Examining Your CSI Identity
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The beauty of the Hawaiian islands is the backdrop to the American Counseling Association Convention this spring, including CSI DayS!

Counselor. Advocate. Leader. These are a few of the words that come to mind when I think about the identity of a CSI member. At first glance, they are simple words but come with such complex meaning. Chi Sigma Iota International includes these words in the mission and strategic plan intentionally, as they are the foundation of who we are and what we do. We also see a focus on these throughout this edition of the Exemplar.

Since winter and snow have had a presence in every state but Hawaii, it is only fitting that CSI DayS will be held there this spring during the ACA Convention. Craig Cashwell, CSI President-elect, gives insight into the leadership training during CSI DayS that will focus on professional identity and leadership. Our current CSI President, Andrea Dixon, expands the discussion about professional identity as advocate within a global context. Advocacy is also highlighted in an article on crisis counseling.

Identity continues to be the focus of several articles written by CSI student members. The 2014 Leadership Essay Award recipients focus on professional identity and advocacy to echo the leadership training focus of CSI DayS. Doctoral student members provide some helpful ideas on factors to consider when pursuing a doctoral degree. Finally, one of our long-time CSI chapter faculty advisors, Dr. Gary Connell, is highlighted in an interview conducted and written by my associate student editor, Bradley McKibben. I think you will find something that will resonate with your CSI identity in this issue.

The CSI Exemplar is distributed three times a year to all CSI members and is a main communication service informing members of current events within the Society and within the counseling profession. Its content represents enthusiasm for academic and professional excellence in counseling.

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Over the next three months, CSI will bring our 29th year to a close and on May 1st will begin a celebration of 30 years as an academic honor and professional society. We continue to grow in both membership and member services, and we continue to seek better ways to serve our diverse membership: students, counselor educators, and professional counselors. Reflecting on our past, nourishing the present, and both visioning and preparing for the future will all be foremost over the next year. A few areas stand out as we look at our mission and goals:

**CSI’s Contributions to Counselor Education**

*Top $1 million*

Each year, CSI provides a rebate to each chapter of $10 per active member, calculated the first of May. Direct monetary support to members and chapters includes grants for research and chapter development, support for speakers for chapter initiations, awards, and leadership fellowships. These contributions to date total much more than $1,000,000. Rebates alone will exceed the $1,000,000 mark as of May, 2014. What other association provides such direct financial support to counselor education?

**Webinars**

In terms of services, CSI’s webinars and CEUs that are free to members require staff time and technology, as well as servant leadership from our membership. These remain among our most valued member services. Almost 2,400 members have registered for our webinars in this fiscal year alone, more than 900 have viewed recorded webinars, and then number of CEU certificates awarded increases daily.

**CSI’s New Journal**

The *Journal of Counselor Leadership & Advocacy* is on schedule for publication in May. The inaugural edition has been in the planning stages for almost two years. Dr. Casey Barrio Minton has recruited an outstanding editorial review panel and created a rigorous peer review process for manuscripts. The journal will be published electronically, and all members will be provided secure log-in access to read all issues. Initially, the journal will be published twice annually.
Policy on Sustainability: CSI has “GONE GREEN”

With the inception of CSI’s Policy on Sustainability last year, we have placed a priority on conserving natural resources and “going green.” Our new Web page has been a major development in this regard. We have increased the number of Web resources and decreased our use of paper and postage. Communications with members are primarily by email, so please be sure our addresses are white listed with your email providers: admin@csi-net.org is the address used to send announcements and links to new issues of the Exemplar and the JCLA. Other email addresses include: info@csi-net.org and office@csi-net.org.

Three CSI “GREEN” Resources: Exemplar, Journal of Counselor Leadership and Advocacy (Available in June 2014), and the CSI website!

Growth in Membership & Chapters

Each year, CSI’s Executive Council reviews our membership and confers with headquarters to set goals for growth in terms of memberships, renewals, and chapters. As of January 2014, CSI had initiated more than 92,000 members. The total number of chapters chartered is 357, with eight new chapters chartered since last May. With almost 3,000 new members and as many renewals so far this year, our positive pattern of growth continues.

Of more importance than numbers are the energy, enthusiasm, and commitment seen in our active members and chapters. More than 550 counselor educators are currently serving as Chapter Faculty Advisors or “Back Up” Chapter Faculty Advisors. Our CFAs mentor countless numbers of students and professional counselors in various roles as chapter leaders, from elected officers to committee chairs to student government and faculty liaisons. Support for leadership development and support for our servant leaders are among CSI’s highest priorities, and I expect this support to expand as we enter our fourth decade.

As always, I encourage CSI members to contact headquarters with your questions, suggestions, and, of course, compliments on what we do well.
Leadership Workshop 2014: Advocacy to Strengthen Professional Identity by Craig S. Cashwell, Upsilon Nu Chi, CSI
Recently, a member of a listserv to which I subscribe asked for feedback on a “heterosexual married couple where each person lacks empathy and compassion for the other.” This was the only information provided about this couple. Listserv responses began to come in. One stated that they should probably just get a divorce. Another said that it was likely that each had personality disorders, to which another said it was likely that “she is borderline and he is narcissistic.” It was striking to me how quickly these mental health professionals took the slightest detail, that the couple lacked empathy and compassion for each other, and quickly began labeling and diagnosing the couple. I am one of only a few professional counselors on this interdisciplinary listserv. It was one of those moments in which I was deeply proud of my profession and that I have been trained (and to have trained others) to join with clients, as a compassionate and empathic soul, rather than disconnect through the process of making quick judgments and hanging pejorative labels on others almost as if it were a sport.

