NVLPC 2019 Student Scholarship Essay Winner

BY DEBBIE RACKHAM

As I sat looking out the airplane window, I considered my options—run at the next layover and somehow make my way home, or continue on my prearranged journey. At that moment, I was on the way to an eating disorder treatment center many miles from home—and I did not want to go. I was leaving behind my children, whom I dearly loved, and a working husband to care for them. Although severely depressed, suicidal, and dangerously low in weight, I thought nothing was wrong with me—something was just wrong with everyone else. That was twelve years ago; the beginning of a journey for which I will be forever grateful.

My time at the treatment center was hard—extremely hard—and the first few days overflowed with tears. However, this experience, classified as both the best and the worst few months of existence, was the turning point for a new life—a life filled with joy, laughter, and contentment. Challenges do that. Whether due to an eating disorder or not, struggles change lives. While we do not necessarily seek them, persevering through conflict produces empathy, growth, and knowledge about ourselves and others in a manner gained nowhere else. Oft times, when looking back, that wisdom is irreplaceable—even worth the pain.

Through the years, I have found myself sitting beside my children, listening as they struggle through life’s trials. During these moments, my heart has been filled with gratitude for my own earlier battles. Though experiences may not be identical, emotions often cross lines of separation. Divorce, anxiety, depression, postpartum blues, and post-traumatic stress disorder all carry with them similar aches, questions, self-doubt, and discouragement. What a gift to understand in a small way—to listen and walk alongside. What I feel while seated with them, in their pain, is indescribable. Yes, the love of a parent is present, but also the artless, genuine love of people.

Over the last few years, I have been blessed to walk alongside others who have struggled, especially with eating disorders. The mind is an incredible creation with boundless power. However, with an eating disorder, that power can easily impact every part of life in a deeply negative fashion. It has been an honor for me to see the sense of relief wash across the faces of these individuals as they come to understand that what they are experiencing is “normal,” for an eating disorder. Fragments of hidden shame are released upon realizing that they are not the only ones to have experienced thoughts or struggles such as these—they are not alone. Humbly, I have been able to share hope, understanding, encouragement, and resources.
Congratulations to the 2019 NVLPC $1000 Scholarship Winner!

BY YASHIKA D. NEAVES - Education Director - eddirector@nvlpc.org

The Northern Virginia Licensed Professional Counselors (NVLPC) has awarded scholarships to active student members enrolled in a masters or doctoral counseling program since 2013. Annually, NVLPC student members are given the opportunity to submit a 600-word essay on the work they plan to do in continuing their growth and development in the field of counseling. This year there were seven NVLPC student candidates who shared their stories and goals towards future careers in the counseling field.

The 2019 NVLPC $1000 Scholarship winner selected this Spring is Debbie Rackham. Congratulations from NVLPC!

Thank you, Debbie, for sharing your personal battles and triumphs and reminding us that the trials we go through refine us for greater work as counselors, driven by the desire to heal the hurting. We wish you the best in your continued endeavor to pursue your education in the field of counseling.

Our Breakfast training events for 2018-2019 have concluded. Stay tuned for a new lineup of trainings starting in September.

The Great Eight!

BY DR. AMY FORTNEY-PARKS, PHD, LPC, ACS - Resident-in-Counseling Support East - residentsupportE@nvlpc.org

Summertime is here! And kids and teens are booked for camps and travel throughout the season. Some, however, have wide open days with nothing in particular scheduled. Endless free time can often look like hours and hours on video games, YouTube and sleeping.

For those of us who work with kids and teens, we know that daily routines are vital to helping with daily focus and emotional regulation. During the school year, parents are more likely to make folks adhere to a regular bed, wake-up and meal time.

In the summer, though, things are often much looser, and it can be a fun and relaxed time. But for youth that experience anxiety, depression and ADHD, unstructured days can cause more stress, a feeling of being out of control, overwhelm and chaos.

A schedule doesn’t have to be rigid, but days run much more smoothly when there are expectations and predictability for youth. Below are THE GREAT EIGHT - some strategies and ideas that you might share with families, or that might work with your own family, as we move through the hazy summer months.

Scholarship Essay
continued from page 1

During these encounters, I have come to appreciate how the unique aspects of each individual affects their journey. Along with personality, perception, and experience, everyone comes with their own background, culture, and values. What aids one individual may not benefit another. An effective helper understands the need to meet others “where they are” in regards to their individual needs, goals, spirituality, and culture.

