselves, Transforming Our Worlds” is the theme of the Oklahoma Counseling Association Annual Conference, to be held at the National Center for Employee Development. A preconference workshop and Friday’s keynote speech will be presented by Mary Nurrie-Stearns, counselor, yoga teacher and author of Yoga for Depression and Anxiety. Saturday’s keynote speech and breakout sessions will be presented by Rockey Robbins, a member of the Cherokee/Choctaw tribe and associate professor at the University of Oklahoma. Robbins will present on Native American healing traditions. Additional session topics include biophilia, anti-gay bullying, medical marijuana, animal-assisted therapy, autism, ethics and supervision. For more information, visit oklahomacounseling.org or contact Connie Fox at connie@cfoxphd.com or 405.473.3453.

ACA Annual Conference & Exposition
March 23-27
New Orleans

Register now for the largest conference in the world dedicated to the counseling profession. The American Counseling Association Annual Conference offers a wide array of speakers, 500-plus education sessions, inspiring keynote addresses, social events and tours of the city. For more information, visit counseling.org/conference or call 800.347.6647 ext. 222.

CCAA Annual Conference
April 28-30
Danbury, Conn.

The Connecticut Counseling Association will host its annual conference at the Westside Campus of Western Connecticut State University. Themed “Counseling Connections 2011: Wellness Across the Life Span,” the conference will include leadership training, play therapy and specialist training in specific strands. Featured speakers include ACA President Marcheta Evans and Jodi Mullen, editor of Play Therapy Magazine. For more information, visit ccamain.com or contact cochair Karla Troesser and Gabriel Lomas at ccaconference@hotmail.com.

ASERVIC Spiritual Journey
May 11-22
England/Scotland

The Association for Spiritual, Ethical and Religious Values in Counseling is pleased to announce its first Spiritual Journey — a 12-day adventure in England and Scotland visiting areas of religious, spiritual and cultural significance. Highlights of the guided tour include stops in London, Glastonbury, York and Edinburgh. Participants will have the opportunity to visit many historical sites that signify the enduring spiritual legacy and rich religious diversity England has to offer. For more information, contact ASERVIC President-Elect Mark Young at myoung@cfl.rr.com.

FYI

Call for submissions

The Wisconsin Counseling Journal is seeking article submissions for its fall 2011 edition, a special issue on professional collaboration between mental health professionals. The journal places emphasis on original, data-based research but will also consider conceptual articles (e.g., position papers, innovative program development, case studies). All manuscripts are subject to a peer-review process involving members of the editorial board. The 2008 edition of the Wisconsin Counseling Journal was awarded “Best Journal, Small Branch” by ACA at the 2009 Annual Conference & Exposition in Charlotte, N.C. For submission guidelines, contact Scott Woitaszewski, guest editor, at scott.woitaszewski@uwr.edu or visit uwr.edu/CSP/Wisconsin-Counseling-Journal.cfm.

Call for submissions

ADULTSPAN Journal, the journal of the Association for Adult Development and Aging, invites manuscripts on the general topic of spirituality and adult development for a special issue. We’re looking for articles that concern the conceptual and clinical aspects of spirituality. Research-based pieces are especially welcome, particularly those with an outcome-oriented focus. For this special issue, Radha H. Parker will serve as coeditor with Catherine Roland. All manuscripts should be sent to Roland at rolande@mail.montclair.edu by April 1. The journal also continues to solicit conceptual or research-based manuscripts spanning the adult life span and also includes practitioner-oriented pieces. Inquiries about the journal in general and manuscript ideas specifically should be addressed to editor Catherine Roland.

Call for journal editor

The Association for Assessment in Counseling and Education is seeking applications for the position of editor of the journal Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development. The journal is a national, peer-reviewed publication with a readership of counselors, educators and other professionals interested in providing leadership, training and research in the creation, development, production and use of assessment and diagnostic techniques. Its mission is to promote and recognize scholarship, professionalism, leadership and excellence in the development and use of assessment and diagnostic techniques in counseling. The appointment of editor is a three-year term beginning July 1. For more information, visit theaaconline.com/MEDC_Editor.pdf.