On the listserv, I posed the question of whether the clients lacked compassion and empathy for all people or simply for each other. The latter, I argued, was probably more indicative of attachment-related fears that could be accessed and worked through by a counselor empathically attuned to each person and their struggle as a couple to create a safe connection. In other words, I offered the possibility that the couple might be struggling not because of deep-seated and intransigent pathology, but because of normal developmental struggles that could be worked through. There was one public negative reaction to my post, but there were also a lot of back-channeled “thank you” notes. I am proud to be a professional counselor, a person who sees the world from a perspective informed by wellness and developmental models.

Just as we challenge individual counselors to increase in self-knowledge and self-awareness by “doing their own work,” so must we as a profession do our own work. That is, the adage of “Counselor, know thyself” needs more systemic application: “Counseling profession, know thyself.” Unfortunately, though, there are issues within our profession that continue to fragment and divide, making it harder for us to “know ourselves.” For example, while all 50 states now have licensure.
laws, requirements are so divergent across states that portability across states remains a serious problem. Similarly, many states have multiple professional associations that serve focused interests within the profession but that, at times, dilute the lobbying and advocacy efforts by missing the bigger picture of advocating for the global counseling profession.

It is in this context that we must move forward as a profession if we are to remain viable. The tireless efforts of the delegates of the 20/20 initiative of the American Counseling Association have resulted in a broadly endorsed definition of counseling, and it appears that consensus is on the horizon for title and scope of practice statements. These are substantive gains for strengthening professional identity. At the same time, the inability of the delegates to reach a consensus definition of minimum educational requirements is troubling. Developing clear and consistent minimum training standards for all counselors to be eligible for licensure (either by the State Licensure Board, the State Department of Public Instruction, or both) is paramount. Similarly, we must increase licensure portability across states, which is achieved, in part, by clear and consistent educational requirements. I read and hear too many stories of people who have been licensed in one state, practiced successfully for many years, and then moved to another state only to find that they had to take additional courses and/or exams to qualify for licensure in their new state. When counselor licensure laws were being passed, each state worked diligently to pass the best law it could get through the state legislature at the time, given the political climate. In that regard, the disparities in laws are understandable and perhaps necessary so that we could reach this point in time where all states have licensure. At the same time, for the continued maturation of our profession, such disparities are now problematic and must be addressed, not only for the counseling profession, but also for consumers. Similarly, counselor preparation should move to functioning under one accrediting body. Multiple accrediting bodies only further fragment the profession and confuse legislators and consumers, thus hindering the continued evolution of our profession.

For decades, Chi Sigma Iota has led the charge to establish a clear professional identity for professional counselors. The home page of the CSI website has a profound statement about “What is CSI about?” CSI is an international honor society that values academic and professional excellence in counseling. We promote a strong professional identity through members (professional counselors, counselor educators, and students) who contribute to the realization of a healthy society by fostering wellness and human dignity.
A strong professional identity is important for our profession. Even more importantly, however, it will improve society for all people, which should be the aspiration of each individual counselor. Accordingly, the theme for CSI Days 2014 is “Advocacy to Strengthen Professional Identity.” Advocacy is a two-pronged activity that includes both advocating for our profession AND for those we serve. In short, creating clear definitions of who we are, what we do, and how we are trained allows for clear communication to lobbyists, advocates, legislators, and consumers. In that regard, a clear identity is an act of social justice that fosters wellness and human dignity.

Oliver Goldsmith, an 18th-century writer once wrote: “Success consists of getting up just one more time than you fall.” With 20/20 hindsight, it seems clear that much has happened to divide and fragment the counseling profession, the times that we have “fallen” as a profession. Additionally, Adler once wrote: that we must “Trust only movement. Life happens at the level of events, not of words. Trust movement.” Taken together, these two quotes highlight the importance of movement, of action steps to move the profession forward with a stronger professional identity and help us get up one more time than we have fallen.

This year, during our leadership workshop, we will explore the promotion of counseling excellence through professional identity and leadership across generations. We will begin by recognizing our 2014-15 Leadership Fellows and Interns who truly are the future leaders of our profession. Having recently met these Fellows and Interns, I am comforted that our future is in very good hands. We then will introduce a panel of three of the counseling profession’s leaders and scholars who have promoted counseling excellence with their research, advocacy, and leadership efforts. Drs. Jason King, Victoria Kress, and Tom Sweeney represent an early, mid, and late career perspective, respectively. They will discuss their views on professional identity and leadership in the counseling profession. Participants also will have an opportunity to interact with panel members and other CSI leaders during small group discussions. Additionally, CSI will sponsor three educational sessions at the ACA Conference in Hawaii. Dr. Nicole Hill will present “Embracing Our Role as Leaders: Counselor Community Engagement as the Catalyst for Excellence.” Dr. Cheryl Holcomb-McCoy will present on “Transformative Leadership in Counselor Education.” And, Dr. Casey Barrio Minton will present “Professional Advocacy through Research and Program Evaluation.” For additional information on these presentations, see csi-net.org > CSI Day. If you attend the ACA Convention, be sure to look for these presentations!