This path I have trodden has not been easy, but it has been worth it. My heart is filled with gratitude for what I have learned through the process. While I could not have fathomed what lay ahead when I looked out the airplane window, the decision to continue on my journey has forever changed my life. Now, twelve years later, I am a completely different person—full of joy, courage, and confidence. This life is what I look forward to offering, as a licensed counselor, to others.

Continued on page 3
The Great Eight continued from page 2

Eight Great Ideas for Your Child’s Summer Schedule:

1. Use a large calendar to write down daily activities. Include any camps, vacations, appointments, etc. If you have an older teen who is working, include his work schedule on the calendar.

2. Post the calendar in a central location, such as the kitchen, so it is visible to the whole family.

3. Involve your child in the planning, and practice packing and unpacking for daily activities.

4. Use the calendar to prepare your child for upcoming scheduled activities such as swim lessons or the beginning of a day camp. Your child may even want to cross out the days on the calendar as he counts down to camp starting.

5. Make a summer bucket list. Talk with your child about what types of things they would like to plan, enjoy and learn for the summer. Perhaps they have been wanting to take a trip to the water park, learn how to skateboard or visit the new ice cream shop.

6. Plan regular weekly trips to the library to stock up on books. Spend time reading together. Make this learning time relaxed, no pressure, just fun.

7. Make sure the summer schedule includes lots of fun physical activities such as outdoor play (including lots of sunscreen), trips to the pool, walks in the neighborhood, bike riding in a safe area away from cars, etc.

8. Don’t forget to allow time for unstructured, imaginative play for kids and quiet downtime for teens.

Parents don’t have to schedule every minute of the day. The idea is to provide kids and teens with a summer routine that is predictable, but flexible. Summer can be a time to grow and learn so take advantage of it! Be Wise.

The Supervision Corner

BY SHARON WATSON, LPC, LMFT, LSATP, NCC, ACS - Supervision Chair - supervision@nvlp.org

RESIDENTS SUPERVISING THEIR SUPERVISOR ! ? !

WHAT? I’ve thought about writing on this topic for several months because it never ceases to amaze me what strange things I hear supervisors and residents saying and doing that make me think they haven’t read and/or understood the Virginia Board of Counseling regulations. So, the question is, should a Resident believe everything they’re told by their Supervisor about supervision and the licensure process? I want to believe that most supervisors are functioning within the regulations. But as the Supervision Chair over many years I’ve heard stories from both residents and supervisors that give me pause. Here are some examples of what supervisors have said:

“It’s only the last supervisor who has to fill out the Verification of Supervision form.”

Continued on page 4
The Supervision Corner continued from page 3

NO!! A Verification of Clinical Supervision form must be submitted by each Board-approved supervisor. Additionally, the form says “ONE LOCATION ONLY” so a separate form must be filled out for each of the resident’s work sites. On page 9 of the LPC Licensure Handbook it states:

“Verification of Clinical Supervision form to be submitted by each of your Board-approved supervisors. This form is available on our website and must be sent with original signatures.”

“I don’t need to do your Quarterly forms until you’re ready to apply for licensure.”

NO!! Although technically true that the Resident doesn’t need to send in their Quarterly forms to the Board until they apply for licensure, the regs page 10 under “D. Supervisory responsibilities” states:

“3. The supervisor shall complete evaluation forms to be given to the resident at the end of each three-month period”.

The regs don’t say “at the time you submit the paperwork for licensure.”

“You fill out the Quarterly form and I’ll just sign it.”

WHAT? Again, the quote above says “the supervisor” not the resident is to complete the form. This is not a major issue but I believe is a supervisory responsibility.

“What Quarterly form should I use for you? The one in use at the time the quarter ended or do all the quarterlies go on the form that’s currently in use?”

WHAT? I had a resident email me this question because her supervisor asked her to check this out with me. This shouldn’t even be a question because, as quoted above, the regs say after each 3-month period. So logically that means the supervisor would already be using the form that is in current use at the time the quarterly was due, assuming the supervisor was keeping up with the form changes over time.

“It’s okay to start seeing clients, counting your hours, start our supervision, and counting your supervision hours even though we haven’t gotten the formal approval letter from the Board because we’ve registered and I’m already listed as an approved supervisor on the Board website.”

