Excerpts from responses to the following questions were published in the *Exemplar*
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Counseling students and professionals operate under extensive stress. What are the best ways you have found to deal with that stress?

Summer 2011

Insights received by students reinforce that self-care is critical to managing the mental, emotional, and physical demands of our profession along with our personal lives. Although various strategies are discussed, individualization of approaches based on personality and values was an important consideration.

Susan Beth Rainsberger, Beta Upsilon Chapter, Barry University

As a counseling student and developing counseling professional, stress comes from all angles, whether personal, inter-relational, or organizational. Stress can generate from a situation with a client, a colleague, a supervisor, a mentor, or an organizational system in which we function. To cope, it is important to think of the variables that lead to stress. Some of the variables include our age, our gender, or our personality, but there are others. It is also important to be aware that all of these things interact within a social context, which is what generates the stress factor. It is the differences between our personal way of being and society's way of functioning that produces stress.

For example, I know that I have an above average amount of work ethic. My work ethic is not necessarily itself the problem, but becomes a problem when my work ethic must relate to others' work ethic when the two don't complement each other. It creates tension for both myself and those I work with because I might expect more and be let down by the end result. They too have their own set of expectations of me, which may or may not also cause stress for them.

My point is that people are different, and the counseling profession is one field where it is important to be able to not only accept people's differences, but you must also be able to embrace them. Our profession teaches us that there is no one expert, but instead people are entitled to their own experience. So, to cope with stress, I open my mind to accepting and embracing human difference and the idea of collaboration. I also like to use the technique of coping self-statements, telling myself that things don't always have to go my way, nor should they.

Tyler J. Andreula, Chi Sigma Mu Chapter, Montclair State University

As a student who is nearing the end of my training as a counselor, I have come to learn just how important self-care is for individuals who are studying to enter the helping professions. Upon entering my internship, I learned that it is very common for counselors to go home feeling utterly exhausted, because counseling is an emotionally and mentally draining activity. After all, our clients come to us with some of their deepest concerns, greatest difficulties, and most heart-wrenching stories, which is a lot for one person to take in! Therefore, taking moments to "recharge our batteries" to remain in top form is crucial to our well-being, as well as to that of our clients. How can we care for others if we do not possess the ability to care for ourselves? This is a crucial question because, if we do not protect ourselves from impairment and stress, our clients might receive substandard services from us when we are not at our best.

Some things that I use to promote my own self-care are actually quite simple. They include hiking, fishing, playing or listening to music, reading, and doing yoga. Each of these activities allows me to free my mind and experience a temporary escape from my responsibilities as a helper and student. After engaging in these activities, I feel refreshed and in top form for a new week of learning and seeing my clients. Of
course, for others, activities of preference might be different, but I believe it is the temporary, rejuvenating, escape that is important, not the activity. The process of discovering and partaking in the activities that embody our own definitions of peace and relaxation is a crucial one if we want to maximize not only our own well-being, but that of our clients as well.

Christian Hendren, Phi Gamma Sigma Chapter, Argosy University-Chicago

Being an intern at Asian Human Services in Chicago brings a wide range of challenges and stresses that need to be addressed in order to avoid burning out as a beginning counselor. I am a Caucasian, English only speaking, American-raised graduate student working in an environment with individuals from mainly Pan-Asia (representing all of Asia) as well as individuals of Caucasian and African American cultures. Working with the Asian population can cause stress due to cultural and language barriers. In addition, student interns gain stresses from balancing paying jobs, class work, maintaining relationships with friends and loved ones, and other life events on top of the internship experience. Each person can find individual ways to cope with such stresses. The best ways I find to cope with these anxieties involve physical, mental and emotional activities. Physically, I enjoy running in 5K and 8K races that benefit organizations like the AIDS Foundation and the Gerber/Hart Library. Running in these races help to increase meaning in my life and decreases stress levels by burning away the stress. Mentally, I release my anxieties by speaking to my love one and counseling supervisors about my issues. Communicating my stresses to trustworthy people gives me the opportunity to process my anxieties and emotions in order to cope more effectively. Another way for me to reduce the stresses of life and working as a counselor is to listen to enjoyable music. Research has shown that music is ‘the window to the soul’ and that is can directly affect emotions. By listening to calming and enjoyable music, I am able to relax, take a breath and focus my mind. Every individual is different, so it is important to understand oneself and be aware of what activities help to reduce stresses and maintain a healthy self.

Sara Westling, Chi Sigma Psi Chapter, Central Washington University

As a counseling student and Chi Sigma chapter leader, I found myself experiencing high levels of stress in graduate school. Entering the program, I knew I would face a challenging course and work load. However, our profession calls for personal health as well as academic competency. At the time, I was not sure how I would accomplish being a healthy, balanced individual while being under such enormous levels of stress. I found myself stressing over classes, clients, tests, work, relationships…you name it, I would stress about it.

However, I knew I needed to find a way to deal with the stress. One day, I decided-against all better judgment which was telling me to keep studying- to go for a run. I laced up my shoes, stepped out my door and just ran. My lungs burned, my legs felt like lead, and it was hard. However, for the first time in a long time, I felt free of stress. I felt like a new person when I got home. My brain was clear, I had a smile on my face and I was ready to conquer another day. Running became my tool to combat stress.

Some days I am not able to run and that’s okay. However, once my feet start hitting the pavement in that synchronized way, it is like a reset button has been pushed. I am able to leave the stress behind and return as a refreshed, rejuvenated individual. I know that the tests and stress of graduate school will end, but I will always need to managing stress. Thus, I will forever consider myself as a runner.

Olivia Fadul, Chi Theta Chapter, Jacksonville State University

As counselors we need to know how to deal with our stress. All of us deal with stress differently. I have learned throughout the years that stress can be best managed if we use our time effectively. I try my hardest not to procrastinate and to work ahead on my assignments in grad school as well as the other
things I need to do in my life such as internship and finding a therapist job. I find that if we find the right balance of work and play we tend to avoid stress in our life. Stress is always going to happen, but if we plan ahead we can avoid it. Daily planners as well as calendars are a blessing that helps us as busy counselors to function. I know calendars are one thing I use. To help me relax from stress I write poetry and play games on the internet. There is something about playing games and writing that is very therapeutic to my soul. If I did not have those two to help me cope with stress I don’t know what I would do. Another way that helps me to cope with stress is talking to friends and classmates.

Rotisha S. Hall, Omega Zeta Chapter, Walden University

The best ways to deal with extensive stress in the counseling profession I found to be the most helpful is using time management. The way I use time management is to organize a weekly schedule and try not to complete so much at one time and in a long length of time without allowing myself to take breaks throughout my daily studying. I allow time to make sure I involve myself in activities I enjoy with family and friends to help with decreasing extensive stress when using time management. When using time management I do not wait until the last minute to complete assignments, I try to complete assignments early if possible to get ahead. Completing assignments ahead of time gives you time to go back and look over your assignment and allot extra time to do other activities I enjoy or get ahead. Always try to stay a little head and not get behind on your studies. Once you are behind it is more difficult to catch back up with the class and it seems as it is more work because it is doubled the next week.

Another way to deal with extensive stress is to have a study buddy in the profession to discuss your frustration and to vent to often when you may be feeling stress to help you cope through the stress. As a counselor student you should have a study partner to help you study and help one another with assignments, not doing the assignment for you “I must clarify”. Having a study buddy can help with expanding your ideas and proof read your documents before submitting.

Ariel Winston, Chi Epsilon Chapter, Georgia State University

The life of a graduate student can be very stressful. Especially when we combine school with additional tasks such as work, relationships, and even parenthood. It is easy to get lost with requirements, deadlines, and responsibilities that come with higher education. Being surrounded by other stressed graduate students can also become an additional stressor at times. As a person highly invested in my future as a counselor educator, I understand that my own pressures to do well contribute to my stress level often. Although time to focus on myself is frequently limited, I try my best to combat my fluctuating levels of stress in many different ways.

I make sure to have a sound social support system of family members and friends both inside and outside of my graduate program. I have found it refreshing to converse with other individuals who do not have the same type of school-related pressures. Additionally, it is beneficial to converse with friends who understand your stressful situations first hand. Whether I am traveling minutes or hours from my home, when possible, I like to get away. I try to attend local social events that I enjoy. Traveling and attending social events can sometimes be just as stressful as I start to think about all the school-related work that I could be doing while I am having fun. But throughout my graduate career, I believe that it is necessary to surround myself with people who care about and love me. When I am not able to travel or do not have the time to socialize with friends, I take a break by listening to music, watching television, and cooking. In order to combat stress, I believe that it is necessary to understand myself, what I enjoy doing, and the company in which I get pleasure. Embracing all of these small delights allows me to deal with the stressors of being a graduate student in a productive and rewarding manner.
Stress can be a difficult thing for students (especially new and incoming students) to deal with. However, there are a few techniques and strategies that I personally have found useful during my first year as a Master’s student as a Professional Counselor-in-Training from a CACREP accredited program. First, find others who are dealing with similar stress. Although you cannot break your professional boundaries (such as confidentiality, etc.), it’s nice to have someone to hang out with who is in a similar position as you are. Personally, I find that hanging with my classmates who can relate to the stress I’m going through is one of the best ways to deal with my personal work or school tension. Also, being involved in CSI is an excellent way to connect and relate.

Second, I suggest getting a planner that you can schedule “fun” activities in. Don’t put any work or school related items into it, only “fun” items. It’s nice to be able to have something to look forward to, and whenever I feel like I am overly stressed, I can look at my “fun planner” and know that eventually there is going to be a light at the end of the tunnel, whether it is a mixer with some friends, or a cooking show I plan to watch on TV, there are plenty of things you can put in there in which you can put aside your anxiety over your school/professional work and simply relax.

Thirdly, build and maintain a good rapport with your professors. Simple fact, your professors have already been there, and done that. Whenever I feel really stressed, I like to remind myself that more than likely the stress that I’m feeling isn’t exclusive to me. And if my professors did it, then I can too.

The challenge of completing graduate courses, maintain family obligations, and continue working as we transition through the world of academia all provide different levels of stress that at times seem to stack on top of each other at times. As a doctoral student I believe I have had an advantage in being able to deal with the stress that comes with graduate students because of I found a counseling program that fit my personality. A bridge from my Masters program, the doctoral program I am in fits with who I am and who I want to be professionally. To me this helps in reducing the stress of being a counseling student from day one. However I also have to credit my instructors because they all place a large emphasis on the importance of counselor wellness as well as personal self-care. It has been through their mentorship that I was able to find the importance of taking time for me. This means finding even thirty minutes during the day to do something that was not work, school, or fulfilling an obligation. We get wrapped up in the “I have to” thought and for me it is important to remind myself that I want to be a counseling student. Today, even during my doctoral studies, I make sure for at least thirty minutes a day just to step outside and take a deep breath to help me center and relax. I also remember to talk to my instructors. It never hurts to turn to a mentor and say “I am stressed about this.” My instructors have always know how to help me relax about a stressful topic and provided guidance.

As a doctoral student, I am involved in a variety of activities (e.g., academic work, research, teaching, supervision, counseling, volunteering, etc…). While I enjoy all my endeavors, I found myself overwhelmed and stressed to the point that I was suffering physically. After a stern talk with my doctor, I realized that something had to change if I wanted to improve my health. I decided to be very honest with myself and prioritize things that were the most important. Then I had to learn to say ‘no’ to the things that were not at the top of that list and/or hindered my progress to achieving those goals. While finishing school was at the top of the list, so was improving my health which required balance and time for sleep, exercise and fun. Although it was difficult to eliminate some activities because others might be disappointed, I realized that
this was an important step to decreasing my stress level. My list also helped me decide whether to take on future projects; if a project was in alignment with my priorities, I might take it on but cut back somewhere else to maintain balance. If it helped meet some, but not all of my top priorities, I might accept a limited involvement and set good boundaries. If it did not benefit my top goals at all, then I said ‘no.’ Although saying ‘no’ sometimes created guilt, I realized those activities were not promoting my well-being but hindering it. Therefore it became easier over time to set my boundaries, knowing that I was saying ‘yes’ to my priorities. Having this clear direction was a better stress-buster for me than any individual activity (e.g., yoga, recreation) because it helped me make the right choices and align my life according to my personal wellness goals.