As you may know, Chi Sigma Iota follows the Servant Leader model of leadership. In his initial essay on servant leadership in 1970, Robert Greenleaf asserted that the ultimate test of a leader is whether those served grow as people, becoming healthier, wiser, more autonomous, and more likely themselves, in turn, to serve others. How ultimately, are the least privileged of society impacted by our work? This is the ultimate question of our profession. How do we best serve others, especially the “least of these?” While the answer to this question is always complex, it starts with being clear about who we are. In sum, you likely have heard of the elevator speech, a short introduction about who you are and what you do, that you can share with someone in a limited amount of time. Do you have an elevator speech when someone asks you what you do as a professional counselor? If not, work on it for yourself and for the good of the profession we serve.
For decades, counseling leaders have struggled to identify common language to describe their identity and advocate for the profession (Gibson, Dollarhide, & Moss, 2010; Myers, Sweeney, & White, 2002). One of the most fundamental ways to promote the development of a strong professional identity is to look at training programs. Presumably, students look up to their professors as leaders in the field. As such, I believe that counselor educators have the opportunity and responsibility to educate students on the importance of professional identity and cultivate experiences that support this notion. Given that one’s professional identity begins to form during their degree program, it only makes sense to target this population.

During a student’s training program, the local Chi Sigma Iota (CSI) chapter can be an integral part of this promotion. Beginning with the Legal & Ethical issues course, students can be exposed to the various professional organizations that are counseling related, including ACA and its divisions. Perhaps, CSI chapters can sponsor professional development events that promote membership in such organizations. For example, I have coordinated with the current president of our state counseling association to come speak to our Professional Identity and Ethics course this fall. Not only does this provide an avenue for students to learn about the importance of professional identity, it also allows students to network with a leader in the counseling field who is relatively local.

Another way in which local CSI chapters can support professional identity development is by holding an essay contest that promotes understanding of current counseling issues or trends. By students writing about issues that are relevant to the profession, they are engaging in educating themselves. Such an event could be held in the springtime and could be focused around a particular issue, or left to the discretion of the author. Empowering students to become educated about issues that are important to them promotes further understanding of their own identity and what they stand for. One variation of this task is to have students write an essay about their own personal development. Gibson et al. (2010) claim that one’s identity evolves from the individual’s definition of the work of
the profession. So, by students writing about their own understanding of the counseling field, they are in fact contributing to their own professional identity development.

Most importantly, I believe that every counselor and counselor educator, at any career stage, should be an advocate for the profession. It is through self-advocacy and tireless communication that our professional identity can become more solidified within helping professions and among the public constituents.

References

2014 Entry-Level Student Leadership Essay First Place Award Recipient:
by Tristen Bergholtz
Alpha Chi Chapter, Louisiana State University

An idea is like a play. It needs a good producer and a good promoter even if it is a masterpiece. Otherwise the play may never open; or it may open but, for a lack of an audience, close after a week. Similarly, an idea will not move from the fringes to the mainstream simply because it is good; it must be skillfully marketed before it will actually shift people’s perceptions and behavior (Bornstein, 2007, p. 93).

As counselors, our “masterpiece” includes the skills and tools we provide our clients with in order to assist them as they strive for wellness. And just as Bornstein notes, we can create masterpiece after masterpiece, but unless others outside of the therapeutic relationship are made aware of our talents and what we have to offer, our “show” may eventually close (i.e., leading to lost employment opportunities, employment termination, or the dissolution of the counseling profession as a whole). Such a fate would be devastating in an array of areas (economically, physically, vocationally, educationally, etc.). As the National Alliance of Mental Illness reports, there is already a lack of mental health services available to the almost “60 million Americans” living with a mental health disorder, and of these 60 million, less than “one-third of adults and one-half of children receive treatment every year” (2013). In an effort to “fill the audience” (i.e., increase the number of individuals seeking treatment) by bringing
awareness to the counseling profession, counselors must become more familiar with what separates them from other helping professionals and become advocates not only for their profession, but clients as well. Such a proactive stance not only provides employers, clients, and fellow helping professionals with a more informed view of counseling, but may lead to a reduction in the negative stigma often associated with the counseling process, thereby possibly contributing to a greater number of individuals living a more balanced and healthier life.

In an effort to ensure the mental health services individuals’ needs are made available and accessible, systemic barriers must be addressed. Improving and increasing professional development opportunities, increasing collaboration amongst helping professionals, eliminating mental health stigmas, and removing systemic, policy barriers preventing individuals from seeking out or receiving mental health services are just a few of the many ways such large-scale changes can occur. CSI chapters can become active agents of social change through increased collaboration with other regional chapters. Such collaboration will start the dialogue necessary to affect change, as well as build a larger, synergistic professional network for counselors. Additionally, increased knowledge of how to affect systemic change and accessing those who make systemic decisions (e.g., policy makers, concerned constituents and professionals) is a necessary skill when advocating for the counseling profession and clients. Creating and maintaining an open and continuous dialogue amongst stakeholders will allow professional counselors the opportunity to become not only a much more informed group, but inevitably a much more active group of professionals dedicated to advocacy, thus not only being well-produced, but well-promoted too.

References

**Welcome New CSI Chapters!**

*Alpha Omega Psi*  
*Chi Psi Omega* 
*Delta Gamma Sigma*  
*Gamma Chi Epsilon*  
*Iota Delta*  
*Mu Zeta Beta*  
*Sigma Upsilon Psi*  
*Upsilon Mu Eta*  

*Geneva College*  
*University of the Cumberlands*  
*Texas A&M Texarcana*  
*Gonzaga University*  
*Lipscomb University*  
*Missouri State University*  
*South University-West Palm Beach*  
*University of Maine*
2013-2014 CSI Election Results
by Victoria E. Kress, CSI Past-President

Chi Sigma Iota was once again fortunate to have four outstanding leaders agree to be nominated for the offices of president-elect and secretary-elect. Nominees for president-elect were Dr. Spencer Niles from the College of William and Mary and Dr. Richard Henriksen from Sam Houston State University. The nominees for the office of secretary-elect were Dr. Kristopher Goodrich from the University of New Mexico and Dr. Amanda La Guardia from Sam Houston State University. All four candidates have already contributed much to promoting excellence in counseling. We are grateful for their commitment, leadership and service.