Call for submissions

The Association for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Issues in Counseling invites submissions for a special issue of the Journal of LGBT Issues in Counseling. The special issue theme is “Finding the Spirit Within: Spirituality Issues in the LGBTQ Community.” Guest editors are Michael Kocet and Jennifer Curry. The deadline for submissions for the special issue is June 30. Submissions of general articles pertinent to the journal are welcome on an ongoing basis. The journal is published quarterly. For detailed submission guidelines or information regarding the special issue, e-mail Michael Kocet at mkocet@yahoo.com or Jennifer Curry at jcurry@livu.edu. For general articles, e-mail Editor Ned Farley at nfarley@antiochseattle.edu.
ACA partners with SAMHSA on Oil Spill Distress Campaign

The Deepwater Horizon oil spill disaster has affected thousands of residents in the Gulf region. Children, families, school staff and community members may feel the effects for years to come. Stress, anxiety and depression are common reactions that may take time to emerge. Each of these effects is known to make it more difficult to concentrate in school and is considered a barrier to learning.

In response, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration has funded an initiative to share mental health resources with school communities along the Gulf Coast. The Oil Spill Distress Campaign will serve students and families in 34 school districts in Alabama, Florida, Louisiana and Mississippi. The first town hall meeting will be for superintendents. Subsequent (virtual) meetings will be announced.

The American Counseling Association is proud to be one of 18 partner organizations invited to support the Oil Spill Distress Campaign. For more information on the campaign, visit the website regularly and bookmark it for future resource needs.

Study suggests link between obesity, depression

As reported by Health Behavior News Service, for many women coping with obesity and depression, new research finds that improving their mood might be the link to losing weight. The study, which appeared in the November/December issue of the journal General Hospital Psychiatry, cites past surveys that show having a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or more, which is classified as obese, increases a person’s risk of depression by 50 percent to 150 percent.

“I expect that the relationship between depression and physical activity goes in both directions,” said lead author Dr. Gregory Simon of Group Health Research Institute in Seattle. “Increased physical activity leads to improvement in depression, and improvement in depression leads to increased physical activity. We see in our study that they go together, but we can’t say which causes which.”

Simon and his colleagues evaluated 203 women ages 40 to 65 with an average BMI of 38.3. Participants underwent baseline tests to measure their weight, depression score, physical activity and food intake. The women were placed into two treatment groups — one focused on weight loss and the other focused on both weight loss and depression. Both interventions included up to 26 group sessions over 12 months, and researchers followed up on participants at six, 12 and 24 months after enrollment.

The researchers found the most significant changes happened in the first six months and then remained stable afterward. At six months, among the women who had at least a one-half point decrease on the Hopkins Symptom Checklist depression score, 38 percent lost at least 5 percent of their body weight. This compared with 21 percent of the women who lost the same amount but had no decrease, or experienced an increase, in their depression score.

“Most weight-loss programs do not pay enough attention to screening and treatment of depression,” said Dr. Babak Roshanaei-Moghaddam of the Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences Department at the University of Washington in Seattle. “This study further underscores the importance of screening for depression in such programs that can potentially lead to both physical and psychological well-being.”

Receive career, private practice advice at ACA Conference

Attendees of the ACA Annual Conference & Exposition in March in New Orleans can take part in a variety of consultations and job-searching options. All consultations are 30 minutes.

Career consultations are available with Rebecca Daniel-Burke, director of the ACA Career Center, or a second consultant regarding a variety of subjects, including résumé critiques, career path options, career changes and more.

Bob Walsh and Norm Dasenbrook will offer consultations regarding starting a private practice, insurance reimbursement, fees and other business practices.

To learn more about these consultations or to sign up, visit counseling.org/sub/career/consultations.aspx.

