Celebrating excellence is the theme of many of this issue’s contents. There are so many great things happening in CSI and our members demonstrate this on a daily basis. So much so, that our 2015-2016 CSI President Spencer Niles has made it his theme for this year. Specifically, he is calling attention to “transformational excellence.” To learn more about this, take a look at the article about Dr. Niles in this issue.

Summer is always a time for the CSI Executive Council to spend some time to reflect on the past year but focus more on the new year. The annual meeting was conducted in early June and very thoughtful planning was initiated for the upcoming year. CSI will be providing some important sessions at the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision conference in October, but stay tuned to the CSI website (www.csi-net.org) for more information about important deadlines for chapters and individuals.

If you noticed a new logo on the front cover of the Exemplar, this is recognition of an Apex Award that our publication received for most improved newsletter. When I was selected as the Exemplar Editor in 2013, CSI Executive Director Jane Myers encouraged me to think about submitting the newsletter for an award. So, in part due to her and my wonderful Exemplar staff, this recognition is yours also. Kudos!
On April 30, CSI completed its 30th fiscal year. In spite of the challenges we faced due to the loss of CSI’s Executive Director, Dr. Jane Myers, our staff, Executive Council, volunteer leaders, and members worked hard to ensure that 2014-2015 would be another successful year for the association. In addition to the Chapter Faculty Advisors and chapter leaders who dedicated countless hours to keep our existing chapters active, we were pleased to welcome the leaders of 11 new chapters and of nine former chapters that were reactivated. CSI started the 2015-2016 fiscal year with 281 active chapters, and we have already received several applications for new chapters. Our society continues to grow!

At the 2015 American Counseling Association Conference & Expo, I was pleased to announce that the 100,000th member joined CSI in February. Due to unprecedented growth this spring, for the first time in the society’s history, more than 7,000 new members joined the association during one year. Membership renewals were also higher than in any previous year. CSI Headquarters appreciates everything that our chapters are doing to invite prospective members to join the association and to encourage professional members to remain active in CSI. We are proud to offer valuable member benefits such as the *Exemplar*, the *Journal of Counselor Leadership & Advocacy*, free NBCC-approved CEU clock hours for CSI webinars, the Counselors’ Bookshelf, and other useful web-based resources.

CSI chapters provide excellent local resources for students, professional counselors, and their communities. As a result, one of CSI’s priorities is to support our chapters’ important work. Last year, CSI provided a record amount of chapter support by issuing rebate checks worth more than $127,000 to eligible chapters. We expect to set a new record in 2015-2016: more than $125,000 in rebate checks were mailed to chapters just this May and additional chapters will be able to receive a rebate check in October. Chapter Faculty Advisors are welcome to contact our office with any questions about their chapters’ eligibility for a rebate.

My term as Interim Executive Director will end in July, and I wanted to thank the wonderful staff and CSI members with whom I have worked with during the past year. Ms. Alicia King, CSI’s Administrative Professional, has done an exceptional job managing our office, helping chapters to prepare for initiations, and responding to any inquiries that our members shared with CSI Headquarters. Ms. Jennifer Weaver, CSI’s Data Manager, has ensured that our database was updated regularly and that our members had access to the resources they needed. Our Web Consultants, Mr. Mark Wolf and Dr. Cheryl Sweeney, have provided invaluable assistance as they coordinated with the computer programmers who are updating our website and Member Management interfaces. I have greatly appreciated my consultations with Dr. Tom Sweeney, CSI’s Executive Director Emeritus, who continues to share his wisdom with the newer members of our staff.

I am grateful as well for the support of CSI’s Executive Council, who provided steady leadership and supported our staff during a very challenging transition. I have also been inspired by our Chapter Faculty Advisors, who volunteered their time to ensure that each of our chapters provided valuable services for our members and their counselor education programs. Our Editors, Committee Chairs and members, Review Panel members, and other leaders have shown exemplary dedication during the past year. Due to the efforts of many individuals, CSI’s annual programs had record participation in 2014-2015.

Thank you all for ensuring CSI’s continued success and for encouraging excellence in the profession of counseling. I have enjoyed working with you as Interim Executive Director, and I hope that you will continue to contact CSI Headquarters with your questions and concerns.