Congratulations to Dr. Spencer Niles, president-elect and Dr. Amanda La Guardia, secretary-elect. Dr. Niles is the dean of the School of Education at the College of William and Mary. Dr. La Guardia is an assistant professor at Sam Houston State University.

CSI DayS

Thursday, March 27, 2014 (Afternoon)
2:30-5:30 Executive Council Meeting
3:30-5:30 Leadership Fellow Orientation

Friday, March 28, 2014 (Afternoon)
1:00-3:30 Leadership Workshop
3:30-5:00 Business Meeting
4:00-5:00 Barrio Minton Theme Session
5:00-6:00 Awards Ceremony
6:00-7:30 CSI Reception

Saturday, March 29, 2014 (Morning)
7:00-8:00 Committee Chairs Meeting
7:00-8:00 LFI Reflections
8:00-9:30 Committee Meetings
9:30-11:00 Chapter Faculty Advisors Training
9:30-11:00 Chapter Leaders Training
10:00-11:30 Hill Theme Session

Sunday, March 30, 2014 (Morning)
7:00-8:00 Holcomb-McCoy Theme Session
VOICE AND VISIBILITY: Celebrating Professional Identity Through Our Advocacy Efforts
by Andrea L. Dixon, CSI President, Chi Epsilon Chapter, Georgia State University

Almost 30 years after its beginnings, Chi Sigma Iota continues to be an active organization whose members illustrate a consistent dedication to the mission of leadership and advocacy in professional counseling. This year in CSI has been one filled with messages and activities of our commitment to advocacy, leadership, and growing the counseling profession globally. As we think about the coming year in CSI, during which we will celebrate CSI’s 30th anniversary, our mission remains steady: “Contributing to the realization of a healthy society by fostering wellness and human dignity through scholarship, research, professionalism, leadership, advocacy, and excellence in counseling.” We also confirm and reaffirm our professional identities as leaders and advocates within the United States and beyond. To this end, we hope to engage our members to become even more visible in their communities and workplaces as advocates for clients, communities, themselves, and the counseling pro-
profession. It is likely that this ever-evolving process begins with creating and maintaining strong professional identities in our development as counseling professionals – and ultimately progresses as we allow ourselves to become voices for others through our professional advocacy efforts.

Creating a professional identity continues to be one of the critical topics in counseling. It is a process that takes time and includes relationships that aid in mentoring one another as professionals who can immerse ourselves in education, counseling, research and advocacy globally. Further, as counselors, professional identity and advocacy go hand-in-hand and actually continue to affect one another throughout our careers. As we create and maintain our professional counseling identities, we find that advocacy becomes a large part of our work both on small and large scales. The more we involve ourselves in advocacy efforts, our professional identities become strengthened and more defined. Chi Sigma Iota remains a steadfast organization that strengthens our professional identities and allows us to learn and grow as leaders and advocates globally. Our professional affiliation with CSI calls for us to involve a few “V’s” that can help lead us on our journeys of leadership and advocacy. Visibility and vocalization, veracity, and vitality lend themselves to the process of creating and celebrating our professional identities and ultimately to our roles as leaders and advocates – at home and beyond.

As we consider how our advocacy efforts can strengthen our professional identities in the U.S. and around our world, counselors’ visibility and vocalization arise as critical actions for the results we seek. Being actively visible and vocal in our workplaces and communities allows us to illustrate our advocacy efforts here in the U.S. through work with clients and their families, community outreach, and programming. Collaborative global education and research also allow us to be visible and vocal to meet the challenge of advocating for and educating others about the counseling profession and to inform us of the mental health needs of individuals and groups in the various countries around the world. To be vocal and visible, counseling professionals must remain aware of the social and political issues facing our country and world. We must be creative in our collaborative global efforts that allow for our advocacy, and we must continue to strengthen our professional identities.

In addition, our professional identities as counselors are strengthened regularly through our veracity and vitality when it comes to what we do as counselors, what counseling goals we
set, and how we approach those goals. Additionally, the individuals and organizations we work with collaboratively to be visible and vocal concerning mental health needs around the world contributes to a strengthened identity. As we advocate for our profession and for what we hope to do collectively as well and individually as counselors, our veracity and genuineness regarding our ethics and competencies take precedence. Being honest and direct about counseling with clients, organizations, and other mental health professionals and researchers around the world allows us to maintain our own integrity and ultimately lends to our professional identities. With our global colleagues seeking collaboration and world-wide advocacy and research efforts, maintaining a high level of vitality about our profession, who we are, and what we do adds to the integrity of our work, and this vitality can help keep us excited about new ideas and advocacy actions. Veracity and virility in the counseling profession must not be taken for granted, but they should be illustrated through our continued leadership and advocacy efforts as critical components of our professional identities.