Courtney Sandoz Copell, Alpha Nu Chapter, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

I remember as a kid, neither my mother nor my grandmother ever ate a hot meal. They seemed to always be up and down at the dinner table ensuring that everyone else got what they needed. When I became a mother, I automatically began eating the burnt piece of toast, giving up my hair appointment to take a kid somewhere, and yes, I too ate half my meals cold and on the run! I believe that those individuals that are drawn to the field of counseling have that same innate desire to help those around them, even at their own expense. I found out as a mother and as a counselor in training, this can be extremely unhealthy. It is important to carve out that “me” time. In our hectic lives, it may seem impossible at times to find even five minutes to yourself. It is imperative to make that time, even if it is only five minutes. It doesn’t really matter how you spend your time. Just make sure it is relaxing and enjoyable and (don’t feel selfish) just for you! Personally, I enjoy reading and taking bubble baths. Now, at least once a week, I ask my husband to take the kids for me. I allow myself that time to decompress. I have found that it makes me a better mother, employee, wife, friend, and yes, counselor. Counseling is an extremely emotionally demanding career. Having an awareness of your stress and developing adequate coping strategies for dealing with your stress will ensure emotional health and help prevent career burn-out.

Jennifer Bridges, Omega Delta Chapter, Old Dominion University

Stress, what is stress?! Everyone has some kind of stress happening in their lives, whether it is from work, school, or family. As a doctoral student it seems as if everyone around me is overly stressed and that is just simply how being a student is supposed to be. If you simply state that you are not stressed, you are the minority! One way I have learned to effectively manage my stress is to exercise. I know when people hear the word exercise it may add even more stress to your life, but I urge you to think of exercise in a different way. Exercise can be as simple as stopping whatever you are working on and getting outside to take a walk. A long walk can do wonders for your outlook on any problem, or assignment that is stressing you out. Another way of de-stressing that works for me is to take a day off from email, assignments, and any type of school related activity. This for some could also cause additional panic and stress, but stay with me on this. If I take one whole day off from everything related to school, the next day I come back re-energized and re-focused so much so, that I accomplish everything on my to-do list and more! Taking a day off refreshes my mind and body so I can come back and tackle anything that comes my way. There are so many benefits to stepping back and taking a break from work/school. Finally, always remember the big picture of what you are trying to accomplish and stick with it.

Cyndi Dennemann, Sigma Zeta Chi Chapter, Xavier University

Early on in my graduate counseling program, as I began my first classes, I wondered, “Am I really smart enough to do this?” As I gained a little confidence and the coursework became more geared toward practice in the field, I wondered, “Will I be able to manage my time effectively?” Now, as an intern who is close to graduation, I still wonder about those things. Some days the answer to both questions is positive,
other days I am less certain. No doubt about it, this has been a stress-producing endeavor. Yet I do not view stress as inherently negative; the trials of life shape and define us for worse or for better. This coursework, the assignments, and the field experiences along with my own reflection have been fertile grounds for personal growth. I try to appreciate this opportunity. I take the long view rather than getting caught up in the stress of the moment. Though it has been challenging at times, I've been able to stay centered in the value of this process, and the sense of purpose and meaning I will derive from being a counselor. There is an end in sight, and it comes quickly! I try to keep that in mind. I've also made a point to engage in activities that keep me feeling vital. Getting outside for gardening or hiking, preparing a healthy meal for my family, doing yoga or biking, going to a concert or a play, and reading fiction are a few of my favorite ways to recharge. I often spend time with family and friends - they sustain me. They help me keep things in perspective and to laugh at life, and myself. And finally, I stay spiritually nourished through prayer, attending services at my church, and participating in my faith community.

Jennifer Wisser, Tau Upsilon Chapter, Troy University

Counseling students function under an extensive amount of stress throughout their course of study. Finding ways to cope with such stress in an effort to maintain psychological wellbeing as a counseling student is of great significance to me. The skills I use to cope with current stressors may also be used in my professional life following graduation. As a counseling student, research assistant, leader in the Tau Upsilon Chapter of Chi Sigma Iota, and a part-time employee outside of academia, acquiring an outlet that allows me to better cope with a wide range of stressors is of great importance to me. In an effort to maintain good mental health as a student, I regularly find time at least once a day to listen to soothing and inspirational music as an outlet for daily stressors. This time allows me to take a psychological break from daily stressors and gives me a chance to re-energize myself either before a long day and/or after a long day. The music has an effect on me that is two-fold. First of all, the content of the music gives me encouragement and inspiration during stressful times. Meanwhile the tone of the music has a calming effect that allows me to relax. Taking the time each day to engage in listening to positive and soothing music leaves me feeling relaxed and psychologically refreshed.

Brahm Fay, Tau Upsilon Chapter, Troy University

I am a student in the clinical mental health program in Orlando, FL at the Troy University campus. Along with the standard CACREP battery of classes I, and two other fellow pupils, have assumed the Chi Sigma Iota executive board as well as formed a research team in an entirely separate endeavor. Naturally, we all rely upon each other, for within our triad of efforts many experiences of hope, courage, and support have emerged. Each of us has learned how to cope with the pressure, I have personally found a safe place in my creative writing.

Allow me to be candid; I am no poet, more the curious spectator that goes home and tinkers with the notion in his garage. The therapeutic benefit of the creative process does much to soothe my sometimes restless soul. For me, lining up a new phrase with a new perspective – is priceless. It is all about making new connections, and when I am hunched over my 1947 Smith–Corona Super Speed; I am lost in the moment. I find the answers to life’s toughest questions are forged in the moment, listening to that inner-voice of mine that I am beginning to trust more and more.

I can find “my voice” in other activities as well: cooking, riding my bike, meditating, producing digital music, cleaning, volunteering, writing research papers, listening to new music. All of these aforementioned activities allow my imagination to wander, and that is good. But the physical act of creative writing permits me to record my streams of thought. The benefit of following my thought-patterns
upstream, allows me to explore the sources of my motivations. This self-awareness affords me a chance to track my progress as a reflective student and as an unfurling mental health professional.

**Sabrina Sanicha, Chi Sigma Mu Chapter, Montclair State University**

As counselors, we are dedicated to meeting the needs of clients. Counselors may focus more on helping others and less on their own self-care. Although counselors are committed to supporting clients, it is critical for a counselor to realize when he or she is experiencing extensive stress and how it can negatively impact overall well-being. Stress is defined as a mental, emotional, physical and/or behavioral response to events that create an imbalance based on the demands of the situation. It is important to become aware of the signs and symptoms of stress and when to seek help from a mental health professional. Stress can become harmful and interfere with daily life activities which may create fatigue, inability to concentrate, irritability and/or a sense of feeling “out of control.” By taking on the role of a client, counselors can take the time to explore inner thoughts and feelings, express concerns and evaluate stressful situations. When considering the Wellness Model, counselors can intervene in the stress process by recognizing stressors and responses, taking on responsibility by setting realistic goals and empowering themselves with activities in pursuit of a healthy lifestyle. Counselors can implement stress relievers by allocating time in their daily lives to deal with stress. Some ways of coping with stress are deep breathing techniques, visualization of tranquil settings, exercise, meditation or listening to soothing music to name a few. Counselors can take a moment to reflect, analyze the stressful situation by writing down pros and cons and reframing an overwhelming situation with a positive perspective. Whether it is spending time with friends and family or time alone, counselors can schedule activities that foster inner peace and happiness. If we, as counseling students and professionals, are to provide the highest-quality counseling services then we must take care of ourselves first.

**What have you found to be a beneficial way you can advocate for the people we serve as counselors?**

Fall 2010 & Spring 2011

**Christopher Belser, Alpha Chi Chapter, Louisiana State University**

Since my state has recently adopted the Louisiana Comprehensive School Counseling Model, my advisor Dr. Jennifer Curry has been charged with the task of training practicing school counselors from around the state how to implement this model. As my classmates and I have experience writing comprehensive programs, she invites us to assist her; during the training sessions, we work one-on-one with counselors to take the needs of their schools and turn them into goals, objectives, and direct services. These trainings allow us to help these counselors become advocates for themselves and for the needs of their students, as they leave the seminar with tangible plans for much-needed services and programs they can take back to their schools. Additionally, throughout this process, I have had the opportunity to discuss with these counselors certain issues that are important to them and to me, such as childhood obesity, sexual minority students, literacy, etc. Through conversing about the topics, we are able to share our experiences in dealing with these needs and to brainstorm ways we can combat these problems.

**Jennifer L. Edwards, Lambda Chapter, Johns Hopkins University**

To advocate for a client is to be fully present with them in the moment and to immerse ourselves in the worldview of the client, following along as their story begins to unfold before us. This, in the moment immersion provides us with an opportunity to gain insight into the reality of another person living in this world and at this time. It is an invaluable tool within our repertoire.
Often the issues that clients suffer from consist of feeling alone, scared and misunderstood. These feelings may not be directly expressed, but lie quietly behind the words used. Such whisperings originate from deep within the soul. We as counselors are trained to be uniquely attuned to these soul voices of our clients. We hear the whisperings in their words and reflect them back. We sit with them as they contemplate and we journey beside them as they traverse the often bumpy road of therapy.

Our counseling office is a place of hallowed ground. This sacred place is one in which client and counselor gather together to dredge out the deepest, darkest demons and bring them into the light. This is sometimes easily accomplished. Other times it is a hard fought battle wherein the demons kick, scream and fight to return back into the client’s psyche where they very often have been well fed and well nurtured for far too long.

To truly advocate for a client means to sit with them through their deepest, most hurtful pain and root for them as they take on new and frightening steps towards change. We are their ear, their confidant and their most enthusiastic cheerleader who celebrates each personal victory no matter the size. A counselor’s job is hard, the stresses many, and troubles unending, but oh the rewards can be wonderful.
Anticipation. several months ago, I was asked by a peer if a statement made during class offended me. My response, after careful consideration of the inquiry, was that I rarely get offended by that which I anticipate. The person, rather stunned by my response, searched earnestly for a way to exit our discourse without risk of further offense. I found the resultant awkward pause personally and professionally instructive for counselors seeking to embrace advocacy opportunities for those we serve. Advocating for clients often requires that we remove our own blinders that cloud the lenses through which we see the world. As a person of color, I choose to be aware of how my embodiment may or may not impact those around me. In other words, I anticipate interactions based on my personal history and the collective histories of those with similar embodiments. In this way, I am a proponent of the axiom history is prologue for the present. Advocacy that seeks to move beyond the cause of the moment dictates that we learn how to anticipate as those we serve anticipate.

Learning to anticipate as another person or group is more than cognitively grasping the plight or travails of those we serve as counselors. The process begins with a radical de-centering that places those being served perpetually in the center, while we voluntarily occupy a position on the margins. As we walk with, not for, those in the center position we can begin to gain true insight their worldview and subsequent anticipations therein.

Learning to anticipate as another does not mean that I fully understand the entirety of his/her experience. The true power of anticipatory advocacy is that even though I may only understand in part, I can choose to validate the person in full.

Cultural Competence: Advocating for Mankind. One of the most beneficial ways to advocate for the people we serve, I feel, is to become more multicultural competent. Learning the different cultures and beliefs others hold can be a very powerful tool when it comes to providing the best service and care for our clients. One of the best ways to advocate for other minorities is by better understanding their socio-cultural and political needs and their development. By doing this, we can better cater to their needs and wants. As competent counselors, we should be able to identify certain restraints and prejudices other minorities face when it comes to receiving help. For instance, we as counselors will generally be working with people from lower socioeconomic classes, some of which cannot afford transportation or child care to come to sessions. Some of which even work two to three jobs to make ends meet, so they are unable to take time off. When it comes to these circumstances, we should be able to accommodate our clients by providing home visits around their schedules, find out if the school can provide after care for their children, that way everyone’s needs are met. Another barrier often time found is that many cultures look down on asking others outside of their family for help, or seeking profession help. Find out what others cultures deem helpful, or what they can and cannot discuss outside the household. Provide them with them with other resources, such as members of their clergy, and support systems they may be able to utilize if they feel that counseling is not for them. By becoming more culturally-competent, we may better serve and advocate for anyone seeking help.

“In the End, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends” - Martin Luther King, Jr.

Finding your voice. So many clients that we work with have lost some aspect of their identity and are struggling to find their voices. When I think of advocacy, I think of being the voice of our clients when they
cannot speak. This voice comes in many different shapes and forms. From walking away when a discriminatory joke is being told, to writing a letter to an editor of a newspaper when something is published that is oppressive in nature, to serving on a committee that represents social justice ideals, there are a multitude of ways we can advocate for our clients on a daily basis. I think one of the most important things to always keep in mind is the oppressive nature of staying silent. When it comes to advocacy, playing in the game is always better than sitting on the sidelines, something is always better than nothing. Every time we stand up against oppression, we are empowering our clients to find their voice and demanding equality and justice for all.