### Announcing CSI’s Chief Operating Officer

As Stephen Kennedy’s role as CSI’s Interim Executive Director comes to an end in July, we are happy to announce that he will be transitioning into the role of CSI’s Chief Operating Officer on August 1, 2015. This is a new position at CSI Headquarters that will involve Stephen serving as CSI’s volunteer coordinator and overseeing CSI’s professional development activities and annual programs.
“Transformational Excellence”  
...according to CSI’s 2015-2016 President, Dr. Spencer Niles  
by Donna M. Gibson, CSI Editor

In every Summer issue of the Exemplar, we introduce members to the incoming CSI President by printing an interview that one of our staff conducts. This year I self-selected myself to interview Dr. Spencer Niles because in the last year, during his President-elect year, I have gotten to know him and wanted to be able to convey these sentiments through this article.

Dr. Spencer “Skip” Niles is well known in the counseling profession, both nationally and internationally, as an eminent researcher and scholar. He served as department chair and distinguished professor of a nationally-ranked counselor education program at The Pennsylvania State University and is currently the dean of the School of Education at the University of William and Mary. His leadership extends to his service as the President and Governing Council representative for the National Career Development Association and numerous American Counseling Association committees and Editorialship of the Journal of Counseling and Development.

Not surprising was his nomination and subsequent election as CSI’s 2015-2016 President. To be honest, though, I had not interacted with Skip on a regular basis prior to his role as CSI’s President-elect year and was looking forward to getting to know his vision about the counseling profession and how CSI will promote that vision during his year as President. I imagined that Skip’s experiences in teaching, scholarship, and service in the profession would lend itself to not only a vision but a mission...and he didn’t disappoint.

To start at the beginning, though, I asked him where this idea of transformational excellence came from for him. Skip began his response by relating his experiences being mentored by Dr. Edwin Herr. He explained that he was being interviewed for doctoral program admissions at several universities and had assumed he would choose one particular one until he interviewed at Penn State. In that interview, he perceived such a level of personal interest from Dr. Herr, that he chose to attend the doctoral program and chose Dr. Herr as his doctoral chairperson. Skip observed Dr. Herr’s involvement in concurrent administrative roles, teaching, leadership (ACA President at that time), and scholarship, all while continuing to mentor others. He made no excuses not to be involved in one of those while doing another. Fairly quickly, Skip knew this man was special and he “exuded excellence” in everything he did. This excellence was observed in not only how Dr. Herr involved himself in the profession, but also how he used his roles in those activities to transform the profession. “He took the face role of the profession (ACA President) to advocate for the profession,” said Dr. Niles.

Working with Dr. Herr as a doctoral student, Skip was often presented with many opportunities to contribute to the profession. Often, he did not believe he had the knowledge and/or skills that were needed to do this, but Dr. Herr was encouraging. Skip said, “He believed in me. He told me that it’s (writing project) a developmental skill and I can teach you.” And, he did. Skip believes that Dr. Herr transformed his life and career, and he continues to talk and visit with him today.

Dr. Herr is not an anomaly. There are many exemplars of excellence in the counseling profession that we can look to as examples. Several are exhibiting this today with many issues that require advocacy in the counseling profession, but we should not count on others as the only ones to do this. Dr. Niles proposes that, “too many people aspire to good enough. This is the enemy of excellence.” But to clarify, excellence doesn’t mean trying to achieve perfection.

Transformational excellence is not a linear process but a developmental one, according to Dr. Niles. “It’s like taking two steps forward and one step back” said Skip. The individual is transformed in the process and his or her achievements are what transforms the profession. For counselors, it involves excellence in counseling practice, scholarship, advocacy, and leadership. However, Skip emphasizes that it also involves self-care and being present-focused. As a profession, we have to do more on informing others about our excellence. Through advocacy efforts, we have done more with this by gaining recognition as a profession that is effective, but we need to grow stronger in conducting and publishing research that demonstrates this as well.