“*To be vocal and visible, counseling professionals must remain aware of the social and political issues facing our country and world. We must be creative in our collaborative global efforts that allow for our advocacy, and we must continue to strengthen our professional identities.*”

Ultimately, consistency in our professional advocacy through visibility and voice, veracity, and visibility strengthens our professional counseling identities in the U.S. and around the world. As mental health professionals aiding in the globalization of counseling, confident professionals who know who they are and what they do enhance and aid us in being teachers, learners, researchers, collaborators, and advocates with numerous others.

As you move forward in your own professional identity development, we encourage you to get and stay involved in counseling organizations such as CSI and to find your own way of being even more visible and vocal in your communities and workplaces as advocates for clients, communities, yourselves, and the counseling profession. As we continue to create and maintain strong professional identities in our development as counseling professionals, we can celebrate as we (and our profession) progress through our engagement in being voices for others through professional advocacy efforts.
Professional identity is a hallmark of any vocation. A strong sense of professional identity binds people together and provides impetus for progress at individual, group, and systemic levels. Although professional counseling is a diverse field, counselors share core beliefs of wellness, development, service, and advocacy. Not surprisingly, these ideals lie at the core of CSI, and CSI members actively advance such ideals as a part of their counselor identity. CSI chapters particularly are well-suited to engage with surrounding communities in advocacy efforts, and such efforts in turn provide rich opportunities for professional identity development.

Dr. Gary Connell, Chapter Faculty Advisor, CFA of Epsilon Chi at Edinboro University, is one of the longest serving CFA’s in CSI (22 years). He leads a chapter of motivated students and professionals dedicated to community-based advocacy. He successfully has mentored counselors-in-training toward an understanding of what it means to be a professional counselor. An interview with him shed light on his philosophy of advocacy, leadership, and professional identity, as well as how he sees these notions playing out for himself and for members of CSI.

Dr. Connell has been CFA of Epsilon Chi since 1992. Epsilon Chi consists of about 140 student and professional members, and the chapter prides itself on reaching its professional members through social media outlets. The chapter is also very active in the community by helping people who live in poverty connect with community and government resources. Concurrently, the chapter works to challenge the stigma associated with poverty.

Dr. Connell says he has seen plenty of changes in counseling and in CSI during his service as CFA. For example, he believes that counseling has gained more presence and confidence in the community over time. He continues, “For years, counselors struggled with licensing and credentialing that provide an equal playing field among professions, but now counseling is established more solidly and is more connected to the community it serves.” Paralleling this, Dr. Connell believes that Epsilon Chi has evolved in that students used to join largely to have a special place in graduation, but now there is a heavy emphasis on service and leadership in the chapter. Just as counseling has established itself as a profession dedicated to serving the community, CSI too has become more established and comfortable in the community.
Community engagement is part of professional and client advocacy, and Dr. Connell sees these forms of advocacy as growing areas of need and awareness in counseling. He believes that counselors need to advocate in support of the community and the profession. He is fond of the quote often attributed to Edmund Burke, “All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing.” He says, “Sometimes it’s not enough to tell people to do something, but to help them do it.” Advocacy means practice as well as prose, and CSI has long been at the forefront of supporting service-based advocacy in counseling. Thus, participation in community engagement through CSI can foster professional identity development by connecting members to core ideals of the profession.

Dr. Connell also sees his role as CFA as connected to his professional identity. He says, “[Being a CFA] is a part of who I am, and I see my role as trying to facilitate development in others, so I try to let students lead and I follow where they want to go.” Further, he notes, “My CFA leadership style has developed along with my own development as a counselor.” That is, Dr. Connell views his role as one of empowerment and guidance. Similar to promoting client empowerment and ownership in counseling, he believes in fostering ownership of action by CSI members. Thus, leadership as a CFA entails mentoring, promoting consensus, and celebrating member accomplishments.

“[Being a CFA] is a part of who I am, and I see my role as trying to facilitate development in others, so I try to let students lead and I follow where they want to go.”

Reflecting upon what contributes to professional identity development, Dr. Connell recognizes a multitude of important influences. Working with clients may be one of the most influential, yet at the same time developing a systemic, service-oriented framework through CSI is valuable to effective work with clients. Dr. Connell values and embodies leading from a place of service to others. He infuses this philosophy into Epsilon Chi by working to make members feel good about participating in an honor society and learn and develop their real selves. He believes that there is a natural tendency within people to seek out one’s own growth and development and his role as faculty and CFA is to provide the conditions for that growth to occur. He states, “I let the student take the lead. A lot of the students want to show that they care, and I need to provide the opportunity for that to be expressed. [Student engagement] is nothing that I do directly; I just try to provide the context.” He also sees this in CSI. He believes that CSI heavily impacts professional integrity and encourages respect for what the students have to offer.

In sum, Dr. Connell is a shining example of a leader with a clear sense of professional identity. His leadership philosophy reflects his belief in people’s inherent growth tendencies, and he
creates a context in CSI that allows members to become involved in various ways to promote their own professional development through community-based advocacy. As a result, Epsilon Chi is a thriving chapter. Though he downplays his own contributions to the chapter’s success (which is another sign of a strong leader), he notes that he truly believes in his approach to advocacy and leadership and it is a philosophy with which others connect. Connecting with the community, understanding the needs of the people, and working to address those needs through advocacy and service can profoundly impact how a counselor approaches work with clients. CSI provides numerous such opportunities for service and advocacy. Dr. Connell believes and encourages participation in CSI for these reasons, and he serves as a prime example of a selfless leader who is committed to action in serving others.
A COUNSELOR’S ROLE IN CRISIS: Response and Advocacy
by Laura Shannonhouse and Michael Porter
Upsilon Mu Eta Chapter
University of Maine

In the pursuit of a healthy and well society, professional counselors are all too often confronted with the immediate and lasting mental health effects of disasters. Although the source and scope of disasters vary, there are ways that professional counselors can help impacted individuals and communities heal and grow. After looking at the breadth of last year’s disasters, we explore the challenges counselors may confront when responding to both large scale natural disasters and localized man-made crises. Then, an example of counselor advocacy is provided as counselor education faculty equip schools in Maine with resources to combat suicide.