Danielle Richards, Beta Alpha Chapter, Northern Arizona University

I have found that the most beneficial way I can advocate for clients is through being an ethical practitioner. The importance of my advocating for the intentional inclusion of the principles of autonomy, beneficence, justice, fidelity and non-maleficence into my work, is of utmost importance. Autonomy is defined as the freedom of clients to choose their own direction. Currently I work with court ordered individuals. In writing and enacting treatment plans, a tendency for the desires of what society and the agency believe are appropriate goals can quietly supersede the desires of the client. Utilizing person-centered therapy has been helpful for upholding client autonomy, and thus advocating for client. Beneficence, is considered to be a proactive concept implying doing things that contribute to the welfare of the client. Ensuring that the content of information that is presented in psycho-educational groups and in individual counseling, is relevant and meaningful to clients can be challenging when clients are resistant in court ordered situations. Taking extra measures to ensure that the work is helpful to people is necessary. Justice refers to being fair in equal distribution of resources and care without biases of any type. Thus, it is crucial to not pre-judge the morality or worth of an individual based on their offense. Fidelity refers to one keeping their word as a professional, which in a busy agency, must always be kept in mind. When scheduling mistakes are made, it is ultimately my responsibility as the counselor to ensure that client’s receive the services in a timely manner. Often times, clients request or are recommended for services that are not appropriate for their offense. The principle of non-maleficence holds that one should do no harm. Diligently looking over client paperwork has contributed to the clients that I serve receiving the proper therapeutic treatment and most financially conservative services. Advocacy seeks to remove barriers that prevent access to services, inhibit growth and development for clients. The careful adherence to the principles of autonomy, beneficence justice, fidelity, and non-maleficence, have provided me with a framework from which to employ advocacy from.

Sandra Royster, Omega Lambda Iota, Virginia Commonwealth University

Counselor Advocacy: It’s Not Just for Professionals Anymore; Joining the Counselor Advocacy Effort as a Graduate Student. There are many professional organizations such as Chi Sigma Iota, the American Counseling Association (ACA), and the corresponding ACA state branches, that have encouraged and recognized the benefits of student participation. Among the benefits of student membership are opportunities to attend annual conferences, serve on committees, receive mentorship, network with professionals, and step into leadership roles. An area of student participation that is becoming increasingly important as legislative proposals to change health care benefits are suggested is counselor advocacy. As proposed by the ACA Office of Public Policy and Legislation (2009) advocacy is more persuasive when delivered personally from constituents rather than lobbyists and does not require a background in political science or for one to be a policy expert.

What it does require is the desire to travel to DC and visit Capitol Hill to speak with representatives to relate a personal story or share experiences. Far from my university hallways and classrooms I decided to put my personal experiences to work as I traveled to DC and navigated the hallways of the Hart and
Rayburn buildings. For the second year in a row I was invited as a student member of the Maryland branch of the ACA to attend the ACA Institute for Leadership Training where I represented Maryland counselors and related our desire for support for various healthcare reform bills. In 2009 I attended the training and met with Legislative Assistants for Maryland Senators Benjamin Cardin and Barbara Mikulski requesting their votes on the health insurance reform bill and the inclusion of language in Medicare to cover services offered by licensed professional counselors. In summer of 2010 I returned to the halls of Congress again soliciting support for legislature allowing counselors who met the TRICARE requirements to practice independently without physician referral and supervision.

After meeting with the Legislative Assistants and returning home I was left with an intense sense of accomplishment and was proud of my efforts to advance my profession. As a student I am all too aware of the sacrifices that students make to earn graduate degrees and the difficulty of devoting time for extra-curricular activities. However as students we must appropriately manage our time to include activities outside the classroom. I would like to offer a personal challenge to all student members to evaluate their time commitments and ask if there is more they could be doing to enhance the profession. In retrospect, as a result of the advocacy efforts of others we now have national licensure requirements for professional counselors and our licensure totals are continuing to grow.

Nicole A. Adamson, Eta Chapter, Youngstown State University

Working with young clients is a rewarding privilege that has the potential to positively influence future generations. Child clients’ sense of hope and wonder inspires me to find new and exciting ways to engage and guide them. However, I often struggle with the disconnection between children’s innocent worldviews and the harsh realities of life. It often seems as though the most effective way to enact real change within young clients is to advocate on their behalf to the people who provide their link to the adult world.

Children have limited control over their environment and daily activities and it is most important to enlist young clients’ caregivers and family members in the counseling process. These people can foster the application of therapeutic interventions to real-life events. Advocacy for this age group includes teaching positive parenting practices to caregivers, speaking with teachers and other mentors to help them understand a client’s mental health needs, and working with local agencies to secure benefits for the child.

A large proportion of children and adolescents are unable to advocate for themselves. Some do not have a sufficient understanding of their mental health needs, others have difficulty finding words to express themselves, and many are not regarded by the public as knowledgeable advocates. Furthermore, a large proportion of young people do not have access to any other informed adults who are willing to work for their happiness and success. Advocating for young clients can inspire hope and produce positive change in young people and the community for years to come.

Kirsten Goffena, Rho Epsilon Chapter, University of Northern Colorado

Advocacy can be seamlessly woven into our role as counselors. Clients are often unable to advocate for themselves. They frequently come to us in crisis asking for our help, thereby placing us in an ideal position to not only provide counseling and support but also to advocate on their behalf. In my work with youth in schools I have found a combination of communication, collaboration, and education are key elements to successful advocacy.
Communication with all stakeholders (e.g. teachers, administration, students, parents, and the community) is an important starting point. Oftentimes, stakeholders are unaware of the struggles youth are facing; for example, many stakeholders do not understand the impact of the recent technology explosion on youth and the harmful effects of cyber bullying, textual harassment, and sexting. Education is an essential component to effective communication; we can provide education to stakeholders through workshops, trainings, staff meetings, newsletters, and flyers. By educating stakeholders, we are not only making sure factual information is being circulated, we are also increasing the chance that our clients will be better understood and subsequently more likely to receive the assistance they require. Collaboration is a respectful way of including stakeholders in finding solutions and enables further advocacy for clients through the development of good working relationships with community members who can potentially assist them. Counselors should include clients in collaboration efforts whenever possible as they can provide valuable information and getting clients involved increases their potential for self-advocacy. For me, the ultimate goal of counseling is empowering clients to become self-reliant. Therefore teaching them to advocate for themselves is the icing on the counseling cake.

Seth Hayden, Rho Beta Chapter, University of Virginia

Advocacy by Integration: Serving the Needs of Military Families. As counselors, advocating for equitable and ethical treatment of clients is an essential component of our practice. Clients often present a myriad of issues in various realms of their life that affect their well-being. Today’s economic climate requires us to fully utilize effective and efficient models of care advocating for clients when necessary. One manner of advocacy is the integration of services. The integration of various health care and community support services enables increases continuity of care. Counselors working in various settings are uniquely positioned to assess the needs of clients and determine appropriate services to address these issues. Once additional services are accessed, a continuing collaboration among service providers saves time and resources of both clients and service providers. One example of a population that benefits from the integration of services is American military families.

Military family members face circumstances specific to this population. Non-deployed family members encounter prolonged separations requiring a dramatic reorganization of their lives. Non-deployed family members often access various services to assist them while military members are away. The burden of accessing community resources can heighten stress during this time. Counselor working with non-deployed partners and children are uniquely positioned to connect family members with various supportive services that can improve their quality of life. Ongoing collaboration with service providers ensures continuity of care during this potentially stressful experience. This method of advocacy enables counselors to better service this population. The integration of services for military families during deployment can alleviate the burden of this circumstance. Counselors willing to connect and collaborate with fellow service providers better serve military families. Integrating services for this population as well as others positions counselors as client advocates ensuring effective and ethical service provision.

Katie Heck, Alpha Chi Chapter, Louisiana State University

Be involved in the community you’re serving. One of the best ways to advocate is to go out and discover what you should advocate for. Whether it be advocating for stronger literacy initiatives, or a program to help lower teen pregnancy rates, find out the specific needs of your community, and build from there. In addition, when advocating for students, a beneficial approach is to get as many stakeholders as you can involved. Find community programs in place, and lend your expertise and your time. There’s no greater way to show your students, your clients, a more passionate approach to helping them achieve success, then to show them that you are actively involved in supporting them and where they spend the majority of their time. When we advocate, we want to help provide someone with something they are not receiving,
but one of the best ways to do that is to go out and actually do it yourself. Not only can you write a paper, or make a phone call, but you can join an organization, sign a petition, help to fundraise, give of your time, and of yourself, and I promise advocacy to you will never mean the same thing again.

Emily Herman, Eta Chapter, Youngstown State University

A great way to advocate is to look at it from a marketing perspective. In the business world, different types of marketing strategies are implemented to attract attention for products. In the counseling world, different strategies can be used to advocate for clients or issues. There are a multitude of strategies, ranging from simple to elaborate, that can produce avenues of support, but not all work in every situation. By analyzing the target population as a marketing department would, counselors can find the best modes of transmission that will work in supporting their cause.

People often think that advocacy has to be blatant, but that may not be the most successful course of action. For example, a school counselor may want to advocate for students with incarcerated parents. After seeking what works with that group, the school counselor can tailor advocacy strategies to meet its target population. Typically, these students feel ashamed of their families’ position and may not initially address the problem; therefore, advocating for this group may not be as outright as others, with the intention of not drawing more attention. School counselors may want to be more subtle about the situation by having literature about school-aged children with incarcerated parents visible in their offices so that the students may feel more at ease. It also opens the door to others to talk to the school counselors so that they can become more knowledgeable on how to help those affected.

Preeminent marketing strategies are usually the ones that affect the target population without their realizing it, advocating for clients can benefit from this strategy as well. Not every advocacy strategy will work for every issue or client, further proving the importance of finding what will appeal to the target population before making the next advocacy move.

Erica Suldon, Omega Zeta Chapter, Walden University

I believe, as counselors, we should be actively involved in those communities that we seek to work with daily. To be an advocate that promotes positive change in our communities, we need to become more aware of our clients internal and external struggles, caused by economic, social and/or political issues, which are endured on a daily basis. So, to beneficially advocate for our clients, we need to be genuine in our quest to make a significant difference in the lives of those people we serve. We should be well informed about current research and discussions, laws and any other pertinent information that may affect our clients. In order for us to advocate for our clients, we should know our own limitations and strengths; we need to know what we can or cannot do ethically and legally for our clients. Furthermore, we should take initiative to assist those who are faced with economic, social, and political injustices by offering our expertise or referring the clients to a specialized agency that can properly assist them. Thus, we should be well informed of what programs our agencies can offer, as well as other agencies. We need to become aware of and begin to network with community based organizations that service various demographical groups. As Shannonhouse, Williams, and Goodman (2010) states, “the development of such networks allows counselors to provide services within already existing support systems that may benefit from the specialized knowledge and expertise of counselors” (p. 11). Finally, we should be willing to offer our services pro bono to those in our communities who cannot afford to pay. By offering pro bono service, it may motivate the client to work towards making a positive difference in the community, whereas the client might not have been previously motivated before receiving the assistance.
What have your counseling peers taught you about yourself as a person and/or counselor?

Summer 2010

Leesa Carlyon, PI Chapter, Marywood University

The person I am, and the counselor I am, are two in the same. The difference being, I am a person one hundred percent of the time and a counselor at appropriate professional times. I incorporate my whole genuine self as a counselor, thus what I learned from my peers is a benefit to my professional self but also every aspect of my life as a person, mother, lover, friend, mentor, sister, daughter...

It is very difficult to put two years of not stop lessons learned, from my counseling peers, about myself as a person and counselor in 300 words or less. Each individual peer I met had qualities I aspired to assimilate. Some peers had qualities I saw reflected in myself - both positive and negative. I learned to enhance and expand my positive traits. Negative traits were difficult to admit to but dealt with nonetheless.

The ultimate peer lesson learned was that it’s okay to trust, believe in, and be proud of myself. I was taught to let go of my fears - of failure, ridicule, and not fitting in. I learned that I most certainly am on the right path regarding a career. Once I was able to let myself be accepted by my peers, it was much easier to be confident in myself and accept my status in life. You see, I am a 41 year old mother of two teenagers, divorced, who is only now starting a career...only now growing up and doing what I feel comes natural. I send a sincere thank you out to all my new friends and acquaintances, especially Sue whom without I would not have made it through graduate school; and Matt who helped me realize that compliments are to be accepted and cherished.

Kacy Mixon, Beta Chapter, University of Florida

Accountability and support from counseling peers has been instrumental in my professional and personal growth. Interactions with peers have unveiled the importance of developing a team of professionals that you can go to when not only challenged by the counseling profession but also when wanting to share successes that you’ve experienced. Peers have shown me the value of supportive friendships. This has been an integral part in helping combat burnout, assisting in me setting my professional boundaries, goals, and in helping me to know when I need to take time out for myself.