As for how transformational excellence is reflected in CSI, Dr. Niles believes that CSI has become a tradition of transformational excellence in the intentionality of the structure of providing education, mentoring, leadership training, and scholarship-building opportunities. He is excited about his year as President and hopes to meet many of the members through initiatives and conferences. Skip looks forward to celebrating the excellence of CSI’s members and observing how this transforms our counseling profession.
The Edwin L. Herr Fellowship for Excellence in Counseling Leadership and Scholarship:  
**Dr. Stephanie Burns, Inaugural Recipient**  
by Sandi Logan, Exemplar Student Associate Editor

This year’s annual CSI DayS was extra special for a number of reasons, one of which was the 30th anniversary of Chi Sigma Iota (CSI). Another reason was that it marked the inaugural year for a recipient of the Edwin L. Herr Fellowship for Excellence in Counseling Leadership and Scholarship. This new award was created to recognize and honor the more than 50 years of contributions by Dr. Edwin L. Herr to CSI and to the counseling profession. Engels (2012), a colleague, friend, and mentee of Dr. Herr, noted his “astounding record of dedication and vision, scholarship, and leadership, nationally and internationally” (p. 80). Further, Engels highlighted the more than 30 books, 50 invited book chapters, and 300 referred journals articles and monographs that comprised Dr. Herr’s scholarship. Most famous was his book, which is now in its sixth edition with colleagues, *Career Guidance and Counseling through the Life Span*. To be eligible for the Edwin L. Herr Fellowship, one must be a full-time counselor educator who is in the early stages of one’s career, currently serving as CSI Chapter Faculty Advisor (CFA), and whose professional goals include career development or international issues in counseling.

The first recipient of this prestigious award is Dr. Stephanie Burns, who currently is an Assistant Professor at Western Michigan University and teaches courses in Research, Counseling & Lifespan Development, and Career Development. She is a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) in Michigan and Ohio, and she holds certification as a Nationally Certified Counselor. Professional service is an important aspect of Dr. Burns’ professional identity development, as she has served as the Co-Chair of CSI’s Professional Advocacy Committee since 2010, currently is serving as an Editorial Board Member of the Journal of Employment Counseling, and has been a member of numerous committees serving the National Career Development Association, just to name a few.

Through an interview with Dr. Burns, she and I discussed her thoughts on receiving this award and reflected upon her contributions to the advancement of the counseling profession. She recalled her involvement with CSI, beginning in her Master’s degree program at Kent State University. “I remember being at an induction ceremony and thinking very diligently about the profession of counseling.” She went on to explain that her involvement in CSI has shaped her in all aspects of her career as a practitioner, researcher, and counselor educator. One mentor in particular stood out in her mind, and she described how “it was phenomenal just to watch him as a leader and counselor educator—I learned a lot from him.” In addition to receiving mentorship, Dr. Burns shared that excellence in counseling and leadership comes from providing mentorship to others and stated that, “in order to advance the profession, we really do have to pay it forward.”

When asked about how she feels being the first recipient of the Herr Fellowship, Dr. Burns acknowledged warmly that, “It’s a great honor, and I believe I try to embody his excellence with my servant leadership in the field and with my scholarly pursuits in the area of career development.” She spoke of Dr. Herr truly mastering the art of being a good statesperson, and recognized that, now that she is a bit farther along in her career, she is more focused on making sure that she is being a good statesperson for our profession.

Reflecting upon this opportunity to get to know Dr. Burns and her career experiences, there is no doubt why she was the recipient of the Herr Fellowship. Her scholarship clearly contributes to the literature on career development, while her leadership behaviors exemplify an extraordinary advocate. While Engels (2012) identified Dr. Herr as a preeminent scholar, leader, advocate, and mentor, it is clear that these also are attributes of Dr. Burns.

References:  
Outstanding Research Award:
Experiences of Counseling Child Survivors of Sexual Abuse and their Nonoffending Caregivers

by Maria Haiyasoso, Sigma Alpha Chi Chapter, University of Texas at San Antonio

The following research study was nominated for the CSI Outstanding research award for 2014-2015. Maria Haiyasoso received the award during the CSI DayS in March and has provided a synopsis of this important research for our members. The study focused on exploring professional counselors’ experiences working with child sexual abuse (CSA) survivors and their nonoffending caregivers (NOCs). Previous research studies have examined the impact of working with CSA survivors on mental health practitioners (Knight, 1997; McCann & Pearlman, 1990). Counseling survivors of CSA and being exposed to their experiences of trauma can result in countertransference, vicarious traumatization (Herman, 1992; McCann & Pearlman, 1990; Pearlman & Saakvitne, 1995), secondary traumatic stress or compassion fatigue (Figley, 1995), and burnout (Maslach, Leiter, & Jackson, 2012). Other effects include compassion satisfaction, or being motivated through helping other people (Collins & Long, 2003) and vicarious resilience (Hernandez, Engstrom, & Gangsei, 2010). However, few studies have explored the effects on professional counselors specifically, and previous research has not explicitly examined professional counselors’ experiences working with CSAs and their NOCs. Thus, the aim of the qualitative research study was to explore licensed professional counselors’ (LPCs) experiences through the following research questions: What are LPCs’ experiences working with CSAs? What are LPCs’ experiences working with NOCs?