Employers and universities desiring to conduct live interviews during the conference and job candidates seeking a live interview should also visit the website for more information. •
Classified advertising categories include: Calendar; Merchandise & Services; Consulting; Office Space Available; Business Opportunities; Educational Programs; Call for Programs/Papers. Other categories can be added at no charge.

Rates: Standard in-column format: $10 per line based on 30 characters per line, $60 minimum. $8 per line for advertisers preparing for six months. No cancellations or refunds. Classified ads can be placed online only at a rate of $8 per line, based on 30 characters per line; 30-day posting.

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Rates: $10 per line based on 30 characters per line, $150 minimum. $8 per line for advertisers preparing for three months. No cancellations or refunds. Employment ads can be placed online only at a rate of $8 per line, based on 30 characters per line; 30-day posting.

Display ads in the employment classified section are available and can be designed by ACA's graphics department. Call for details. Classified and employment ads are not commissionable and are billed at net rate only.

ACA Members: If you are seeking a position you may place a 45-word ad for $10. This is a one-time insertion only.

Deadlines: Vary per issue. Contact Kathy Maguire at 607.662.4451 or kmaguire@counseling.org for further details.

Direct all copy or inquiries to Kathy Maguire via e-mail at kmaguire@counseling.org.

Phone: 607.662.4451
Fax: 607.662.4415

Ads are subject to Counseling Today approval; however, Counseling Today cannot screen or evaluate all products or services advertised in the classified section and does not guarantee their value or authenticity.

The publication of an advertisement in Counseling Today is in no way an endorsement by ACA of the advertiser or the product or service advertised. Advertisers may not incorporate in subsequent advertising or promotion the fact that a product or service has been advertised in any ACA publication. ACA endorses equal opportunity practices and will not knowingly accept ads that discriminate on the basis of race, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability or age.

Counseling Today reserves the right to edit all copy, request additional documentation where indicated and to refuse ads that are not in consonance with these practices. ACA is not responsible for any claims made in advertisements nor for the specific position title or working of any particular position listed in employment classified ads.

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EMPLOYMENT

NATIONAL

THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA)

Mental Health Opportunities Nationwide

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is one of the largest, most
The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is one of the largest, most technologically advanced health care systems in the United States. Our employees work at 154 medical centers, 875 ambulatory and community-based outpatient clinics, 136 nursing homes, and many other facilities, such as domiciliaries and readjustment counseling centers. More than a century ago, President Lincoln made a promise to America's servicemen and women, pledging the care and concern of a grateful Nation for the sacrifices they made to preserve freedom. Since 1930, VA's mission has been to keep that promise.

Veterans' mental health is a top priority at VA. After returning from combat, many veterans struggle to readjust to life at home. Our mental health care providers play a critical role in helping these veterans reclaim their lives by providing cutting-edge care. VA supports this mission by ensuring that our mental health professionals have the most innovative technologies, facilities, and training at their fingertips. When you join VA, you will be a core member of our interdisciplinary care team structure, where there is a vacancy and, if hired, you may seek employment at any location and Puerto Rico. Should a mental health professional desire to relocate, he or she can do so. Within 18 months of hire, an active, unrestricted state license is needed to practice in a VA facility in the United States. VA has health care facilities in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. More than a century ago, President Lincoln made a promise to America's servicemen and women, pledging the care and concern of a grateful Nation for the sacrifices they made to preserve freedom. Since 1930, VA's mission has been to keep that promise.

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coe.k-state.edu/about/positions.htm for a complete listing of responsibilities and required/desired qualifications. If you have questions, email Search Committee Chair, Dr. Judy Hughy, jhughy@ksu.edu. Kansas State University is an equal opportunity employer and actively seeks diversity among its employees. Background check required.

NEW YORK

CANISIUS COLLEGE
Assistant/Associate Professor of Counseling and Human Services

Tenure-track position at Asst/Assoc Professor level is available beginning Fall 2011 in the Department of Counseling & Human Services at Canisius College in Buffalo, NY. The Department is nationally accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP), offering Master’s-level programs in clinical mental health counseling, school counseling. A proposal for a Doctoral program in Counselor Education & Supervision will be submitted in the very near future for review by the NYS Education Department. The goal is to accept our first cohort of doctoral students in Fall 2012.