Many counselors are accustomed to having the answers and being in the helper role. My peers have shown me the importance of realizing human limitations, knowing when to ask for advice, and being vulnerable to a supportive network that can create learning opportunities. Sometimes, it is through our mistakes that we learn the most in life and in our professions. These valuable interactions helped to normalize the stressors associated with the field and acknowledge mistakes from which to learn. My relationships with counseling peers have helped me gain insight into my own barriers and provided a safe space in discussing struggles and insecurities. My colleagues have helped me in acknowledging frustrations that I may be experiencing in the profession and reminded me that challenges can provide avenues for growth and development as a counselor.
My counseling mates continue to create opportunities for me to realize the beauty in differences and value the need to stay curious about individual, family, and cultural experiences unique to the people I interact with. My professional and personal relationships with peers encourage me to never stop learning and provide inspiration to generate new ideas, perspectives, and growth in a field that I am so passionate about.

Natalie Spencer, Nu Sigma Chi Chapter, North Carolina State University

As I enter into my fourth year as doctoral student in my counselor education program, I have found that I have learned just as much from my peers as I have from my professors and mentors. The greatest thing I have learned from my peers is to never be afraid to ask questions.

When I am with my peers I find that I am most at ease and I am willing to take more risks and explore topics and situations that normally I would shy away from. As I interact more and more with my peers, I have learned that it’s ok to ask questions and test my limits. My peers provide a safe environment for me to grow personally and professionally.

Without the support of my peers, I do not know where I would be today. My peers have enriched my life in so many ways. I’ve learned how to be a better leader, speaker, scholar, teacher, and counselor. Over the years we’ve shared funny stories, called each other in distress over a paper, cried when things went wrong, and most of all supported each other. My peers are not only my colleagues, but they are also my friends. And that makes a world of difference.

Lindsey Stephenson, Chi Chapter, University of Montevallo

As an undergraduate, I visited the Carl Jung Institute in Zurich with a group of students where we listened to a lecture about the process of earning a spot at the Institute. At the time, to receive a diploma from the program each candidate had to undergo Jungian therapy. Initially, after hearing about this procedure I thought it might have been a means of discovering individuals who would not have “fit in” with everyone else or whose personal problems were so significant that he or she would not have made an effective therapist. I should have asked a question about the purpose of the procedure, but I failed to somehow (I was likely distracted by the view of Lake Zurich directly outside).

Looking back from my current graduate work, I think the Institute had the right idea requiring Jungian therapy for its students. Through observation and discussion with my classmates, I now understand that everyone can benefit from counseling and self-reflection, including counseling trainees, including me. I suppose admitting that I need to engage in more self-reflection is not much of a breakthrough, because as a counseling student I have the opportunity to talk about it frequently with my peers in venues like group supervision and class discussions, but I think more is involved than just admitting it. I think the difficult part of that realization is the implied pending action: getting help. I am not talking about fire-side chats with a friend; I am talking about facing the stuff in life that you try not to face; about really getting your hands dirty. Doing something about extra baggage takes more than just insight; it takes bravery. It’s something we ask our clients to do every day, and I had to ask myself, Am I willing to be that brave?

Darla Timberlake, Alpha Omega Lambda Chapter, Regent University-Virginia Beach

My counseling peers have totally surprised me by how much they have taught me about myself as a person and as a counselor. I entered graduate school at age 47 after 26 years as a dental hygienist. I felt very strongly that entering the counseling profession was what I was supposed to do; however, I was extremely intimidated (scared to death to be exact) at the thought of changing careers and journeying
through graduate school with peers young enough to be my offspring! I began my studies with the deer in the headlight look, but after being welcomed with open arms and hearts I slowly settled in to my new calling.

After almost 5 semesters, I can truly say that my peers, being the talented counselors that they are, have mirrored to me strengths I possessed that I did not know existed. In this mirroring, my strengths have only grown. As someone who used to always sit on the sidelines, I now find myself active on so many fronts including being President of Regent University’s chapter of Chi Sigma Iota. This was a huge departure from my safety zone of not stepping into any limelight.

The empowerment piece of counseling has been felt firsthand by me from what my peers have mirrored back. Not only have I grown immeasurably because of what I have learned from them, but my counseling skills have grown as well. Helping someone step into their own light by mirroring their strengths is not just a counseling concept anymore. I am living and shining proof of the results. I look forward to passing the gift my cohorts have given me on to my clients, and I thank my fellow peers from the bottom of my heart for all they have taught and instilled in me.

What area of research captures your interest most and what is it about that area?

Spring 2010

Shannon Eller, Chi Chi Chapter, Columbus State University
Rachael Hopkins, Alpha Upsilon Alpha Chapter, Argosy University-Atlanta

Our research interests grew out of a needs-assessment based on the loss of female participants at a community-based program for mandated felony probationers with substance abuse disorders. Shortly after beginning the program, we noticed that the few females we had in the program were dropping out at a much higher rate than male offenders, either by absconding from supervision or becoming incarcerated.

In order to provide better services for the females we had, we began to attempt to develop a program that would meet the unique needs of the females we were counseling so that they could have a better opportunity to complete the programming and return to the community. We began to see these females within a culturally-specific model, realizing that their needs were different than male offenders, specifically in the areas of education, family support, and employability. However, in the past, some treatment modalities failed to account for the huge disparity of these needs within the female population. We have seen that it is essential to develop a gender-specific counseling model that targets these areas of need from the perspective of the female. Several key needs must be addressed for the females in treatment and recovery: housing, job readiness, education, substance abuse treatment, financial solvency, mental and physical health assessment, family violence, family support, and connection with community resources and social services.

Gail Perry-Ryder, Tau Chapter, Lehman College/CUNY

Criminal Justice Issues. In this field of crime victim services, I encounter very black-and-white, narrowly-defined characterizations of who ‘victims’ and ‘criminals’ are, particularly from other victim service professionals and colleagues in the legal services and law enforcement arenas. Victims of crime are often characterized very one-dimensionally and perpetrators of crime even more so, and this has direct implications for what they are seen to need or deserve by way of treatment and/or restitution. The nuances of the human experience of both are simply lost. For example, many perpetrators of street level
crime have been victims of the same themselves, which does not excuse the crime, but immediately throws into question the good person-bad person dichotomy. Another example is that prison rape is a crime that merits legal action and follow-up trauma services’ logic which acknowledges that prisoners, too, are human beings that can be victimized but many people continue to think of this as a contradiction in terms. Oversimplification of human nature serves a specific purpose in the criminal justice system and certainly helps the news media to influence public perception. But, it does little to promote healing or restoration. As counselors, we must to be the professionals that maintain a middle ground given that our goal is to promote healing. I am interested in seeing more research that deals with these issues.

Angie Pate, Chi Theta, Jacksonville State University

The topic of spirituality is the area of research that most captures my interest. In previous years, spirituality has not been a technique counselors have utilized. Counselors delve into all aspects of clients’ lives, but the area of spirituality has often been ignored. Counselors have been hesitant to use spirituality in their practice because of the threat it might violate ethical codes. Many counselors were also unsure how to incorporate this concept into their practice. The counseling field has now begun exploring how spirituality can actually be a powerful tool to use with clients because so many individuals believe in a higher power. It profoundly influences how people think, feel, and act. It also provides them with a sense of meaning and purpose in their lives. Spirituality is even beginning to be incorporated into counseling theories.

The research on spirituality helps determine how to use it appropriately with clients who are spiritual. It helps provide a more holistic view of individuals. Since spirituality is a new concept being brought into the counseling field, it is important that counselors’ conduct research because many students and counselors have had little training and understanding in exactly how to incorporate it into therapy. Research can provide more insight into what issues and clientele spirituality is best suited to aid, and how counselors can resourcefully and creatively use it. Spirituality captures my interest the most because it is such a new and unique technique in counseling. This is an important resource for counselors to use so they are able to fully support clients. It also provides more information so counseling students can better be trained. Spirituality affects so many facets of individuals? lives, and counselors must continue researching how to properly utilize this valuable tool so clients are able to become productive members of society.

Ana Tindall, Pi Omega, Eastern Michigan University

The area of research which captures my interest the most is attachment theory. Currently I am involved in a research study where we have been following a cohort of women from their third trimester of pregnancy through the child’s second birthday. During interviews with mothers and their children, we observe the dyad using the HOME Inventory as well as observe the interaction of the mothers with their children during a 10-minute video taped play interaction. What intrigues me the most about attachment research is the direct relationship to the counseling profession. By being aware of the characteristics of the four attachment styles while working with children, the counselor is better able to detect possible child abuse and strained relationships. In addition to being aware of the attachment styles, counselors can work with children and the primary caregiver to improve the dyad's relationship and stop the possibility of psychological disorders in the child's future.
What types of professionals from related helping disciplines (e.g., social workers, educators, psychiatrists, psychologists) do you anticipate working with as a counselor? What skills might you need to collaborate and communicate with other professionals? How can the counseling profession improve training for interdisciplinary practice?

Fall 2009

**Kirsten Wirth, Omega Sigma Eta Chapter, University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh**

It has been my experience, as a counseling intern, that in today’s service arena, the position of the professional counselor is about changing systems and helping individuals with new coping strategies within those systems. Such service calls for collaboration in the most unusual places. As a student, I have not only worked with other counseling professionals and social workers, but have found myself collaborating with immigration professionals, budget professionals, and even hospice professionals. Looking to the future, I can only begin to imagine the varied and diverse opportunities for collaboration that will take place.

The counseling profession can improve training for interdisciplinary practice by allowing students more opportunity for service learning experience during their education. My experience as a student coupled with the real life application through service learning has shown me that these lessons are typically the most difficult and often best learned. These “real life” lessons are those that I anticipate will stay with my throughout my professional career.

**Kelli Lasseter, Chi Theta Chapter, Jacksonville State University**

It has been my experience that in order to effectively address the many complex needs of today’s client, it is imperative to collaborate with each of the helping disciplines. I do not anticipate for this change once I begin my own counseling practice. Developing linkages with others within the helping professions serves to ensure seamless service delivery for the client. These collaborative relationships also serve to build the counselor’s integrity with other professionals in addition to potential clients.

A clear understanding of the services provided with collaborating professions is an essential skill. Too often, clients present with needs beyond to scope of the services provided by the counseling professional. When this occurs, it is crucial to know the services provided by the other helping disciplines. For example, I am presently employed with a community-based agency that provides free substance abuse counseling services for indigent populations. The needs of the targeted population of vast in scope and require a plethora of services before effective intervention can begin. It is at this point that we refer to our referral list of collaborating partners to assist the client in navigating through the system. These collaborations are based on mutual understanding of the services each profession provides.

Training modules designed with a multicultural teamwork approach to counseling would greatly improve training for interdisciplinary practice. The ACA Code of Ethics clearly outlines the importance of collaboration within the counseling community and with other helping professionals. Students and professionals alike could only serve to benefit by participating in training that focuses on the development of collaborative relationships. Additionally, following a multicultural teamwork approach develops counselor integrity as helping professional; a must if effective intervention is to occur.
Carla D. Chugani, Gamma Eta Omega Chapter, Florida Gulf Coast University

In addition to working with other helping professionals traditionally associated with counseling practice (psychologists, social workers, psychiatrists, etc.), I hope to be fortunate enough to collaborate with attorneys, judges, mediators, parenting coordinators and several types of physicians during the course of my career. Counseling students should be taught to value and respect the many benefits of interdisciplinary collaboration in providing multifaceted perspectives which often lead to the most effective and comprehensive solutions. As counselors, we already have a multitude of problem solving tools at our disposal. Counselor training can be further augmented by helping students learn to use these tools not only with clients, but with other professionals as well. For example, institutions with social work and counseling programs may cross-list one or more courses and require course work to be completed in groups composed of one student from each discipline. Students participating in such interdisciplinary educational exercises will learn how to collaborate with individuals from diverse professional backgrounds while simultaneously increasing knowledge as they learn from one another throughout the collaborative process. Early education regarding the advantages of interdisciplinary collaboration for clients can help counseling students prepare to work well with other professionals in the interest of providing holistic treatment that meets the highest standard of care.

Kara Rasberry Brooks, Chi Theta Chapter, Jacksonville State University

I work with social workers, lawyers, and law enforcement as I am employed as a counselor at a non-profit organization that deals with child sexual abuse. Social workers report the abuse to law enforcement and our agency. Law enforcement then provides an investigation, if necessary, after an interview of the child has been conducted at our center. The case is then presented before the District Attorney’s office to identify whether or not a crime has been committed and to determine if there is sufficient evidence to prosecute.