Description of Study

The researcher conducted the qualitative study using a phenomenological approach to explore the experience of a phenomenon for groups or for individuals (Patton, 2002). The researcher interviewed 10 participants who were all LPCs affiliated with children’s advocacy centers (CACs), agencies established to assist law enforcement and child protection agencies with child abuse and neglect investigations (Newman, Dannenfelser, & Pendleton, 2005). There were three male and seven female participants. The mean age of participants was 50.9 years and ethnic backgrounds were White (7), Hispanic (1), Black (1), and Multiracial (1). Participants reported a mean caseload of 16 survivor/caregiver clients and a mean of 11.55 total years of practicing counseling with CSA survivors and NOCs.

Upon consenting to participate in the study, participants completed a demographic questionnaire, followed by semi-structured interviews. Each interview was audio recorded for later transcribing. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and reviewed to identify emergent themes. After transcription, the primary researcher organized the data, taking care to bracket out preconceived thoughts about the data and to document the researcher’s personal reflections. The researcher utilized field notes and kept a reflection journal throughout the study.

Results

The core themes that emerged were: working with clients’ life circumstances, professional orientation, awareness, and coping strategies. Each theme contained subthemes listed below.

Clients’ Life Circumstances (subthemes: Relational Factors, Environmental Factors)

Clients’ life circumstances was a prominent theme among participants. The relational and environmental situations of child clients were salient aspects of working with child survivors and caregivers. The subtheme, relational factors, elucidated the importance of NOC’s involvement in the counseling process. Participants considered NOC involvement as essential to providing counseling to CSA survivors. Additionally, the environment was a significant factor when a child survivor of CSA interacted with NOCs. For example, if a child had to frequently see the alleged perpetrator, there could be setbacks for the child that may undermine gains made in counseling.

Professional Orientation (subthemes: Training/Education, Theoretical Approach, and Conceptualization)

In the professional orientation theme, participants discussed the benefit of participating in ongoing training and education to continue learning and honing skills and to foster creativity in their interventions. Participants mentioned using a variety of approaches (e.g., Play Therapy, Narrative Therapy, Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TFCBT), Adventure Therapy,) and measures [i.e., questionnaires, assessments] to work with clients and address symptoms associated with sexual abuse. All of the participants believed in engaging NOCs in counseling to build more support for the child survivor.

Awareness (subthemes: Textural Awareness and Structural Awareness)

Participants reported having an awareness of the impact of their work on others and themselves. They were aware of how they were impacted. Overall, participants regarded their work as fulfilling and satisfying. Some felt “called” to this specific type of work. Many reported a sense of honor to be a part of the healing process for survivors. Additionally, participants reported feeling distressed, having disrupted sleep, and having difficulty dealing with societal views of survivors (e.g., victim-blaming). For participants who were parents or grandparents, there was increased suspicion of other’s intentions.

Coping Strategies (subthemes: Self-care, Consultation/Supervision, and Reflecting on Experience)

Coping strategies included self-care, seeking supervision, and reflecting on experience. Self-
care included physical activity, journaling, staying active in their spiritual/religious communities, vacations, and leisure activities. Consulting with peers and seeking supervision helped with normalizing stress and getting a fresh perspective on their cases. Finally, the participants believed that their past experience helped them discern what interventions and activities would be effective with clients. Relying on past experience allowed participants to help clients, and themselves as counselors. Over time, their experience helped buffer the intensity of the shock of hearing such horrific accounts of abuse. Their experience also allowed the participants to take in the information and feel less reaction to the clients’ trauma.

Implications for the Counseling Profession

Included in CSI’s mission is to promote advocacy and excellence in counseling. This research study, although focused on professional counselors’ experiences working with survivors of CSA and their NOCs, resulted in themes that call to mind the need for professional counselors to advocate for their workplace, training, and self-care or wellness needs.