Candidates are expected to have: strong teaching skills in face-to-face & online formats; clear research agenda with the capacity to publish in peer-reviewed journals; ability to secure external funding; deep commitment to mentor students; high level of motivation to participate in community & professional service. Experience in supervision of theses & dissertations is preferred. We are seeking a dynamic person who embodies values & actions that are consistent with our Department’s mission of social justice, developing & strengthening community partnerships, working with underserved populations, teaching culturally responsive interventions. A doctorate in counselor education from a CACREP-accredited program or at least one year of teaching experience in a graduate counselor education program is required. Specializations & research interest areas are open. Salary is competitive. Application review will begin 2/1/11. To apply please submit a letter of application, statement of teaching philosophy, curriculum vitae, contact information for 3 references to hr.recruiter@canisius.edu (please put COUNSELING in subject line) or mail to Dr. Michael Rutter, Canisius College, 2001 Main Street, Buffalo, New York 14208. For additional information visit www.canisius.edu/hr/jobs.asp

Canisius College is an independent, co-educational, medium sized institution of higher education conducted in the Catholic and Jesuit tradition. Minority candidates strongly encouraged to apply. AA/EOE.

OREGON

LEWIS & CLARK COLLEGE
Assistant or Associate Professor

The Graduate School of Education and Counseling at Lewis & Clark College invites applications for a full-time tenure-track appointment at the Assistant or Associate Professor rank in Community Counseling, beginning August 2011. The Community Counseling Program operates from a generalist perspective and program faculty teach across theoretical approaches while stressing an overlying lens of critical, feminist, and diversity perspectives. Responsibilities include teaching, service, program development, advising, and scholarship. The faculty member in this position will also serve as the clinic director, including handling the administration of the clinic and supervising student practicum and internship experiences. Ph.D. in Counselor Education preferred, but candidates with a doctorate in a closely related field with experience teaching full-time in a professional counseling program will be considered; Oregon-licensed LPC or license eligibility; demonstrated knowledge and understanding of critical, feminist, and diversity perspectives; strong potential for scholarship with articulated agenda relating to program and department goals. For full position description see http://www.lclark.edu/offices/human_resources/jobs/faculty/ Application review will begin on February 15, 2011 and will continue until the position is closed.

PENNSYLVANIA

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
Faculty position in the tenure track

School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, Department of Rehabilitation Science and Technology/Rehabilitation Counseling

Qualifications: We are seeking an individual with teaching and clinical expertise in rehabilitation psychology and rehabilitation counseling. Successful applicants will have an earned doctorate in rehabilitation counseling, rehabilitation psychology or a closely related field. Preference will be given to individuals who are CRC Certified/Eligible and hold a license to practice psychology in Pennsylvania. The incumbent must possess teaching excellence and be able to teach courses and advise students at the graduate level, as well as to be a mentor for PhD students.

Responsibilities: The incumbent is expected to support the departmental teaching program in the area of individual counseling, career counseling, group counseling and psychiatric rehabilitation as well as provide clinical service in the area of rehabilitation psychology and neuropsychology. The incumbent is expected to develop an independent research program in rehabilitation counseling/psychology within a department of rehabilitation science and technology. The individual is expected to generate funding to support own research as well as graduate students.