Disasters and Counselor’s Response

Globally, several large disasters occurred in 2013. The most damaging events were a pair of typhoons: Phailin impacted over 13 million people in India and Haiyan killed 6,000 and displaced 3.6 million in the Philippines. The latter storm was one of the strongest on record with 235 mile-per-hour winds and followed just three weeks on the heels
of a magnitude 7.2 earthquake that had destroyed tens of thousands of homes and more than 200 lives. Though these events caused tragic loss of life, they pale in comparison to what we have witnessed over the past decade. The 2004 Indonesian Tsunami and 2010 Haiti Earthquake each killed two and a half times as many people as the current CSI membership.

While some American counselors may travel abroad and respond to one of these massive disasters as part of a concerted effort through an organization such as the Red Cross, it is more likely that we will respond to crises closer to home. In the U.S. last year, there were 65 major disaster and emergency declarations due to flooding, fires, and storms, such as the mile-wide Moore, Oklahoma tornado in May. Though early warning networks, building standards, and emergency services tend to mitigate the fatality of such events, the trauma associated with personal injury and grief resulting from the loss of loved ones (potentially coupled with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and survivor’s guilt) are common issues that counselors can help address. Many of these natural disasters also cause widespread property destruction, which forces survivors to navigate homelessness and/or joblessness.

There are unique mental health needs for each crisis response based on the community affected and the specific nature of the disaster. Professional counselors have a unique set of skills that enables them to view problem issues from the perspective of community members and understand complex social inequities. Multicultural and developmental issues should be considered when appropriate. As evidenced in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, often those hit hardest were those with fewest resources prior to the disaster. Due to historical and systemic inequalities, those more vulnerable populations are frequently members of depressed economic and ethnic minority groups. And within those impacted, children and older persons may be even more vulnerable. Professional counselors are aware of the compounding influence of ‘-isms’ and are consequently positioned not just to provide culturally appropriate services, but to advocate for those traumatized and marginalized.

The character of the crisis also shapes the immediate emotional damage and lasting effects. A large storm such as Katrina can literally destroy the foundation of whole communities. This can create refugees who not only lose the homes of their grandparents, but also their identity. If the livelihood of your family had been tied to the coast, then the loss of a fishing boat and relocation inland may result in losing far more than a job. Besides meteorological and geologic origins, disasters may result from accidents, like the recent Elk River chemical spill in West Virginia, or terrorism. When a crisis is not an act of God, but rather an act of humans, then anger and regret can be mixed with the grief. Suffering through the trauma of last year’s Boston marathon with the knowledge that it was predicated by hate and the intentional infliction of distress is fundamentally different than weathering an impersonal, albeit atypically large, hurricane.

This millennium, acts of terror and violence seem all too common. Though these crises are the acts of specific individuals, the conversations that arise regarding prevention and security touch upon collective responsibility. Two dominant themes of that discussion are gun control and mental health.
The gunmen in several of the most recent shooting tragedies, Aurora, Newtown, and the D.C. Navy Yard, all had histories of mental illness. Professional counselors are not only knowledgeable about the subject of these dialogs – reporting practices, treatment methods, and confidentiality, but our voices and perspectives also are vital in furthering the conversation. This is one example of how our identity is supportive of not just crisis response, but advocacy for all persons.

**An Example of Counselor Advocacy**

Suicide, while not a large-scale natural disaster, is a man-made crisis that regularly impacts our society and our schools. The ripples caused when someone takes his/her own life directly affect six people on average and extend out into whole communities. The loss of innocence and promise due to the suicide of a minor often prompts a particularly traumatic response in their families, churches, and schools. School counselors are unfortunately familiar with suicidal thoughts and behaviors in their students. Nationally, one in eight high school students have considered suicide while 6% have attempted it. Suicide is irrevocable and will often prompt a disaster response; however, through advocacy, professional counselors can respond to suicidal ideation and attempts before they become community crises.

Recent student suicides (e.g. this past March, a 13-year old girl from Thorndike, ME died by suicide at her home, and in September, a 19-year old recent high school graduate died by suicide from a self-inflicted gunshot wound in Gray, ME) prompted citizen advocacy and legislative response in the state of Maine. The resulting state law requires all school personnel (e.g. teachers, administrators, bus drivers, custodians, etc.) to receive mandatory suicide awareness training by August 2014. Further, at least two representatives from each school must receive advanced training. Unfortunately, the plan for implementing these trainings was underdeveloped as the State Department of Education and the National Alliance of Mental Illness in Maine are currently at training capacity. When we learned of this need, the University of Maine counselor education faculty partnered with NAMI Maine and the State DOE to find a way to use their skills as professional counselors to serve our community regarding this issue.

We quickly assembled a three-member team (two counselor educators, and one staff psychologist at our university counseling center) and presented a proposal to various parties within our institution so that we could secure funding ($12,000) to become Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) trainers. ASIST, an internationally recognized standard in suicide awareness and prevention for laypersons, has been adopted by multiple states
and the U.S. Army, recognized by the Centers for Disease Control, and used in crisis centers across the country. While suicide prevention research is difficult to conduct, several studies have found that programs which incorporate ASIST components positively change responder behaviors, increasing both their confidence and competence.