In order to provide quality care to clients, counselors must attend to their needs and work toward well-being. Lack of wellness can result in losing empathy, diminished effectiveness, and leaving the field entirely (Cummings, Massey, & Jones, 2007). In sum, counselors attending to their wellness through the above mentioned may be better able to hold space for clients’ processing of CSA trauma.

References


CSI DayS 2015-Orlando!

Celebrating CSI’s 30th Anniversary

by Stephen D. Kennedy, CSI Interim Executive Director and Spencer G. Niles, CSI President
CSI DayS at the 2015 American Counseling Association (ACA) Conference & Expo in Orlando, Florida celebrated the Society’s 30-year history of promoting excellence in the counseling profession. The week began with an Executive Council Meeting and an orientation for our 2015-2016 Leadership Fellows and Interns (LFIs). CSI’s LFI program was created to assist future leaders in developing skills and competencies that can advance the counseling profession, and CSI members in the early years of their professional career are encouraged to apply. We are pleased to welcome an exceptional group of LFIs who will be working with us during the coming year, and other interested CSI members can apply for our 2016-2017 LFI Program. Applications will be due on December 1, 2015.

On Friday, March 13, CSI sponsored an annual Leadership Workshop based on the society’s 2014-2015 theme, “Advocacy to Strengthen Professional Identity.” During the workshop, participants learned from leaders of three associations that have helped to develop and strengthen the profession of counseling. Dr. Spencer Niles, the 2015-2016 President of CSI, moderated a panel discussion that included Drs. Carol Bobby, Tom Clawson, and Larry Loesch. Dr. Bobby currently serves as the CEO and President of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP); Dr. Clawson is the CEO and President of the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC); and Dr. Loesch served as one of the first Presidents of CSI International in 1990-1991. After responding to questions about leadership and professional identity, each panelist facilitated a small group discussion with participants.

Later on Friday, representatives from most of CSI’s active chapters participated in the annual Delegate Business Meeting. Members of 154 chapters attended the meeting, which included reports from CSI’s Executive Council and Interim Executive Director. Participants also heard responses to “Frequently Asked Questions” that delegates submitted before the meeting. The PowerPoint presentation from the meeting can be downloaded from the 2015 Delegate Business Meeting webpage.

As part of CSI’s 30th Anniversary Celebration, the Delegate Business Meeting included remarks by Sr. Lois Wedl, Ph.D., who was interviewed in the Spring 2015 Edition CSI Exemplar. Sr. Lois is the first member of CSI, and she explained how being a student in the Counselor Education program at Ohio University in 1965 “when the dream of CSI was first being conceived” enabled her to be the first person who submitted a new member application to Dr. Tom Sweeney, CSI’s Founding President and Executive Director.

Sr. Lois pointed out that her involvement with CSI created connections that have lasted for 30 years. When compared to other honor societies, she said CSI was the only one that focused on “the counseling profession as a whole.” She encouraged CSI members to recognize that membership in the society offers “more than a line on your vita” because involvement in CSI allows a person “to really be connected to others who have the strong beliefs in counseling that we have” and to take pride in having the identity of a professional counselor.

After a productive Delegate Business Meeting, CSI members were invited to attend our annual Awards Ceremony. Dr. Kristen Dickens, Chair of CSI’s Awards Committee, acknowledged the recipients of CSI’s Individual Awards and Chapter Awards. CSI members who received Excellence in Counseling Research Grants, Chapter Development Grants, and Statewide Networking Grants were also recognized. Information about the award recipients is available on CSI’s Awards webpage, and photos from the ceremony can be downloaded from CSI’s Facebook Page.

CSI’s next event was the 30th Anniversary Showcase of Chapters. The Showcase is held during anniversary years to celebrate CSI’s chapters and provide an opportunity for them to highlight their activities and accomplishments. Participating chapters shared programs that helped them to promote excellence in counseling, and photos from the event were posted on CSI’s Facebook Page. CSI’s last event on March 13 was a reception featuring a slideshow that CSI’s Chapter Development Committee created to highlight our chapters’ accomplishments.