As part of the University of Pittsburgh, the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences is an affirmative action institution and welcomes applications from minorities, the handicapped and other categories of underrepresented persons. To Apply, send curriculum vitae to: Michael McCue, PhD; Vice Chair and Program Director, Rehabilitation Counseling Program; Department of Rehabilitation Science and Technology; School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences; University of Pittsburgh; 5050 Forbes Tower; Sennott and Atwood Streets; Pittsburgh, PA 15260

Gerald Corey, Robert Haynes, Patrice Moulton, Michelle Muratori

This straightforward guide emphasizes effective skill development for supervision in a variety of settings. Topics covered include the roles and responsibilities of supervisors, the supervisory relationship, models and methods of supervision, becoming a multiculturally competent supervisor, ethical and legal issues in supervision, managing crisis situations, and evaluation in supervision. User-friendly tips, case examples, sample forms, questions for reflection, and group activities are included throughout the text, as are contributing supervisors’ Voices From the Field and the authors’ Personal Perspectives—making this an interactive learning tool that is sure to keep readers interested and involved. 2010 • 304 pgs
List Price: $99.95 ACA Member Price: $74.95

The ACA Encyclopedia of Counseling

This premiere counseling reference book is perfect for educators, students, supervisors, researchers, and practitioners looking to enhance their knowledge of the most important topics in counseling. More than 400 entries span the 2009 CACREP core areas making this a wonderful text for introductory counseling classes or for use as a study guide when preparing for the National Counselor Exam. 2009 • 672 pgs
List Price: $62.95


Norman C. Gysbers, Mary J. Heppner, and Joseph A. Johnston

Career Counseling incorporates the most widely used career counseling practices with new and emerging career development concepts, making it an exceptional text for both counselors-in-training and seasoned practitioners. Topics discussed include traditional and postmodern career theories and approaches; counseling an increasingly diverse workforce; forming a productive alliance with the client; using assessment inventories and instruments; and developing client action plans. 2009 • 325 pgs
Order #72881 ISBN 978-1-55620-289-6
List Price: $64.95 ACA Member Price: $45.95

A Contemporary Approach to Substance Abuse and Addictions Counseling: A Counselor’s Guide to Application and Understanding

Ford Brooks and Bill McHenry

This book provides a basic understanding of the nature of substance abuse and addiction, its progression, and clinical interventions for college/university, school, and community/mental health agency settings. Topics covered include drug classifications; assessment; working with ethnically diverse clients, the GLBT population, and women; the continuum of nonuse to addiction; developmental approaches in treating addiction; relapse prevention; grief and loss in addiction; group counseling; working with families; spirituality; addictions training and ethical issues; and counselor self-care. 2009 • 280 pgs
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List Price: $46.95 ACA Member Price: $33.95

The Professional Counselor: Portfolio, Competencies, Performance Guidelines, and Assessment, Fourth Edition

Dennis W. Engels, Casey A. Barrio Minton, Dee C. Ray, and Associates

Student learner outcomes and counselor work behaviors are tied to the 2009 CACREP Standards in this handbook for students, educators, supervisors, researchers, and practitioners seeking to update, refresh, or evaluate their knowledge of and skills in the most important competencies in counseling. Ideal for use as a student portfolio or a supplementary text, this edition continues a 35-year tradition of providing a useful framework for tracking individual professional growth and evaluation. 2010 • 244 pgs
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Learn the Latest Theory and Techniques With These New Texts From ACA!
AUSTIN PEAY STATE UNIVERSITY
Counseling Psychology Position

The department of psychology at Austin Peay State University seeks to fill a tenure-track position in the area of COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGY beginning August 2011. A Ph.D. or Psy.D. in Counseling Psychology is required. It is anticipated that the position will be filled at the rank of assistant professor. However, a successful candidate meeting the APSU requirement to hold the rank of associate professor may be appointed at that rank regardless of their current rank. (ABD with all requirements for degree completed prior to the time of hire will also be considered.) Responsibilities include teaching graduate counseling courses and undergraduate courses in psychology as well as supervising graduate student interns. University/community service and scholarly and creative activity are also expected. The department is in the process of seeking State approval to offer a Psy.D. degree in Counseling Psychology with an emphasis in preparing students to work with military personnel and their families. This emphasis was selected because of our proximity and close ties with the U.S. Army installation at Ft. Campbell. The Psychology Department has a counseling lab with suites, state-of-the-art digital recording and monitoring equipment, and new furniture for group counseling training sessions. The department also has a generous lab space to conduct research utilizing rats, a developmental lab, including observational rooms, a well-equipped perception lab, a cognitive lab suite with separate testing rooms. In addition, the university has funding opportunities to help support research and teaching equipment expenses. For more information about the department, visit www.apsu.edu/psychology. All applicants are to visit Austin Peay State University’s Human Resources website (http://www.apsu.edu/hrhomepage/) to apply online through PeopleAdmin’s user friendly online application system. Women and members of other protected groups are encouraged to apply. APSU IS AN AA/EOE