Our plan, developed in partnership with local superintendents, involved providing ASIST training to the natural helpers in area schools. This training is more comprehensive than what is required by the new state law (i.e. identify and refer suicidal students) as ASIST teaches the responder to (a) explore invitations, (b) ask about suicide, (c) hear the story, (d) help the person-at-risk identify a turning point / reason to live, (e) develop a safety plan, and (f) confirm actions. Using our skills as professional counselors, we are augmenting the current available trainings offered by the state. This builds capacity by developing support networks, equipping school staff to respond to and intervene in the moment as needed, building a “suicide safer community” comprised of many different types of helpers. Professional counselors can proactively seek ways to advocate for the future wellness of their communities by organizing similar efforts, whether focused on suicide or other issues of concern.

We are on track to train 170 representatives in local districts by the summer (two 16-hour trainings down, three to go!) and have started planning the five trainings requested by the University of Maine. As engaged scholars, we have also found a way to conduct research on this work, as that will enable us to learn more about the effectiveness of the training and generate new knowledge about suicide prevention. Further, as counselor educators, we have organized a plan to integrate what we learn into the preparation of future professional counselors.

Disasters and other crises will always be part of the human condition. Professional counselors who champion human dignity and wellness have a vital role in helping those affected by these tragic circumstances. Our identity also demands that we find ways to go further by advocating for policies and initiatives that make our communities more resilient to crises and by fostering wellness in spite of them.

For Further Reading

An excellent introductory resource on disaster mental health is the Field Manual for Mental Health and Human Service Workers in Major Disasters available online at [http://content.samhsa.gov/ext/item?uri=/samhsa/content/item/200009/200009.pdf](http://content.samhsa.gov/ext/item?uri=/samhsa/content/item/200009/200009.pdf). It identifies many key concepts of working with disaster-affected individuals and communities, highlights important self-care practices, and outlines appropriate intervention strategies based on trauma symptomatology. Though this serves as a good summary of ‘psychological first aid,’ counselors must always be sure to operate within their scope of care. Materials also exist to specifically position CSI members and chapters to intentionally respond to community needs. Whether related to disasters or other chronic needs, CSI members and leaders are encouraged to consider CSI’s Disaster Response Protocols and Counselor Community Engagement Resources, available online at: [www.csi-net](http://www.csi-net). When professional counselors approach crises intentionally, the response can be powerful and transformative for communities faced with all manner of disasters.
Upon completion of a master’s degree, one is faced with a multitude of decisions—one of which may be pursuing a doctoral degree. The mental health programs seeking student enrollment are considerable (e.g., clinical social work, clinical psychology, counseling psychology, marriage and family therapy). With all of these options, why choose a Ph.D. in counselor education and supervision? The authors of this article, former and current doctoral students in counselor education and supervision programs, offer personal insights regarding our decision-making process to capture underlying advantages of pursuing this academic path.

The Decision-Making Process

The decision-making process in pursuing a doctoral degree in the mental health field involves several considerations including whether or not one is willing (or able) to move, has the financial means for educational and life expenses (e.g., employment, graduate assistantships), and has family/social support to aid in coping with the emotional toll inherent in a doctoral program. Often-times, one thinks about professional status, pay, and employment trends to find a suitable fit. All of these aforementioned considerations are legitimate and complex in nature but overshadow some other equally important components: personal and professional interests and professional identity. These two factors greatly shaped each of our decisions.
to pursue degrees in counselor education and supervision.

**Personal and Professional Interests**

For both of us, personal (e.g., community service) and professional (e.g., working with individuals [Jessica] and families [Kacy] in clinical settings) involvement were key motivating factors in our decisions to apply to our respective doctoral programs. Our services—from community mental health to non-profit agencies to a hospital setting—inspired us to seek an advanced degree to better serve our clients, communities, and the greater public. More specifically, we had a hunger to learn more about prevention, development, and wellness. Additionally, we wanted to share this information with others—hence the desire to become both educators and supervisors. A Ph.D. program in counselor education and supervision was the ideal setting for us to learn more about how to integrate current research into our practice, advance the field, and facilitate social change.

**Professional Identity**

For both of us, professional identity was important to our decision to pursue a doctoral degree in counselor education and supervision but in different ways. For me (Jessica), my counselor identity grew and solidified during my master’s program in community counseling. I chose to apply to my doctoral program because I wanted to feel connected and united to other counselors, to teach future counselors-to-be, and to contribute to our body of research knowledge. Put simply, I wanted to promote and advance the counseling profession.

For me (Kacy), I entered my doctoral program with the identity of a marriage and family therapist. Following my experiences in a supportive and growth-fostering program, I have developed an identity as a counselor educator. Together, these identities have merged into who I am today, influencing many aspects of my work as a clinician, educator, and supervisor—an influence that has strengthened my appreciation for collaboration among complimentary fields. Because counselor education programs house various fields (i.e., marriage and family counseling, mental health counseling, school counseling), unique opportunities are available to collaborate among fields. For instance, I have been able to utilize my background in relational family systems thinking to assist in preparing teachers and school counselors to work with families. This is an opportunity that I feel is directly related to the complimentary identities developed as a result of being in a counselor education and supervision program.