NO!! According to the Virginia Code and the regulations, only residents who have been notified their application to register a supervisor has been approved by the Board, specifically for THEM, and with a start date, may provide counseling after that start date. At that point only, can a resident start counting their work (face-to-face client contact and ancillary hours) and supervision hours. It’s possible that the confusion on this is based on the fact that on page 8 of the regs it says “register” the supervision:

“With their supervisor, register their supervisory contract on the appropriate forms for board approval before starting to practice under supervision”

But on page 9 the regs state:

“4. Supervision that is not concurrent with a residency will not be accepted, nor will residency hours be accrued in the absence of approved supervision.”

And on page 5 of the LPC Licensure Handbook it states:

Continued on page 5
The Supervision Corner continued from page 4

“Once you meet the education requirements…you must apply for and gain board approval of your supervised residency prior to counting hours toward licensure. Supervised residency experience in all settings obtained in Virginia, without prior written board approval, will NOT be accepted toward licensure.”

“It’s okay for you to be supervised by my colleague, even though I’m your Board approved supervisor, because they’re licensed and they’re reporting what’s happening in your supervision sessions to me.”

NO!! NO!! NO!! This is not okay! The only person who can supervise a resident is the supervisor who has been approved by the Virginia Board of Counseling. That role cannot be delegated by that supervisor to another individual even if that individual is licensed, even if they are on the Supervisor list on the Board of Counseling website, and even if that individual is being monitored by the Board-approved supervisor. This is true of individual supervision and group supervision. On page 8 the regs state:

“2. The residency shall include a minimum of 200 hours of in-person supervision between supervisor and resident.”

On page 9 of the LPC Licensure Handbook it states:

“What is in-person supervision? It is the supervision between supervisor and resident in the consultation and review of clinical counseling services provided by a resident. In-person supervision may include the use of secured technology that maintains client confidentiality and provides real-time, visual contact between the supervisor and the resident.”

This statement refers to the supervisor who has been Board-approved.

“I don’t need to see your progress notes and documentation.”

NO!! A supervisor is to evaluate documentation in addition to the other areas listed in the regs. On page 10 of the regs it states:

“4. The supervisor shall report the total hours of residency and shall evaluate the applicant’s competency in the six areas stated in subdivision B 1 of this section.”

In subdivision B 1 on page 8 of the regs it lists:

“Case management and recordkeeping”

I’m beginning to be more empathetic with the Board of Counseling staff’s response to many questions with “read the regulations” because I’ve myself felt like saying the same thing when I’ve heard supervisors telling residents things that clearly show they’ve not understood the regulations. Is it because the Clinical Supervision Training these supervisors have taken was during graduate school or on-line where the information was general and not specific to Virginia? Or is it because the in-person training they attended concentrated on other topics (i.e., supervision theory or research) rather than an in-depth review of the regulations with questions asked and answered and the grey areas of the regulations at least discussed?

So, in conclusion: Residents, you are responsible as well to know the regulations. Don’t only depend on your supervisor. The supervisory relationship is a working relationship so if you have questions about what a supervisor has told you, re-read the regulations and the Licensure

Continued on page 6
The Supervision Corner continued from page 5

Handbooks, ask your supervisor to re-read the regulations, email the Virginia Board to ask them your questions, ask a trusted colleague, email me, or do all of the above…but don’t assume your supervisor has all the answers. No one does!

Additional note: very recently there was a petition on the Virginia Board of Counseling website with a request to increase the requirements for supervisors due to the concern about supervisors not being adequately trained. I’ve addressed some concerning topics in this article. The petitioner requested that either the requirements for becoming a supervisor be increased from 2 to 5 years in practice and if not increased, to assure that a potential supervisor has been actually in practice treating clients for 2 years rather than only working in a non-clinical role. I notified the NVLPC yahoo group about this petition so that members could give their opinion on this before the comment period closed on 7/7/19. This speaks to the concern that some clinicians have about questionable supervision practices.

What do you think?

The ideas and philosophies expressed here are my own and not those of NVLPC. If you have any questions about this or any of my previous articles or if you have ideas for future supervision topics, please let me know. I’m happy to research any questions you may have regarding supervision, residency, and the regulations. You can email me at supervision@nvlpc.org.

Don’t Let Summer Just Happen

COURTESY OF THE AMERICAN COUNSELING ASSOCIATION’S “COUNSELING CORNER BLOG.”