In order to effectively collaborate and communicate with other helping disciplines, creative problem solving, mutual respect, and an understanding of each profession is needed. Although we all have different responsibilities and protocols to follow, our problem solving skills must be inventive and resourceful. At times each helping profession may disagree as to which direction a child’s case should go, but each must respect the others opinions and professions as well. Each profession has its? own set of responsibilities, roles, and ethical considerations. This makes it paramount for counselors to have a clear understanding of what each professional’s task include.

My first experience with interdisciplinary professionals took place at my internship site as a Master’s level student. Practicum and internship requirements should entail that a counselor-in-training must collaborate with other professionals in an interdisciplinary setting for a set number of hours. The code of ethics for other key professions should be reviewed in counselor’s ethic courses. If a counselor is unaware of another helping professional’s code of ethics in which they are working with, then it is their responsibility to review. Training new counselors for interdisciplinary practice should include a mock training experience. This illustration provides an on-hands demonstration of how multiple professionals collaborate together to proficiently treat a client. Collaboration allows professionals to meet the ever-changing complex needs of clients.
What current developments in the counseling field motivate you? Which worry you? How will these trends impact your future as a professional counselor?

Summer 2009

Dan Turk, Delta Gamma Chapter, University of South Florida

The current focus on social justice inspires me due to my passion for social activism and motivating people for change. My zeal for victims’ rights and ensuring that they receive the proper help, not only in navigating their emotional and physical trauma, but also in the criminal justice system and the new world in which they live after their victimization, are a perfect fit for a counselor with an eye for social justice.

Within this development, however, I am concerned that some populations are not being afforded the attention they deserve. Most of us are aware of inequalities forced upon people with differing abilities, diverse cultures, various sexual orientations and disparate socioeconomic statuses. However, few of us think of the needs and rights of populations such as victims of sexual violence, human trafficking, identity theft or stalking.

While clearly, survivors of these crimes will be faced with emotional struggles for which our training as counselors prepares us, I feel we as counselors would better serve our clients if we actively sought training and education about these crimes and their after-effects. Rather than solely helping the client through their emotional turmoil, the social justice counselor will aid in preventing the trauma from occurring in the first place. I believe my opportunity to make an impact on the world of counseling lies within building upon my training as both a victims’ services practitioner and a counselor in order to bridge the gap between victims’ services and counseling.

Jennifer L. Danese, Rho Alpha Mu Chapter, Pennsylvania State University

I am thrilled to have experienced an Elementary Student Assistance Program (ESAP) on a weekly basis at my practicum site. One of the first, this certified staff has completed several years of formal training and has become a strong collaboration and consultation team. ESAP is a special program that assesses needs of at-risk elementary students and forms/implements action plans. Needs assessment, school based interventions, crisis intervention, and outside referrals can be made through the multidisciplinary program. The ESAP team produces extraordinary and profound effects for the students it serves. I am eager to establish or become involved in ESAP programs throughout my career as an elementary school counselor.

I am also motivated by the increased trend of implementing the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model. It supports school counselors in shaping students in academic, personal/social, and career domains. The ASCA National Model outlines the school counselor’s position and ideal time allotments for responsibilities, including advocacy. I especially appreciate the recommended counselor-to-student ratio for the intended purpose of counselors serving all students effectively. I am concerned, however, that this ratio is merely an ideal. Yet, I maintain counselors are accountable for the wellbeing of every student in the school where the number one responsibility of the counselor is to the students. As a professional counselor, I will strive to put the model into action and truly be a counselor for all.

It is an exciting time to be a future elementary school counselor for these reasons, among many. Currently, there is great opportunity to make a difference in the schools and lives of children for motivated and enthusiastic counselors.
Falon Williams, Delta Gamma, University of South Florida

The counseling impression attaches immense importance to learning in the field. The emphasis on lifelong learning within the counseling community motivates me to continue to strive to know more, to experience more, to share more, and to achieve more. Lifelong learning is a key component in both personal and professional growth and is essential if one wishes to maintain intellectual, multicultural, and professional competence.

With the economic crisis comes a great deal of worry. The counseling field is irrefutably experiencing the impact of the elimination of the comfortable. There is angst, confusion, exasperation, and several other troubling descriptors that could be used to reference the apprehension on the mind of not only future professional counselors, but of professionals by and large, who are waiting anxiously on the horizon.

Truthfully, I am uncertain if there will be a position available for me to begin my future as a professional counselor. Keeping in mind the need for lifelong learning for personal and professional growth, continuing my educational career and sharpening to the tools imparted upon me are the likely result of the worry afforded in current times.

Sarah Kresge and Carly Scarton, Rho Alpha Mu Chapter, Pennsylvania State University

Currently, we are seeing the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) model being implemented in schools. The prospects of this trend are exciting. The ASCA national model will create a formal standard for counseling programs on a district level. Through the creation of such standards, program effectiveness can be measured on an individual and national level. Implementing the ASCA model in schools has the potential to create a common language, which may allow for more efficient collaboration between school counselors, other professionals, and school stakeholders. It is important to aid students in their personal/social, academic, and career development, which are the primary components of the ASCA model. To accomplish the primary components, ASCA utilizes individual counseling, group counseling, and classroom guidance. The balance of this approach allows the school counselor to be a counselor for all students.

Although there are many benefits to implementing the ASCA national model, there may also be some drawbacks. Family involvement in school based activities, teams, and programs is an area in which many schools need improvement. The ASCA national model does not emphasize the importance of family participation. If ASCA had chosen to address this problem, it may have changed on a national level. In many ways the ASCA national model is a “one size fits all” solution. It does not accommodate the needs of schools and students on an individual basis.

The schools in which we are hired may or may not employ the ASCA national model, because of this we are not entirely sure what to expect. If the ASCA national model is in place there will be a structured counseling curriculum to follow. On the other hand, without the model we may find ourselves making many difficult changes in order to aid all students in their personal/social, academic, and career development.

Julia Whisenhun, Gamma Zeta Chapter, University of West Georgia

In 2001, I graduated with my first degree in Psychology. During my undergraduate studies, I never once heard mention of expressive therapy. Less than two years later, I received my master’s degree in Psychology. Still, I had no knowledge of expressive therapy. It wasn’t until my post-graduate studies in counseling in 2006 that I discovered the expressive modalities. Now, it seems that I meet more students
who know about expressive therapy than those who do not. My admittedly anecdotal and novice observation is that these creative means of conducting counseling are growing in popularity. There seem to be more books, papers, and graduate schools in this discipline than ever before. Even a large section of the professional community in which I work appears to be on this bandwagon. Indeed, the new psychiatric hospital in the area has two expressive therapy rooms, two expressive therapists, features art therapy creations as the screensavers on computers, and even publishes an annual expressive therapy calendar for the public. It is hard to deny that, at least within my community, expressive therapy is growing in popularity.

When asked to define what changes in modern counseling motivate me, I immediately considered the increasing acceptance of these nontraditional modalities. To be sure, counselors have used expressive techniques since before my time. But it seems to me that the field is really beginning to appreciate the healing and transformative power of the creative process. So, in a time during which counselors are burdened by increasing case loads and decreasing finances, what inspires me most is the knowledge that there remains room for creativity in the counselor’s work. At every opportunity I find to use these expressive modalities, I find myself grateful to be a part of a profession in which the counselor is challenged creatively - not just intellectually.

**Stephanie F. Dailey, Sigma Phi Sigma Chapter, Argosy University-Washington, DC.**

Change is an ongoing process in the life of any profession. It is motivating and troublesome, exciting yet alarming. However, particularly in the field of counseling, transformation promotes growth. Without it we would remain stagnant, failing to recognize the impact of sociopolitical, economic, and cultural factors within our world. Two current counseling developments which support this change process are globalization and the expansion of our empirical research base.

Looking at globalization, innovations in technology are breaking down boundaries which traditionally separated populations. Widened communications, more efficient travel and increased access to technology, particularly the internet, have shifted how counselors approach, treat and follow up with clients. This transformation demands that counselors learn, at times hastily, how to meet the multicultural needs of individuals in differing environments. Exhilarating and worrisome, technology is an important gateway for otherwise isolated or reticent populations. But we must approach this development with caution and remember that accessibility does not mean awareness! New modalities present challenging obstacles (e.g. “virtual intimacy”) for counselors. As professionals we must evolve and respond appropriately to the opportunities of globalization and remember that what works today might not work tomorrow.

The second motivator which greatly impacts the future of counseling is the expansion of evidence based practice. Used to stimulate current counseling practices, research fuels intentional and efficacious clinical practice based on improved client outcomes. Critics claim that this movement discredits the importance of a positive therapeutic alliance. I find it worrisome that some would suggest such polarity. Whereas I support the therapeutic alliance as being the single most important factor related to change in counseling, I find it troublesome to question evidence based treatment. Encouraging critical thinking and using evidence based practice is not only ethical, but exciting as it encourages new counselors to develop their own empirical “footprint”!

**Ariel Winston, Chi Epsilon Chapter, Georgia State University**

I am ecstatic to learn about the new developments and components of multicultural counseling and competencies. Being a minority individual, I believe that it is necessary to constantly educate fellow
counselors and others about minority populations and those whose cultures may be different from our own. History has not been very accommodating to clients who do not ascribe to the white, western, and male demographic categories. I am equally delighted to hear about the social justice/advocacy direction of counseling. Multicultural understanding is the first step and social justice/advocacy, for individuals who may be silenced, seems to be the next step in a well-rounded counseling profession.

In my love of multiculturalism and social justice, I worry about the illegitimacies concerning individuals who may not wholeheartedly support these concepts. There are pushes to become advocates and culturally competent, but I prefer to have passionate counselors participating. Clients can see and feel when a counselor is not being authentic. I see more harm in mandating all counselors to jump on the bandwagon if they may be racist, elitist, discriminatory, etc.

My future as a professional counselor is grounded in multicultural theory and competencies. I feel that there are pieces to every individual that make him or her unique. Culture can be one or many of these pieces and it is my job, as a good counselor, to learn about and encourage understanding. Advocacy is an aspect that will professionally be more subjective. I will fight for causes in which I am passionate, as well as important situations in which my clients encounter throughout my professional career. But, I will not advocate for causes in which I wholeheartedly do not believe in because I feel that enthusiasm is an integral aspect.

Cassandra R. Armato, Delta Gamma Chapter, University of South Florida

Technology has undoubtedly made its footprint on our everyday lives: e-mail, instant messaging, texting, MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, and now Google Latitude. While all of this instant access to and dissemination of information has opened our world to a level of communication that would otherwise not have been possible, the majority of users are unaware of the malicious ways in which these technologies can be implemented to exploit others or even themselves. Who are these people? They are not only the parents of the children in our schools, but also our school administrators and school board members. Even worse, which ones among them, and among us as counselors, know nothing at all about these invasive technologies? Children are teaching adults about Internet use, when it is the adults who should be teaching the children. The need to bridge this generation gap motivates me to prepare to educate my future school community on Internet safety and on the necessity for policies to address Internet misconduct.

In 2008, Jesse Logan (18) committed suicide after being tormented in school due to an ex-boyfriend sending her naked picture to hundreds of students' cell phones. Earlier that year, Victoria Lindsay (16) was severely beaten by six of her friends for the purpose of posting the video on MySpace and YouTube. Despite the obvious atrocity of these initial acts, I worry about our preparedness to counsel these children who are revictimized by the awful reality that once something is disseminated digitally, it will never completely be erased.

As a future professional school counselor, I will continue to educate myself on the latest technologies and be proactive in designing and implementing policy so that victims are not left feeling powerless in a school system that has no means by which to punish offenders when the law cannot.

Rosemary Menarchem, Lambda Iota Beta Chapter, Long Island University-Brentwood

The current trend of counselors in recommending the many growing avenues of health and wellness support services, such as meditation, yoga, and nutritional guidance, focuses on treating the whole individual. Good counseling in general takes into account each patient's physical and mental health, genetic predispositions and environmental influences. The emphasis today to take a preventative
approach to disease and mental illness can encourage and teach self-responsibility for mental and physical health care.

These current developments have motivated me through my own personal experiences of a holistic approach to well-being. The high stress, fast paced world where technology has infringed upon our thoughts and quiet time, and high action and violence have become an accepted norm has taken its toll on the health and well-being of mankind. It is all about aggression, attainment, and accomplishment. It has very little to do with accepting, contentment, personal peace and joy, and fulfilling lifestyles.

Along with the outside world being chaotic and confused, the inside world of humanity has become deficient and neglected. Through deterioration of the soil through overuse, depletion, and pesticides, and the addition of chemicals, toxins and preservatives to the food chain, the human condition and specifically the health of the mind has gradually deteriorated over time.