CSI’s final events at the 2015 ACA Conference & Expo were our annual Chapter Faculty Advisors (CFA) Training and Chapter Leaders Training on Saturday, March 14. At the CFA...
training session, Dr. John Laux moderated small group discussions that addressed common CFA concerns such as being a new CFA, membership development, considering students’ perspectives, promoting student leadership, fundraising, and web development. Dr. Kris Goodrich led the Chapter Leaders Training, which provided an overview of important information for new chapter leaders and allowed participants to ask questions about effective leadership. Participants received copies of *CSI’s Best Practices Guide for Initiations*. New CFAs and Chapter Leaders will be able to attend similar trainings at the 2015 ACES Conference in Philadelphia.

CSI DayS 2015 provided opportunities for our members and chapter leaders to learn valuable information and to interact with each other. As we celebrated our 30th Anniversary, we recognized CSI’s impressive growth and our significant contributions to the counseling profession, and we expressed appreciation of the CSI members who made these accomplishments possible. CSI DayS will be held again at ACA’s 2016 Conference & Expo in Montreal, and our Executive Council and staff look forward to seeing you at next year’s events.

**2015-2016 CSI Executive Council**

Front Row: Amanda La Guardia, Craig Cashwell, Brittany Wilson  
Back Row: Michael Brubaker, Nedeljko Golubovic, Christine Bhat, Spencer Niles

**2014-2015 CSI Award Recipients**

**Outstanding Chapter Newsletter**  
Alpha Phi-Loyola University-New Orleans  
Beta Upsilon-Barry University

**Outstanding Individual Program**  
Alpha Upsilon  
The University of Akron

**Outstanding Chapter-Zeta**  
The University of Alabama-Birmingham

**Outstanding Entry Level Student**  
Rebecca Szanto-Eta  
Youngstown State University

**Outstanding Doctoral Student**  
Sandi Logan-Beta  
University of Florida

**Outstanding Service to the Chapter**  
Nina Stewart-Alpa Phi Loyola University-New Orleans

**Outstanding Practitioner**  
Hallie Sheade-Rho Kappa  
The University of North Texas

**Outstanding Practitioner Supervisor**  
Stephanie McGuire Wise-Alpha Omega  
The University of Toledo

**Outstanding Research**  
Maria Haiyasoso-Sigma Alpha Chi  
The University of Texas-San Antonio

**Outstanding Chapter Faculty Advisor**  
Lawrence Tyson-Zeta  
The University of Alabama-Birmingham

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**Call for Student Reflections**

2015 Fall Exemplar

How do you experience or “exude” transformational excellence in the counseling profession?

We often see it all around us and we often are striving for excellence in our service, scholarship, and leadership.

How are you being transformed and how are you transforming the profession through your excellence?

Submit a 500 word reflection by September 1, 2015 to:  
Dr. Donna Gibson  
exemplar@csi-net.org

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*Victoria Kress receives the Thomas J. Sweeney Professional Leadership Award from CSI Past-President, Craig Cashwell.*
This year, the Chi Sigma Iota (CSI) Executive Council created the Jane E. Myers Lifetime Mentor Award to honor a CSI member who contributes both to the counseling profession and to CSI by mentoring others. This award, which honors Dr. Myers’ legacy and fierce commitment to mentorship, is presented to a person who has demonstrated consistent efforts to mentor and develop leaders and advocates in the counseling profession. The very first recipient of this award is Dr. Catharina Chang (Chi Epsilon); she was honored with this award at CSI DayS in Orlando. Dr. Chang is a Professor at Georgia State University and Program Coordinator for the Counselor Education and Practice doctoral program. She is President-Elect of the Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development, and among her many avenues of service in CSI, she served as CSI President from 2009-2010. Through an interview with Dr. Chang, she and I unpacked her approach to and views of mentorship to shed light on her success as a strong mentor to others that has, by extension, strengthened the counseling profession.

First, Dr. Chang noted that she sees the relationship between mentor and mentee as essential. A strong mentoring relationship is reciprocal. “Mentorship is not 'do this/don't do that,’” Dr. Chang stated, “it's about agreed upon goals and a shared vision of what mentorship looks like.” She also sees mutual respect and commitment as key components of her mentoring approach. Specifically, she takes her commitment to her students very seriously, which she noted was a lesson that she learned as a doctoral student from Dr. Myers. It was here in the interview that she paused to share a story:

As a new doctoral student at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Dr. Chang figured out quickly that she wanted Dr. Myers to be her dissertation chair. She asked Dr. Myers as quickly as she could. “She was so humbled that I asked her,” Dr. Chang recalled, “and she told me to think about it first because she viewed being a chair as a lifelong commitment.” Dr. Chang did not get a yes from Dr. Myers right away, but she learned the depth of commitment involved in true mentorship. Today, Dr. Chang continues this depth of commitment in her own mentorship with her doctoral students.