Most of us, from young children to senior citizens, look forward to the opportunities of summer. While we may complain some days about the heat and humidity, the warmer weather and slower pace offers a chance to relax, to take advantage of more outdoor activities and perhaps to even enjoy a well-earned vacation. But sometimes the temptation is just to sit back and let summer happen.

This might sound tempting but it often means time suddenly flies by, the kids are bored and cranky, and you’ve missed many of the good things that summer had to offer. The solution is simply to do some pre-summer planning in order to maximize the more-relaxed time that this season allows.

An important starting point is with your children. While their summer plans may revolve around staying up late every night and sleeping till noon the next day, experts advise that life goes more smoothly if a family has a set schedule and sticks to it. When meal times and bedtimes are on a consistent schedule, kids feel more comfortable and usually are more cooperative.

This is also the time to make plans with your kids for summer activities. If we’re talking about a teenager this might mean encouraging him or her now to seek that summer job or to enroll Continued on page 8
This training is for LPCs, LMFTs, & Residents who plan to supervise in Virginia

**3-Day ∙ 20 CE hours ∙ Including 2 CE hours of Ethics on Day 3**

**PRESENTED BY**

SHARON WATSON, LPC, LMFT, LSATP, NCC, ACS

TBD January/February 2020
Friday 9 am – 5 pm / Saturday 9 am – 5 pm / Sunday 9 am – 4 pm

**Fairfax Hilton Garden Inn**
3950 Fair Ridge Drive, Fairfax, VA 22033

**Single or multiple day registration ∙ NVLPC member discount available**

We are providing the option of taking one day or two days in order to provide an opportunity for those of you who may already have had some supervision training. The Virginia Board does not specifically delineate the content of the clinical supervision training so you can choose what day(s) will make a well-rounded experience for you.

Although a supervisor must document 2 years of post-licensure clinical experience before supervising residents, the required clinical supervision training can be taken during those 2 years of practice or even during a residency.

**Day 1: CLINICAL SUPERVISION: THEORY AND PRACTICE**
7 hours
- Training goals
- Definitions
- Motivations
- Models of supervision
- Role differences: administrative vs clinical
- Phases in supervision
- Tasks & Functions
- Modalities
- Concepts in the supervisory relationship

**Day 2: CLINICAL SUPERVISION: SKILLS AND TECHNIQUES**
7 hours
- Supervisory characteristics
- Stages of development
- Competencies
- Resident self-monitoring
- Influences in supervision
- Supervisor & resident personality traits
- Stress & burnout
- Multi-cultural & diversity impact

**Day 3: CLINICAL SUPERVISION: COMPLEXITIES OF SUPERVISION**
6 hours
- Supervision essentials
- Process: regulations, contracts, documentation, forms, evaluation
- Ethical & legal practice in supervision
- Ethics codes
- Reducing vicarious responsibility
- Supervisory relationship issues

The training is experiential with interactive discussion, break-out work groups, paper and pencil work sheets, video, role plays, multiple handouts, and many question and answer opportunities.

**Full 3-day Training:**
- $400 for NVLPC members and $450 for non-members

**Individual Days:**
- $150 for NVLPC members and $175 for non-members

NOTE: Please select **either** the 3-day event or the specific dates if you are only registering for 1 or 2 days & not all three.

Registration is open!!! To register go to www.nvlpc.org

For questions contact Sharon Watson at 703.350.5002 or sharonhazwatson@hotmail.com

Northern Virginia Licensed Professional Counselors, PO Box 2213, Merrifield, VA 22116
www.nvlpc.org

NVLPC has been approved by NBCC as an Approved Continuing Education Provider, ACEP No. 6130. Programs that do not qualify for NBCC credit are clearly identified. NVLPC is solely responsible for all aspects of the programs.
Is Your Summer Vacation Really A Vacation?

COURTESY OF THE AMERICAN COUNSELING ASSOCIATION’S “COUNSELING CORNER BLOG.”

A vacation is a chance to get away from the normal routine of work and demands of daily life. When done right, a vacation should be a period of relaxation, enjoyment and recharging yourself. Research has shown that a vacation with those close to us is a shared experience that makes us happy, and continues to do so when we relive the experience afterwards.

But done badly, summer holidays can produce enough stress that some people need to return to daily life to rest up from that “vacation.”