With both of these changes in the human condition, there will be increasing need for mental health support. It is both comforting and inspirational to know that there are many areas developing in a variety of fields a counselor can suggest for the continual education and development of a client. There are inspirational speakers, laughter yoga workshops, nutritional counselors, exercise coaches, and meditation clinics.

It worries me; however, with the variety of services available, there may be people who will not receive the right mental health counseling support. I believe the key to good counseling is the holistic approach to mental health and wellness. Encouraging the awareness of one’s potential, and the unleashing of his/her obstacles, can come from personal specialized knowledge attained through counseling.

As we move into the future, the rapid developments of physical and mental health and well-being can open up a range of possibilities for the future of counseling. People will expect and want to think, feel and function better. We are on the cusp of a new era.

Michelle Nerish, Chi Sigma Mu Chapter, Montclair State University

The new generation of counseling professionals will be facing a challenge much different from their predecessors. The rapid growth of the geriatric population is a less familiar territory that will impact the future of necessary counseling awareness. Therefore, it is in our best interest, as well as our clients’ best interest to be knowledgeable of this growing change in society.

This rising population and changing societal dynamic will affect counseling in all settings. For example, in community counseling agencies, hospitals, etc., there will likely be an increase in matured clients coping with the demands of aging, as well as, their older sons and daughters handling the added responsibility of caring for them. In the school setting, there may be more multi-generational families living in one home where children and adolescents may need counseling to assist in handling issues involved as a result to this environment.

As an upcoming graduate, this development both worries and excites me. I think, as a counselor, it is an exciting time to enter the field and engage in this moment of change. I believe that being prepared for the upcoming skewed population will enable me to be a more informed and proficient counselor.

On the other hand, this transformation is fast approaching. Because of this, I contend that based on curriculum and CACREP standards, this topic is not addressed sufficiently. This, in turn, may inhibit the work and competency of new counselors. Therefore, I believe it is our duty to better inform ourselves about the needs and demands of the highest growing age group. In doing so, not only do we remain
current on the needs of our clients, but we are also prepared to add our own thoughts and approaches to help shape future counseling practices in relation to this population.

What are the leadership skills you have found to be most important in a good leader?

Fall 2008 & Spring 2009

Kemi Amola, Nu Sigma Chi Chapter, North Carolina State University

My views of what makes a good leader has changed a lot over the years. I use to think a good leader was simply someone who was 1) knowledgeable in the area which they are leading, 2) effective in directing people to complete a task and 3) able to relate well with people and different personalities. As I have gained more work experience and have had the opportunity to work with many different people and leadership styles, I realize there is one important quality I have often neglected. I have often overlooked the importance of the ability to think outside of the box and the courage to carry it out. My current clinical supervisor embodies all of these characteristics. She has been in the counseling/social work field for many years; working in many different agencies from EAP programs, public and private agencies to finally her own private practice. Over the years she has discovered many flaws within the mental health system, instead of just adjusting to the flaws or simply complaining about them, she has found ways to work outside of the box, while still fulfilling her obligations. She has found creative and innovative ways to meet her client’s needs as well as the needs of the funding agency. She does not simply do something because that is the way it has always been done or because some people believe it can’t be done any other way. She is also not silenced by others negativity. She is not afraid to be the only one to try something if she has determined it is what is best for the client. Her influence has inspired me to also think outside of the box and, importantly, not to get caught up in the trappings of negativity. As with all good leaders she inspires those around her. I believe she embodies all of the characteristics of a good leader and she has instilled the same characteristics in me.

Ronda Bonnette, Alpha Eta Chapter, University of New Orleans

Great leaders, to me, exhibit a great balance between several factors. They are able to delegate without hesitation, they give respect therefore they receive it right back, and most importantly, they are risk takers and aren’t afraid to do the right thing.

Cynthia Coogan, Mu Upsilon Gamma Chapter, Marymount University

Essential and Effective Leadership Skills. Leadership comes in many forms: bold and innovative, quiet and purposeful, or steady and careful to stay the course. Depending on the needs and the organization, any of these might be useful at any given time. However, what are leadership skills that stand the test of time and are important in any leader?

First, generating enthusiasm for the task at hand is paramount. No employee likes the feeling that the person leading them is stipified by the work. Staff look to their leader to model the skills and abilities they need to tackle the work before them. The leader must embolden her staff to be energized by the challenges that await them, no matter how trivial or daunting they may seem. The dynamic chain reaction that enthusiasm ignites works like a charm. It is not naive; rather, it is facing the work to be done with a perspective that creates momentum. Generating the enthusiasm can occur on many levels: in casual meetings or inquiries with staff, during a structured staff meeting, or in written directives and brief e-mail dispatches.
Second, a strong leader must have a solid vision for the organization. Where is it going? What is its purpose? Is it clear to the members of the staff why they do what they do each day? A foundation of this vision would be a clear and concise mission statement that guides the actions of the department or organization. When a task is delegated to that staff, the strong leader can look to its principles as delineated in the mission statement and ask, “Does this activity fit our mission and goals?” Keeping the work of those in one’s charge attuned to the overall vision should naturally feed back to the first skill of generating enthusiasm. If the vision is clear and the leader adheres to it, then work can be accomplished with little confusion about its place in the organization’s priorities. This clarity of purpose makes people feel good about the work they do.

Third, a strong leader keeps an open mind. As the demands placed on an organization evolve, so must the members of that organization evolve. There is no place for stagnation in a dynamic field such as counseling! The leader’s open mind hears its employees, is not averse to constructive criticism, and is able to integrate the input that is given. In this way, the leader, the staff and the organization are able to keep pace with the myriad demands placed upon them.

Strong leadership is optimistic and enthusiastic while facing the demands of reality. Effective leadership imparts its vision clearly through appropriate channels. And the best leaders keep an open and alert mind to the ever-evolving process of which they are a part. With these traits as foundation and practice, leaders in counseling will have an essential skill set that stands the test of time.

Danielle Biondi, Delta Tau Kappa Chapter, West Chester University

Barack Obama, Steve Jobs, and President Abraham Lincoln. What make these individuals great leaders? Leaders possess an outstanding ability to inspire others. An effective leader has a vision, understands how to communicate with individuals, and is confident in their delivery of the vision in a way that obtains end-goal results. For example, presidential candidate Barack Obama, exudes confidence every time he takes the podium, delivering his vision clearly and with confidence to his target audience. Though political beliefs may differ, everyone agrees that Barack Obama can motivate a group of people around him by utilizing the characteristics described above.

Each of us has our own idea of what leadership skills create an effective leader. In my experience, I have found that effective leaders have integrity, a clear vision, and are motivated. A leader is someone who has a positive vision, and empowers others by instilling the confidence to embark on new challenges. I believe understanding one’s own values, as well communicating those values to others, are important for change to take place. Apple CEO Steve Jobs is a prime example of a leader who takes a positive vision, and empowers others to push the envelope in creating change. This was seen most recently when he revolutionized the Smartphone industry by the release of the iPhone.

Accepting change is something that is imperative for a good leader to embody. The challenges a leader may face today are resistance to change, and the threat of failure. Leaders, who have the ability to not only accept change, but also help their followers accept or embrace change, are truly the great leaders. These individuals have a powerful influence over people. A true leader is flexible to the demands of change and embraces the challenge of learning new things and skills. When a leader is successful in creating trust, others will follow. A great example of a leader who faced resistance to change, and threat of failure, was President Abraham Lincoln. President Lincoln used his leadership qualities to successfully lead the country through one of our greatest crises, the Civil War.
Finally, while great leaders may be rare, we all have leadership potential. If an individual is confident, embraces change, and uses sound judgment, values, skills, and behaviors; we can all become someone who others respect and follow.

Talia J. Dean, Sigma Sigma Upsilon Chapter, University of Illinois at Springfield

The number one leadership skill that I have found to be in a good leader is the ability to empathically direct team members. Combine this skill with general respect for others and you have yourself a great leader. Throughout my life I have had numerous opportunities observing others lead. Interestingly, at times I have often found myself discouraged at what I have seen. People that I have entrusted to teach and guide me, have involuntarily provided me with a what not to do list of ways to lead. As a result, these experiences have been extremely valuable in reminding me that everyday people (some who may not consider themselves leaders) are always being watched by someone; just as subordinates should never mistake their role as an excuse not to lead. The truth is anyone, at any time, can become a leader that has the opportunity to promote positive change and provide inspiration to others.

Overall, there have been many people who have provided me with a what to do list as well; and thus have paved the way in my own journey of awareness of the types of leadership qualities that I have come to value and continuously strive to obtain. I have found that I value professionalism in a leader. Professionalism includes objectivity; thus valuing one’s own experience instead of relying on another’s as absolute truth. Strong leaders find a way to effectively connect with others, and encourage honesty in dialoguing about possible concerns that one might have. A good leader does not hesitate to ask for help from others, and is aware of one’s vulnerabilities. Great leaders do not settle for the negative, and enthusiastically and continually search for the positive. Finally, leaders are able to rise to challenges directly and openly; even if they find that they are sometimes standing alone.

Kristine Doyle, Pi Alpha Chapter, Wake Forest University

In an election year the definition of good leadership becomes a debatable topic. Does charisma outshine experience? Does a title ensure competence? Is change better than status quo? Learning about leadership is a personal journey that is as much about learning from failure as it is about thriving amidst success. To be a good leader one must understand this balance. Leaders are prepared to face many challenges that have outcomes that might not fall within the panes of Johari’s Window. Thomas Edison stated, “If we all did the things we are capable of doing, we would literally astound ourselves.” Leaders are the ones who help us make these astounding discoveries.

Despite laughable failures and because of commendable successes, the leaders that I aspire to emulate are the ones that have a likeability factor than cannot be denied. These leaders have the ability to sell faith and they do it with the same passion of a BBQ grill salesman in the pits of hell. True leaders have the fortitude to be so supportive towards others that their likeability could be confused with reverence. They are the ones who believe they are capable of more but also accept when good is just good enough. Not unlike a fine piece of meat there are leaders who can perform a job well-done but I prefer to think of good leaders as a little more rare and dripping with flavor.

I am not an authority on leaders. I can say that I have witnessed many diverse leadership styles. I have received unintelligible barked orders from a militaristic hierarchy of leaders who demanded compliance without question. I watched an overly accessorized sorority sister prioritize her leadership role somewhere after party coordination but before studying for finals. These experiences provided me with options when creating a foundation for my own personal leadership style. Good leaders know they can leave a legacy and strive to make it a positive one.
I encourage the good, the bad and the ugly to fill leadership roles. There is something to be said for leaders who have charisma but no experience, who have a title but little knowledge and for those who are willing to promote change when the status quo is reliable. Everyone can be a good leader if they just take these words by Theodore Roosevelt to heart, “Do what you can, with what you have, where you are.”

**Kristopher M. Goodrich, Sigma Upsilon Chapter, Syracuse University**

The most important skills that I have seen in a good leader have been the skills of self-awareness and awareness of others. The greatest leaders that I have had the opportunity to interact with have all shown me that they have the capacity to know their own talents and limitations, as well as how to facilitate engaged involvement from skilled others. They recognize the abilities that others possess and find ways to actively engage them within the group’s activities. These individuals understand when it is important to “say no,” as well as how to delegate tasks to others. This normally translates to good organizational/time management skills, as no one person has the burden of running the group or organization. Their leadership includes active assessment and evaluation of individual and group activities, as well as creativity and openness to finding new ways of doing things. It appears that through an active process of self-examination, as well as attention to others, they are able to facilitate a powerfully engaged and productive group. And it has become clear to me that these two seemingly separate things, self-awareness and awareness of others, really is two sides of the same skills set but fundamentally important to facilitating a successful organization.

**Michelle Gimenez Hinkle, Kappa Sigma Upsilon Chapter, Kent State University**

In my preparation to be a counselor and counselor educator, I have had the privilege of being impacted directly and indirectly by many leaders. Although they have each led me in different ways based on their individual talents, they have all worked collectively to keep me motivated to stay involved in the profession and be excited about the work that I do. In my opinion, this ability to excite newcomers to the profession is the most important skill of a leader.