Inherent in Dr. Chang’s approach to mentorship are social justice and advocacy. A strong area of interest for her, Dr. Chang infuses social justice into her teaching, research, and mentorship. “Ultimately, what I do will impact client care,” she said. Thus, she acts with the knowledge of a ripple effect – the understanding that her influence on students impacts clients and the profession beyond the interaction between mentor and mentee.

She encourages her mentees to think about how they can be advocates and leaders in a way that is rewarding for them. She often asks her mentees, “What do you want to do to impact the world? What kind of leader do you want to be? How do you want to integrate advocacy into your role as a professional counselor/counselor educator?” For Dr. Chang, encouraging and nurturing professional counselors who are able to think and act “outside the counseling office” as social justice advocates is an important function of social justice in mentorship.

How does one develop such an influential and noteworthy mentorship approach like Dr. Chang? Unsurprisingly, she noted the influence of her own mentors on her career. Dr. Myers was a committed, lifelong mentor for Dr. Chang. Dr. Myers was a person who, like Dr. Chang does with her own students, got to know Dr. Chang on a personal level. “In additional to all she did for me professionally, she also sent me a card every year for my birthday,” Dr. Chang recalled, “She made it a point to know me as a person.”

She also noted that Dr. Tom Sweeney became a mentor to her as she became more involved in CSI. She noted, “He was a gentle mentor who role modeled multitasking and strong leadership.” Drs. Courtland Lee and Brad Erford each influenced her career in unique ways as well. The presence of strong mentors in Dr. Chang’s life, coupled with the profound influence that she has had on her own students’ lives, underscores the powerful effect that mentorship can have on counselors and on the counseling profession.

As the interview concluded, Dr. Chang provided insight for mentors and mentees seeking a strong mentoring relationship. To mentors, she emphasized, “Mentorship is a commitment;
don’t take on the role without being ready to do it.” Second, mentors need to be involved with a mentee and need to find common ground together. For example, she recalled that some of her less effective experiences as a mentor were with students with whom she was matched at a distance through mentoring programs. Mentors can create meaningful relationships with mentees by getting to know the mentee, understanding and respecting that mentorship looks different for each person, and finding out what works for each individual mentee. To mentees, she encouraged, “Don’t be afraid to ask someone for mentorship if you want it from that person. Most people you ask will be honored that you are asking.” She added that mentees should ask for what they need from a mentor in a respectful way. As she stated earlier in the interview, mentoring relationships are built on shared vision and mutual respect. Mentees can make the most of their experiences by asking for what they need.

A theme that ran throughout this interview with Dr. Chang, and a quality that undoubtedly plays into her mentoring approach, was refreshing humility. When asked how she felt about receiving the first Jane E. Myers Lifetime Mentor Award, she replied, “I am just amazed to be honored with this award; I still feel like I am figuring things out.” She noted that she was particularly humbled to receive a mentoring award that carries Dr. Myers’ name because, of all the awards that Dr. Myers received throughout her career, the American Counseling Association David K. Brooks Jr. Distinguished Mentoring Award was the most special to Dr. Myers. Dr. Chang walks steadily upon the fine line of humility and mastery, a line on which many stumble to one side or the other. She is committed evocatively to her mentees, she understands how to connect with those seeking her mentorship, and she maintains a healthy perspective of her role and her influence in peoples’ lives – all fitting characteristics for a recipient of the Jane E. Myers Lifetime Mentor Award. Congratulations, Dr. Chang!

Advocacy Strategies for Promoting Counselor Well-Being
by Yue Dang and Varunee Faii Sangganjanavanich
Alpha Upsilon Chapter, The University of Akron

Note: Periodically, the Exemplar will highlight an article from CSI's Journal of Counselor Leadership and Advocacy.


Wellness is an integral part of one’s life as it encompasses multiple synergistic components (e.g., physical health, interpersonal relationships, spirituality) pertaining to one’s physical, psychological, and spiritual well-being (Myers, Sweeney, & Witmer, 2001). One has to balance the functioning of these components in order to achieve one’s optimal well-being. For this reason, it is essential that counselors deliver quality services to promote clients’ wellness (Myers & Sweeney, 2008). Such a notion requires counselors to pay close attention to clients’ well-being, while they may become vulnerable to various stressors that may contribute to their own professional and personal well-being (Lawson & Myers, 2011; Richards, Campenni, & Muse-Burke, 2010).