A relaxing summer holiday simply requires some planning and careful choices. A good vacation isn’t about how long it lasts or where you go, but rather about what you do with your time, and the choices made to help you relax.

Most important is not trying to do too much. Experts suggest staying in fewer places for longer periods of time makes it easier to relax. Similarly, don’t try to pack in too many activities. Scheduling is fine, but you don’t need to fill every minute. Plan some free time when relaxing is your only goal.

For a family trip, reduce conflict and complaining by planning activities that will satisfy at least some of the needs of all family members. Talk with your kids about the trade-offs. Some things being planned will be to keep them happy, but help them understand that other activities are to keep mom and dad happy, too.

You can also reduce vacation stress by being realistic about work obligations. Constantly worrying about what’s happening back in the office is not a way to relax. If you can’t totally escape work issues, plan some specific work time. Set up an afternoon when the family can disappear to have fun and you can check in with the office and clear up any problems. When that’s done, get back to your vacation and relaxing.

Your goal is to make vacation time restful and fun. Don’t stress out by worrying that everything you’ve planned has to happen and has to be wonderful. Accept that your schedule is flexible, and if you discover something new and interesting, take the time to enjoy it. What you don’t want is a schedule packed with activities that will leave everyone feeling tired, cranky and overwhelmed.

Keep your vacation simple, under-scheduled and flexible, and you have a better chance of coming back truly refreshed and reinvigorated.

It’s Time to be In Charge Of Your Life

COURTESY OF THE AMERICAN COUNSELING ASSOCIATION’S “COUNSELING CORNER BLOG.”

Getting tired of how life just seems to happen? Do days seem to be filled with mundane tasks, an unfulfilling job or just the same old thing over and over?

It’s easy to let our lives fall into a rut and realize there are a lot of actions that may seem necessary, but aren’t making us happy. This is when it’s time to take charge of your life and begin moving things in a more positive and satisfying direction.

Don’t Let Summer Just Happen

continued from page 6

in a summer enrichment program. For younger children it can mean organizing play dates or setting up a regular schedule for playground or pool visits.

Whether there are children in the family or not, this is the time of year to make some clear plans for a summer vacation, if that hasn’t already been discussed. Last-minute vacation planning usually means increased stress and that’s not the point of a vacation. A real vacation means leaving behind the responsibilities and demands of home and work. This is what really reduces stress levels.

Recent studies have shown that the majority of us are living overly stressful lives, and high levels of stress, over prolonged periods of time, can negatively affect both our mental and physical health.

So plan now for a summer that will bring you relaxation and revitalization. Whether it’s a long beach vacation, or just a drive to visit relatives in another state, taking the time to enjoy the season can bring many benefits and can keep you from waking up in mid-September wondering how the summer disappeared.

Continued on page 9
It’s Time to be In Charge continued from page 8

You don’t have to turn your whole life upside down, but rather start looking for small changes that can leave you feeling better about yourself. Often this simply means making some decisions that let you see that you really are in charge of the life you’re living.

A good starting point is the physical you. If your looks or physical shape have you unhappy, now, right now, is a good time to make a few small changes. Reconsider your diet, nutrition and physical activity to help you look better, be healthier and feel more positive about yourself. Maybe a new hairstyle or more exciting clothes?

Are there other things you may want to change about yourself? Try taking an inventory of your personal strengths and interests. Are there activities or interests you really would like to be pursuing, but aren’t? Maybe it’s time to do more reading, take an educational course, or begin that hobby you’ve been putting off.

Making a better life for yourself can and should start with small steps that get you on the road to a happier, more satisfied you. Try doing one new daily action that you find gratifying. Maybe it’s making a phone call to an almost forgotten old friend. Maybe it might be finding interesting volunteer work to do. It can be something as simple as cleaning out your closet, organizing all those old files, or something more life changing like updating your resume and considering a new line of work.

This can also be a good time to see if there are parts of your life that are out of balance. Is there something or someone taking up an excessive amount of your time without providing enjoyment and fulfillment to your life?

Take some time to examine the life you’re living in detail, then take steps, even small baby steps, that can help you find the balance, enjoyment and happiness you deserve.

The next issue of the NVLPC Newsletter will be September, 2019. The deadline for article submission, committee reports, bulletin board items, membership spotlights and advertising is August 15, 2019. Please send content to newsletter@nvlpc.org.