In my perspective, it seems that one common aspect among all the people who I think of as leaders is that they make me feel excited about counseling and counselor education. This excitement makes me feel motivated to reach my goals or fulfill accomplishments for the good of the professional community. Sometimes I read articles by leaders in counseling that make me feel so energized that I can’t wait to try a new intervention or technique with one of my clients. In this sense, the leader used skills in writing to motivate me to try something new in counseling that I wouldn’t have tried otherwise. Other times, I have encouraging conversations with leaders who help me identify my strengths and provide me with opportunities for service to counseling. During these times, the leader uses skills of verbal communication and encouragement by helping me feel motivated to offer my own resources and talents in ways that I would have not considered, or in ways that I previously thought were too small or unimportant. I am also motivated to do well in my schoolwork, service to counseling, and scholarship when I observe leaders role modeling strong professional identity. These leaders lead by example through their humble commitment to counseling and counselor education. This type of leadership is important to me because it reinforces my own motivations to pursue this career and find my own devotion to the profession. Witnessing these leaders’ work and interactions also reminds me to be reflective in all that I do as a counselor and to show respect for the profession.

I am grateful for each leader that I have come in contact with, either face-to-face or indirectly. Although, they have each found themselves in leadership positions based of different skills and talents, they all have impacted me by their ability to excite me about being involved in the profession of counseling.
Paul Johnson, Chi Chapter, University of Montevallo

First, I feel that the choice of the word skills, as opposed to traits or abilities, is an important distinction. Whereas leadership traits are often attributed to natural qualities within a person from birth, skills are acquired or refined over time. A period of testing has occurred to the leader that necessitated a learning process that required the acquisition of an ability and an exercising of that ability until it became a fully functional skill; or the period of testing may have demanded a natural inborn trait to be refined in order to function at its fullest potential. Either way, a process has occurred where the leader has developed his leadership capacity.

Second, and more directly to the question, I think there are two skills that are the most important in a good leader: the ability to initiate (to take the leadership risk) and the ability to follow-up (with those whom the leader is leading). In regards to initiating, it is important for the leader to lead, to make an initial decision, to act in some way that initiates the group’s task or endeavor. It takes a great deal of courage, security, self-confidence, self-assurance, or gumption, to take the risk, to step out, to initiate. Too many leaders are too insecure to take this first step.

In regards to following up, it is important for the leader to check in with those under her/his leadership; to check progress, of course, but even more so, to check motivation, buy-in, utilization, growth, development, insights, ideas. It enables the leader to engage in the refining process for both the members and the task. These two skills require a strong sense of identity and humility within the leader. When practiced well, both lend a real sense of power and progress to the leader, regardless of results.

Kristin Meany-Walen, Rho Kappa Chapter, University of North Texas

What leadership skills make a good leader? I thought about this question and found I could not answer it without inverting the question. Hence, I asked myself, what are the characteristics of the leaders I tend to follow? I follow those whom are dependable, predictable, and consistent. I find comfort in knowing what to expect from those whom I have elected to follow; I know what they stand for and I know they will consistently stand for it.

Leaders have a framework of morals and ethics that are known by their followers. As a follower, I believe in what my leader stands for. A leader strives for goals that she or he is passionate about and I choose to follow her or him based on her or his conviction and integrity. A common goal exists among us, one that the leader is passionate about, and works hard to achieve. I believe she or he will work effortlessly to meet the goal without jeopardizing her or his moral and ethical character. Additionally, she or he will consistently aim to accomplish her or his objective amidst an ever changing world.

Life is not stagnant. Issues, topics, and problems will change. As the world, others, and myself progress through the ages my leaders remain dependable, predictable, and consistent. Leaders must be open to growth and change. They take in new information and accommodate or assimilate the changing world with their existing beliefs and goals. However, their moral and ethical character remains relatively predictable. Just as a well-developed counseling theory can stand through the eras, a leader of integrity can endure the change of times.

Lastly, I wish to confirm that for me, quality leaders are human. I tend to follow those who let me know them with their strengths, insecurities, challenges, and goals. My leaders allow me to see their imperfections and vulnerabilities. They share their successes and processes of growth. I can learn vicariously from their humanness and naturally feel a connection with them on a human level. My leaders light the path but allow me to join in the journey.
Maryann O. Meniru, Alpha Upsilon Chapter, University of Akron

What makes a Good Leader? The idea of leadership has been defined variously. The constant thread that runs through most views regarding this concept is that of the ability of the leader to make every member of a group feel belonged and valued. Since there is no human person who is complete or perfect, the idea of leadership may be discussed from a perspective of a collection of qualities which are needed to achieve a group’s goals or needs. In other words a person who has what may be pertinent to the progress of a well lead group. The second aspect may be seen as what the led perceives as good qualities. To this student writer, it appears that the qualities of a good leader may be dependent on the extent to which the group perceives their goals and needs are being met.

The following qualities may be described as general characteristics or traits needed for effective leadership. They include:

1. Rapport
2. Unconditional positive regard for people
3. Solution Oriented mindset
4. Ability to adapt to situations or
5. Complementarities
6. Vision

It is believed that the above qualities are either learned or inborn. The leader has to see that in a group, there are many talents and needs. The group being lead may also have goals and or visions for their group. The ability to recognize these diversities as well as harness them for the growth of the group are pertinent. When a leader sees the potential within his or her group and is able to bring as well as utilize those qualities to enhance the group that person is showing quality of a good leader. This act would require the skill of rapport to achieve. Also, since different people have different qualities and talents; the leader will need the ability to not only recognize this but also bring it out of the individuals who have them. It means that the lead will trust and respect their leader. Another related quality is unconditional positive regard for people which breed trust and a sense of belonging in the people. The skill to adapt to different situation cannot be underestimated. Sometimes, things do not go perfectly and different situations require different approaches and solution. Vision is probably the most necessary as any group’s progress depend on this. A good leader should demonstrate foresight for his group. This essay wishes to conclude by stating that leadership is a process which continues to evolve and therefore a leader must continue to adapt and learn while on this journey.

Caroline Perjessy, Kappa Sigma Upsilon Chapter, Kent State University

"An effective leader demonstrates both vision and action, equally. Their ability to see the possibilities, create ideas, and implement dreams are at the nexus of change. The counseling field, without them, would falter and remain stagnant. The growth that we see in our profession is reliant upon individuals willing to look beyond the horizon and who can imagine what may come, often motivating others in the process. The future, to them, is ripe with potential. They think critically and creatively, but also collaborate and cooperate. Effective leaders are willing to take risks, but are not blinded by personal agendas and hidden motivations. When they falter, they do not give up or make excuses. They remain true to themselves and what they believe in. They never stop learning."

Irene Rettig, Upsilon Nu Omicron Chapter, University of Nebraska-Omaha

As the President of Chi Sigma Iota (CSI), coming into a new year of service, I see great opportunity and anticipate the possibilities in the months ahead. Recognizing that it is not just a position of office, but
effective leadership that is needed for a chapter to work toward a collective vision, I consider the skills necessary to lead an organization like CSI.

When contemplating the skills that are essential for strong leadership I look to some of our strongest leaders. Though leadership is presented with differences in style, there are certain skills that most dynamic leaders possess.

First, a dynamic leader defines their vision with clarity and passion. Few have done this with the eloquence of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., demonstrated in his “I Have a Dream” speech. “I say to you today, my friends, that in spite of the difficulties and frustration of the moment, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.” He articulated his vision and defined it in a way that touched the individual deeply on a personal level precipitating change that impacted society with the Civil Rights Act in 1964. Undoubtedly a defined vision can produce powerful results.

Second, a successful leader will acquire a strong knowledge base, tools and procedures. Bill Gates with his genius for seeing opportunities had the ability to change current precepts, created one of the greatest technical advancements in history with the internet, effecting people on a global level. Possessing a strong knowledge base, awareness, and world view is vital for a successful leader.

Third, strong communication and motivation skills are needed to lead effectively. Challenging members and delegating responsibility within the organization creates a sense of purpose and ownership. President Lincoln stated at Gettysburg in 1863, “The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here.” In his eloquence, President Lincoln challenged and motivated the troops, then encouraged and praised their efforts.

Finally, a dynamic leader must lead by example. These great leaders I have mentioned have demonstrated personal discipline, integrity and dedication to their mission. They have served with a sense of duty and sound moral principles placed above all else. I will strive to incorporate these skills in the upcoming year through my leadership role with Chi Sigma Iota.

Angela Shores, Nu Sigma Chi Chapter, North Carolina State University

A good leader is a servant; he/she serves the organization, association, or institution, the people, the goals and objectives, and the ideals of that which he/she leads. A good leader has vision - a vision of who he/she is as a person and a leader and a vision of what the group he/she leads is about and where they are going. This vision encourages all members of the group to also have a vision of themselves and the organization. A good leader incorporates all of these visions into a direction for the team.

A good leader is able to inspire others to join the group, to take an active role as part of the team, and to take on leadership roles. In this, a good leader leads by example, taking an active role in accomplishing goals. Leaders listen to the ideas of others and learn from everyone in the group. They can follow when it is appropriate to give someone else the opportunity to learn new skills and develop.

Good leaders find balance - not just balance between leading and following, but balance among all of the things they undertake. Good leaders know their limits and know when to let others help, as well as when to ask for help from team members. Good leaders are humble; they serve for the ultimate success of the organization or team, and do not seek leadership simply for personal gain.
Furthermore, good leaders are confident in their ability to complete a task, encourage others to become excited about the mission and vision of the group, and about their skills to organize a group for success. They are confident in their ability to learn the tasks of a leader and the essence of leadership in every opportunity they face.

Regardless of the specific tasks involved, or the organization which one is leading, a good leader is ethical, serves with integrity, and strives to honor the leaders that have served before and who will serve the association, organization, or institution in the future.

**Sarah Smith, Chi Upsilon Chapter, Clemson University**

Although it takes numerous skills to become a great leader, some of the most important skills in being a successful leader include: patience, confidence, self-respect and respect for others, flexibility, open-mindedness, and insight. Many of today's leaders exhibit confidence, but often they are so set in their ways they tend not to be flexible or open-minded.

A truly great leader has all of the above qualities. Staying open-minded and flexible in one's thoughts, views, and actions is key in today's fast-pace society. It is important to also maintain respect for oneself, so that others do not perceive their leader as a push-over. Once a leader is considered to be a push-over or too easy going, it is difficult to maintain control and to continue to maintain position as the leader. Others may drift or start to identify someone else as someone of confidence and who is capable of good-decision making, and therefore someone worthy of turning to for advice or leadership.

A person who is insightful is capable of reading others and their situation accurately. A leader who is capable of this and acts on these insights leads the crowd much more easily than someone who is unable to assess the situation and understand the current needs of the group. This goes hand-in-hand with being flexible, as mentioned above. Leaders tend to have an idea or a plan of action, but as they go along, they may find the group having different needs. A good leader will continually assess and respect the needs of the group, thereby being flexible in how they manage and organize the situation. Being able to continually rearrange the schedule or one’s plan of action requires patience and confidence. It takes confidence to trust in one’s decisions and assessment, and patience as these decisions are repeatedly changed to suit the needs of the group.

Great leaders come in all shapes and sizes. Truly great leaders are the ones capable of modifying plans and assessing situations continuously to better serve the needs of the group through use of accurate insight, confidence, patience, flexibility, and open-mindedness.

**Jennifer E. Tomon, Nu Sigma Chi Chapter, North Carolina State University**

Yin-Yang Leadership. Chinese philosophy recognizes the concepts of yin and yang, which are two opposite yet complimentary forces, leading to equilibrium in all existence. Like yin-yang, a good leader is one who exemplifies a balance of qualities that may seem contradictory but that are not mutually exclusive. Knowing when to take charge and when to defer to others is a necessary skill of an effective leader. A good leader is able to bring out the best in those around him/her and is willing to let others take the credit for a job well done or the criticism for deficiencies. Empowering others to be creative and exercise decision-making is a charge of a good leader.

A competent leader should also be an effective manager of personalities and organizer of tasks. Being resourceful and willing to ask for assistance is essential. As a good leader, one should be an equally effective communicator and listener. Trusting the wisdom of others while maintaining confidence in one's
ideas encourages morale as well as continued personal development. A quality leader should be grounded in principles but flexible and adaptive.

As counselors, we should look to exercise our leadership within our profession and throughout our counseling relationships. Our clients trust us to help them with goal-setting and action or treatment, and they expect the aforementioned balance in leadership skills. We must communicate effectively through our words and actions; listen actively through the use of our core skills; and while grounded in our principles, we should be open to the beliefs and experiences of others. For new practitioners, it is also critical that we trust our instincts while also seeking the guidance of other professionals. We cannot presume to have all of the answers, but as counselor leaders, we recognize this fact and look to the expertise of our supervisors and colleagues. By entering the counseling profession, we acknowledge our responsibility to hone our leadership skills and to serve as advocates for our clients. Though we share a sense of purpose, we lead in different ways. As an individual, explore your strengths and continue to strive for a sense of balance in your life. Recognize the yin-yang in your leadership style.