**Concluding Thoughts**

For many, the decision to pursue a doctoral degree is difficult. Nevertheless, the journey—with its ups and downs—can be one of empowerment. When considering a doctoral program, we both offer simple advice:

I (Jessica) encourage one to ask two questions: “Who am I?” and “What do I stand for?” If one identifies as a counselor and stands for leadership, excellence, and advocacy for clients and our profession, one might consider applying for a Ph.D. in counselor education and supervision. A Ph.D. is one of many ways to facilitate personal and professional growth.

I (Kacy) offer that we all come from backgrounds that can provide valuable insight. A Ph.D. in counselor education and supervision may be a great setting in which one can apply one’s unique perspective to numerous contexts...
while also engaging in experiences that develop one’s personal and professional identity.

Our respective journeys have been full of experiences promoting our personal and professional development. By sharing insights regarding our decision making process, we hope to encourage others to consider all of the factors contributing to this decision. In addition to considering practical factors connected to obtaining a Ph.D., one should actively reflect on personal and professional interests and identities—all of which influence one’s decision making process. We hope that the road one travels brings similar growth that is has to us, and we encourage those interested to explore a Ph.D. in counselor education and supervision.

Meet the New CSI Bookshelf Editor!

Dr. Jeff Warren, Phi Sigma chapter, is the new senior editor of the Counselors’ Bookshelf. He earned a doctorate in Counselor Education and Supervision from North Carolina State University in 2010. He has worked in various settings as a professional counselor including school, agency, and private practice. Currently, he is an assistant professor and the director of the Professional School Counseling program at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke. Additionally, he is the current president of the North Carolina Counseling Association. He is an active member of ACA and currently sits on the Public Policy and Legislation Committee. His research interests include school counselor consultation, REBT, and counselor preparation and supervision. In CSI, he is a CFA for the Phi Sigma chapter and has served on the Review Board (and more recently was the editor for the Music Section) of the Counselors’ Bookshelf. He states, “I am excited about this appointment and my new role with CSI.”

Jeff looks forward to the opportunity to continue working with CSI leaders and members. During his three-year term, he hopes to accomplish many goals. Broadly speaking, he plans for the Bookshelf to remain a relevant source for reviews of counseling resources. He is interested in engaging counseling students, practitioners, and counselor educators in this task in order to maximize usefulness to CSI members. If anyone would like more information about the Counselors’ Bookshelf, are interested in serving as a reviewer for one of the sections, or have a novel idea you think others may want to hear, Jeff can be reached at bookshelf@csi-net.org. Welcome aboard, Jeff!
New at CSI-NET.ORG

Professional Advocacy Heroes and Heroines Interviews
http://csi-net.org/?Interviews_Advocacy

Five new professional advocacy heroes and heroines interviews have been contributed by CSI’s Professional Advocacy Committee, chaired by Drs. Stephanie Burns and Daniel Cruikshanks:

Dr. Carol Bobby, Executive Director, CACREP
Dr. Craig Cashwell, President-Elect, CSI
Dr. Catherina Chang, Professor, Georgia State University
Dr. Daniel Cruikshanks, Co-Chair, CSI Professional Advocacy Committee
Dr. Richard Henricksen, Professor, Sam Houston State University

New Chapter Development Materials

Membership Flyer, One page flyer with overview of CSI and member benefits for use in recruitment of new members.

Best Practices Guidelines for Initiations and Ceremonies, prepared by CSI’s Chapter Development Committee, chaired by Dr. Kristopher Goodrich.

Parliamentary Procedures, Powerpoint training module prepared by CSI’s Chapter Development Committee
Link: http://csi-net.org/?Chapter_Training

New Member Management Portal for Chapter Faculty Advisors
http://csi-net.org/?Member_Management

Secure log in area where Chapter Faculty Advisors can approve new members and download list of all chapter members 24/7/365

CSI Counselor’s Bookshelf Reviews

Requiem for a Dream (movie), reviewed by Afton Cappello and Dr. Philip Clarke. Described as a “good resource to educate counselors working with couples who both are struggling with addiction.”

Maybe (Sick Puppies) (music), reviewed by William Bradley McKibben. Described as “effective with middle or high school students and young adults who are unsure about making changes in their lives. The song fits well with clients in the contemplation phase of behavior change.”

CSI Author Showcase


Counselor’s Corner

http://csi-net.org/?Counselors_Corner

Download a copy of the CSI-NBCC Client Rights and Responsibilities brochure to frame for your office or provide as a handout for clients. Find useful forms for your counseling practice and share forms you have created.

Publications

http://csi-net.org/?Pub_CSI_Endorsed

Read reviews of CSI-endorsed books, including the award winning Professional Counseling Excellence through Leadership and Advocacy, co-edited by Catharine Chang, Casey Barrio Minton, Andrea Dixon, Jane Myers, & Tom Sweeney. Professional Counseling Excellence through Leadership and Advocacy (2011, October) is available from Routledge – 429 pages; Hardback: 978-0-415-89072-4: $44.95. Order through Routledge online to save 10% and receive free shipping on orders over $30.

Social Networking Opportunities

http://csi-net.org/members/group_select.asp?type=11689

All CSI members are automatically members of their chapter (primary group) and may message or email any other chapter members from the chapter group site. Chapter Faculty Advisors and other Group Admins may upload photos, email all members, send and post newsletters, and create events and an entire website through the group site.

Other groups members can join include your state, region, and several groups for all CSI members: networks for Counselor Community Engagement, Professional Advocacy, Global Networking, Professional Counselors, and CSI issues in general.
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