Counselors’ professional well-being and personal well-being influence their overall functioning. Issues in counselors’ professional lives may affect their personal lives, in both positive and negative ways, and vice versa (Cummins, Massey, & Jones, 2007; Kahill, 1988). When counselors overlook their well-being, they may be at a higher risk of experiencing impairment (e.g., burnout, compassion fatigue, vicarious traumatization), which, in turn, can jeopardize their services to clients (Lawson, 2007). Therefore, to ensure quality services, counselors need to attend to their own well-being.

Given this conceptualization, current professional standards have emphasized the significance of wellness. For example, the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP, 2009) shed light on wellness in counselor training and practice, which alludes that it is a professional imperative for counselors to implement wellness practice. Importantly, it is also an ethical mandate that counselors promote their wellness to ensure quality counseling practice (American Counseling Association [ACA], 2014).
Attending to their wellness is one way that counselors can strengthen the profession. It is crucial that counselors make concerted advocacy efforts to promote their wellness. Professional organizations including the ACA and Chi Sigma Iota (CSI) have initiated discussions about professional advocacy at multiple levels (individual, group, institutional, and societal) concerning various issues (e.g., counselor education, prevention and wellness) (ACA, 2014; www.csi-net.org/?advocacy). These discussions provide valuable information pertaining to professional advocacy. However, there is still a scarcity of scholarly literature on counselors’ well-being in relation to professional advocacy.

In our recent article titled “Promoting Counselor Professional and Personal Well-Being Through Advocacy”, which has been published in the Journal of Counselor Leadership and Advocacy, we proposed practical advocacy strategies concerning counselors’ professional and personal well-being at micro, meso, and macro levels (Dang & Sangganjanavanich, 2015). Although these strategies were not developed in a “cookbook” manner for counselors to follow step-by-step, counselors may utilize these strategies to develop and advance their advocacy efforts regarding their well-being (Dang & Sangganjanavanich, 2015). To capture the essence of our recently published article, we summarize the advocacy strategies below by highlighting the essential aspects.

Micro level advocacy strategies start with counselors’ self-advocacy efforts concerning their well-being. To advocate at this level, counselors may adopt a scientific wellness model (e.g., Myers & Sweeney, 2005) to investigate their current wellness practice. Based on their wellness practice, counselors may generate individualized plans of actions to further promote their well-being. Importantly, counselors need to take actions based on their plans of actions to self-advocate for their well-being (Dang & Sangganjanavanich, 2015).

Meso level advocacy involves promoting counselors’ well-being at the community level. Counselors need to examine their environment, including both advantages and challenges facing their well-being to understand their wellness situations comprehensively. Additionally, counselors need to seek intraprofessional collaboration with other counselors within their community (e.g., providing self-care training) to expand their advocacy efforts concerning their well-being. Furthermore, it is necessary that counselors examine how, if any, relevant policies regarding their wellness at this level may promote or hinder their wellness advocacy efforts (Dang & Sangganjanavanich, 2015).

Macro level advocacy strategies may be implemented to address issues related to counselors’ well-being within the counseling profession and the general public. To advocate at this level, counselors may be actively involved with professional organizations to strengthen their collective advocacy efforts. In addition, counselors may broaden their advocacy efforts concerning their well-being by engaging in interprofessional collaborations with professionals from other disciplines. This way, counselors may conceptualize issues facing their well-being in-depth and further advocate for their well-being within a broader context. Moreover, counselors may implement multiple advocacy methods (e.g., presentations, lobbying) to address their well-being in relation to relevant public policies. Last but not least, it is vital that counselors help the general public understand the importance of seeking quality services from counselors who demonstrate their well-being (Dang & Sangganjanavanich, 2015).

The practice of professional counseling places a strong emphasis on clients’ well-being. Counselors who practice under such notions easily may become vulnerable to impairment. It is our hope that counselors can reflect on their wellness practice and explore potential advocacy strategies that they can utilize to advocate for their professional and personal well-being, which may ultimately promote the quality of their counseling services.

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