Cynthia Vasilas & Amanda Thomas, Iota Delta Sigma, Auburn University

Leadership is often misinterpreted and cannot simply be defined by a professional title or innate personality characteristic. A leader is not born or promoted but rather developed through a process that requires patience, enthusiasm and commitment. As students and clinicians, we have come to recognize and value effective leadership throughout the years. To us, a leader is someone who assists others to unlock their potential. It is not about telling people what to do but, inspiring others to see what they are capable of. Valuable leaders acknowledge their personal strengths and weaknesses, set achievable goals and shoot for success. We feel that a leader takes risks, is flexible, aware, motivated and above all else is able to laugh.

Extraordinary leaders that we have encountered set the precedence with their actions, ability to communicate their expectations and clear vision. Through the application of effective communication; a leader nourishes others abilities and provides them opportunities to flourish by furthering developing their skill set. Leaders that have placed a value on communication all recognize that the most powerful and empowering thing a guide can do is simply to listen. A good leader never stops at simply organizing a team but, will contribute to become a part of that team. Leaders know just how important motivation can be, and when presenting a challenge, leaders provide the necessary guidance, coaching, and encouragement needed. Equally important, a good leader knows the secret of the simple but too often ignored motivators of praise, appreciation, and recognition. Overall, the quality shared by each of the successful leaders we have encountered was their ability to effortlessly encourage success through purpose and direction. It is necessary to remain cognizant to these strong attributes as we continue to develop into effective counselor educators and future leaders.

Dana Welborn, Omega Kappa Upsilon Chapter, Western Kentucky University

In my opinion, the best leaders are those who recognize the hidden potential in others, and can quell the negative in order for the more positive traits to stand out. Everyone has an unconstructive behavior that surfaces when they are asked to do what they are uncomfortable or disagreeable towards. These unconstructive behaviors could range from resistance and withdrawal to rudeness and dissension. The better leader can address each individual’s issue without lowering the morale of that person or the rest of the group. Meanwhile, the leader can also draw out the confidence of another to put effort towards a task that strikes their insecurities. As the confidence mounts, so increases the ability and willingness of that person to approach a similar situation in the future, without the encouragement or support of another.
Another trait important to a good leader is the ability to maintain composure. No one should know when a leader is getting frustrated, angry, or upset. This aspect goes hand-in-hand with the ability to vanquish negative behaviors without lowering morale. Anyone can get distressed and project their hostility towards others as they demand tasks be accomplished or behaviors be changed. If the goal is then met, it is not completed with confidence and self-motivation, but with fear and anxiety. The result is that no one has focused on their own personal growth resulting from completing the task, and they will likely not be motivated to attempt a similar task in the future. A leader can also be upset that they have been placed in charge of relaying information or coordinating an effort, the variety of which they do not agree or relate. The better leader does not allow for emotional trickle-down to affect mood and productivity. This person relays enthusiasm towards the idea as though they had conjured it themselves. And, despite their reluctance towards the proposition, they are able to motivate skeptical others to believe the motion is worth attention and effort.

Steve Zapalla, Mu Upsilon Gamma Chapter, Marymount University

When thinking of leadership skills I am quickly reminded of my experience in the Army. Having attended the best military schools, exposed to the finest teachers, and serving in elite units I thought I knew leadership well. After all, I was decorated for my leadership abilities many times in both peace and war. However, I am now aware of another leadership skill I find to be the most important in a good leader.

An Army leader is commonly defined as one who has the skills, values and attributes to inspire and influence people to accomplish organizational goals. Some of the more common skills are loyalty, duty, honor, respect, selflessness, integrity, courage, confidence, and the list goes on and on. These are all helpful skills and countless hours are spent labeling and prioritizing them. The Army further teaches leaders to “be, know and do” these skills. This stresses the importance of internalizing these skills; however, they are still tied to the tenet of influencing others and supporting organizational goals. In this way, success comes from meeting or changing outside demands. While this may work for the organization it can be limiting.

I suggest that the single most important leadership skill is to become aware of one’s own self, deeply and profoundly. Being able to negotiate the delicate balance between accomplishing the mission and taking care of people, in any environment, can be best accomplished by genuinely improving our own ability to find and cope with our own deep seated fears and difficulties. And not just learning the words but sensing the deep feelings words can only point to.

Leaders from all over often help their people overcome overwhelming physical and psychological fears as quickly as possible to accomplish the mission. In this way, fear is often avoided and buried. Leaders learn similar habits and their effectiveness may ultimately prove limited. In much the same way counselors help clients uncover fears; leaders should find and deal with their own fears first. Once a leader can realize his or her own true nature, all else will follow. To lead one self is to lead it all. Only from this place within, rather than from what looks good on the outside or intellectually, can we then “know” and enjoy the many attributes of sound leadership. Our ability to communicate and do what is right will come instinctively. Do we have the willingness and patience to help others reach this awareness? Now that would be a good leadership skill to have!
In your development as a counselor, what have you learned from clients or other individuals who struggle with life's problems?

Jennifer Allen, Alpha Iota

The Power of Resilience. I am inspired by the successful navigation by children experiencing difficult life circumstances beyond their control. Adversity seems to call upon personal strengths, often ones they have not yet recognized in themselves. Focusing on students' accomplishments with things even as simple as getting up and coming to school each day, can offer an opportunity for them to see their own capacities for choice and success.

Rhonda Bonnette, Alpha Eta

It Is All About Perspective. I have found a temporary or permanent solution to the problems clients experience is related to how they perceive the presenting problem. If the individual is able to move forward and see the problem as a learning experience, then their problems often do not seem so troubling.

Richard Albright, Rho Alpha Mu

I have noticed that everyone struggles with life's problems to some extent. Certainly there are those who are able to cope better and those who are not able to cope as well.

Oswaldo Chavez, Theta Alpha Mu

It is the perception of the crises from which we gain wisdom to overcome future dilemmas. During a crisis we may feel that we do not have the capacity to overcome it, but with a little encouragement from a counselor, family member, or self, we realize that all along we had the necessary tools to deal with the problem. I have faced obstacles such as losing my father when I was 10 years old and my brother and best friend when he was only 18. I believe in the existentialistic view that we make a choice to allow these occurrences to either destroy or motivate us. In my life, these tragic events have encouraged and motivated me to help others.

Pat Edmonds, Chi Upsilon

The Value Asking for Clarification in Difficult Situations. At an initial meeting with individuals who are terminally ill and their families I frequently play the Native American Flute. From my experience, this ancient folk instrument can bring pain relief, provide distraction, and promote relaxation. One day I had forgotten my flute, but I was still able to establish rapport with the new client. The next time I saw her, I asked if she'd like to hear me play. Her reply was a steely, "If it will make you feel better, go ahead." My mind went into overdrive. What was this all about? Where was our good relationship? What to do? Had the client misunderstood me? My heart beat wildly, and after hesitating a little longer, I tentatively offered, "You know, a moment ago I didn't say, "pray for you," I said, "play for you" and then held up the flute before me. The person readily agreed, "Oh, well, in that case, by all means, go ahead and play." This was a turning point. I had asked for clarification. It was a particularly edgy hunch, I think, and one another might handle differently.

April Young, Rho Epsilon

The Power of Understanding Normal Reactions to Abnormal Events. During the time I worked as an addiction counselor, it appeared many clients were trying to find power in the very substances that were
robbing them of it. These individuals were seeking the power to understand their lives and get their needs met. It seemed they were trying to bury many of their emotions, especially those emotions our society does not deem acceptable, or worthy of our attention. So, I began to pour on the normalizing! I explained to clients that most of what they were experiencing and the behaviors they were exhibiting were in fact, normal reactions to abnormal events. Our desires to be normal, to be accepted, seem to be common themes among those seeking counseling.

Sherry Kirkland, Delta Chi

Everyone is Unique. I have learned that each person is a unique individual whose needs in any given situation might be totally different from the needs of another individual in the same situation. It is easy to put everyone who struggles with the same problem into the same category. However, I have come to believe uncovering an individual's individuality is one of the most important things we can do for a client.

Chris Tyler, Alpha Eta

The Importance of Having Someone to Share Ideas With. In my development as a counselor, I have found that the individuals struggling with life's problems need someone to talk to. Many individuals seem to be at a fork in the road or are just confused about what steps to take in their lives. Often times these individuals start to feel that there is something wrong with them, when in reality it is completely normal to be "stuck." I have seen that once these individuals are able to talk through their problems, many possibilities begin to be placed in front of them. Ideas become more apparent and worthwhile because the individual has achieved his/her own goals.

Wei Liu, Tau Sigma

More About Myself. I always think that the progress that the clients made is also made by the counselors. The counseling process to me is a mutual learning process. As a counselor, I am often an "onlooker" who can think more objectively and rationally about the problems individuals' experience. As a part of that process, I can recognize my own blind spots, such as similar reactions or mistakes I would have had in the same situation. Thanks to my clients, I learned how to work and live more efficiently.

What area of counselor education provides the most motivation for you and what is it about that area that excites you?

Michael Chaney, Georgia State University, Chi Sigma Iota, Chi Epsilon Chapter

The area of counselor education that is most motivating and exciting is the multiculturalism associated with the field. Specifically, there are three ways multicultural issues in counselor education have been motivating and inspiring: Interacting, learning, and growing.

Interacting with individuals who come from cultural backgrounds different than my own has been exciting and challenging. Whether I am working with clients or mingling with my academic peers, I have been challenged to question beliefs and/or stereotypes I may have, regarding an individual's cultural heritage. Indeed I am even more motivated to interact with people of diverse backgrounds when my own world view is challenged. When this occurs, I not only gain insight about myself, but am able to become a culturally-competent counselor and friend.
Learning about multicultural issues seems to be an on-going process. My learning has been comprised of taking multicultural counseling courses, personal reading, and simply asking questions of culturally-different individuals. I must admit, most of my multicultural knowledge has come from asking questions of the individual and not from sitting in a classroom, albeit, class lectures were a good starting point. It has been my experience that clients and peers seem to appreciate questions being asked about their cultures. Furthermore, I have noticed that they seem to get excited that I am learning about and showing interest in their culture. What an incredible experience it is when two individuals of diverse cultures can come together and share each other’s histories, traditions, and values!

Interacting with culturally-different individuals and learning about their backgrounds has fostered my personal growth professionally and personally. I believe that is what is most motivating, the more culturally aware I become, the more I grow and flourish. It is almost as if my experiences with people of diverse cultures fertilize me, allowing me to transform. In addition, it is exciting to know that counselor education allows me to be surrounded by so much diversity and that we are all interacting, learning, and growing together!

Kelly Kozlowski, Alpha Rho Chapter

Trying On My Counseling Hat. All counselor education has the common goal of preparing us to be effective counselors. Studying the theories of the giants in the field introduces us to many different styles. Ethics instills the need to practice professionally. Understanding people and even research methods have been enlightening as have the rest. The choice of the most motivating area was actually quite simple for me; it is a class common to everyone. It is the one that allowed me my first chance to don the hat of counselor, pre-practicum.

Now I have heard all the talk about how much better practicum is, that you get to break out your own style but I disagree. Don’t we often talk about the first time we experienced something and how exciting and scary it was. Parents vicariously enjoy thru their children their firsts: days of school, sleep-overs, boyfriends and girlfriends and even simple trips to the zoo. Pre practicum has offered me my first feel at actual clinical experience, the chance to wear the therapist hat. To sit across from a client, even if it is a classmate, and to listen and ask questions. With the close of the class I am motivated and ready for more.

Pre-practicum was a major boost for me. The emotions of the pre-practicum experience were all that first experiences are supposed to be; a mixture of excitement, fear, confidence, and most definitely anxiety. Even while struggling to find the right question, I left the experience having reinforced my passion for this field. It might not have gone as well as hoped for and there was plenty of room to grow into the counseling hat, but now I know I can do it, I want to do it, and I’m motivated to do it again. What’s more, I learned a lot about what that hat I wear looks and feels like. That my hat is unique to me and the counselor I will be.

Before this it was all theory and textbooks, thinking and applying what others have done and experienced. Now I have sat in the seat I have so often read about and experienced the role of a counselor. Practicum may be what others say it is, a chance to add more style to my hat, but it will lack the newness of the first time I put that hat on my head.
See the **Exemplar** for previous editions of the Student Insights

- **If you could improve Counselor Education training in one way, what would that be?**  
  Summer & Spring 2008

- **In your development as a counselor, what have you learned from clients or other individuals who struggle with life's problems?**  
  Fall 2007

- **From your experiences in life or training, what counseling skill has the most positive influence on clients, peers, friends, or relatives?**  
  Summer 2007

- **What motivates you to become a professional counselor?**  
  Spring 2007