AUSTIN PEAY STATE UNIVERSITY
School Counseling

The department of psychology at Austin Peay State University seeks to fill a tenure-track in the area of SCHOOL COUNSELING beginning August 2011. A Ph.D. or Ed.D. in either Counselor Education or Counseling Psychology and school counseling experience or knowledge is required (ABD with all requirements for degree completed prior to the time of hire will also be considered). It is anticipated that the position will be filled at the rank of assistant professor. However, a successful candidate meeting the APSU requirement to hold the rank of associate professor may be appointed at that rank regardless of their current rank. Responsibilities include teaching graduate counseling courses and undergraduate courses in psychology as well as supervising school counseling graduate student interns. University/community service and scholarly and creative activity are also expected. The department is in the process of seeking State approval to offer a Psy.D. degree in Counseling Psychology with an emphasis in preparing students to work with military personnel and their families. This emphasis was selected because of our proximity and close ties with the U.S. Army installation at Ft. Campbell. The Psychology Department has a counseling lab with suites, new equipment and new furniture for private sessions. The department also has a generous lab space to conduct research utilizing rats, a developmental lab, including observational rooms, a well-equipped perception lab, and a cognitive lab suite with separate testing rooms. In addition, the university has funding opportunities to help support research and teaching equipment expenses. All applicants are to visit Austin Peay State University’s Human Resources website (http://www.apsu.edu/hrhomepage/) to apply online through PeopleAdmin’s user friendly online application system. Women and members of other protected groups are encouraged to apply. APSU IS AN AA/EOE

REGENT UNIVERSITY
Multiple Openings

Regent University, Virginia Beach, VA, Department of Counseling—School of Psychology & Counseling.: Tenure line faculty openings in the Counseling Department with primary appointments to the Doctoral Program in Counselor Education & Supervision (CACREP-accredited), Master’s Program in Counseling, School/Community Programs (CACREP-accredited), or Master’s Program in Clinical Mental Health Counseling (online). Positions will be offered at the assistant professor rank and include a 9-month contract; separate summer contract is typically available, if desired. A doctoral degree in counselor education from a CACREP-accredited program is required; relevant license preferred. The ability to mentor students in counseling skill development consistent with competent, professional practice and a Judeo-Christian worldview is essential. Applications from historically underrepresented groups, women, and persons with disabilities are encouraged. Applications accepted until the positions are filled. Positions are contingent upon funding. Additional information and application available at: http://www.regent.edu/psychology/jobs.
A counselor’s story…

8:00 a.m.  Get to the office early. Start the coffee. Check voice mail. Leave a brief message for my client Brad. Don’t want his wife over-hearing anything confidential.

9:00 a.m.  First client, Mark. Dealing with depression. Lost his job of 15 years. Body language anxious. Admits he is contemplating shooting his ex-boss.

10:00 a.m.  Christine has a long-running drug and alcohol problem. Making great progress. Offers to clean my house in return for counseling sessions.

11:00 a.m.  Mary gave me a big hug, again. She wants me to testify at her son’s child custody hearing. Let’s me know husband is going to subpoena her records. She invites me to dinner.

12:00 p.m.  Grab lunch at desk. Check email. Sign up for CE class on crisis management.

Read an article on lawsuits filed over ‘client confidentiality.’ It is important to know when to protect a client’s privacy and when it’s required by law to report certain behavior.

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