

Keynote

The Future of Counseling is Counseling for Happiness (and Joy)

Presenter: John Sommers-Flanagan, Ph.D.

For about 45 years (since publication of DSM-III), mental health professionals have over-focused on diagnosis and assessment. During this time, mental disorders have consistently increased. The talk on the street--and in counseling offices--is all about trauma, anxiety, depression, substances, and other mental, emotional, and behavioral problems. In this keynote, we will identify and experience two evidence-based strategies for moving our discipline, ourselves, and our clients toward wellbeing, mental health, happiness, and joy.

Session 1

Thursday, November 12, 2026, 7:30 AM – 8:30 AM

T100 – Morning Mindfulness Practice Group

Presenter: Alan Forrest, EdD, LPC, LMFT

Frank/Shang/York

Mindfulness is present moment awareness and the art of conscious living. It is the intentional attending to what is happening right now without judgment or reactivity. This morning practice group will provide an opportunity for participants to have a place to begin their day in stillness and silence; it can serve as a calming touchstone to return to throughout the day. The structure of the practice session will consist of a welcome, lightly guided period, and silent sit. We are all each other's teachers; therefore, we will conclude with an optional open discussion. Beginners and seasoned meditation practitioners are welcome. This is a gentle way to begin your day.

Learning Objectives: 1. Understand what mindfulness is and how it can be used personally and professionally. 2. Experience how mindfulness can improve well-being and performance. 3. Experience a variety of mindfulness techniques.

Lead Presenter Bio: Alan Forrest, Ed.D., is Professor Emeritus from the Department of Counselor Education at Radford University where he taught for 32 years. He is a Licensed Professional Counselor and Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist who has extensive clinical experience in the areas of individual, group, couples, and family counseling. Alan has been a consultant for various mental health centers, school districts, hospices, businesses, and other organizations. In addition to his personal mindfulness meditation practice, Alan leads, and co-leads, mindfulness retreats/workshops for college students, medical and nursing students, human service and mental health professionals, educators, and others. Alan is a founding Board Member of the nonprofit organization InStill Mindfulness of Southwest Virginia. He is affiliated with the private practice, Life in Balance: Counseling & Wellness Center in Christiansburg, Virginia where he has been a counselor for the past 15 years. Alan is also an Adjunct Faculty at Bluefield University in the Counselor Education Department.

Session 2
Thursday, November 12, 2026, 12:45 PM – 1:45 PM

T200 – Integrating Strengths-Based and Traditional (Medical Model) Approaches to Suicide Assessment

Presenter: John Sommers-Flanagan, Ph.D.

Co-Presenter(s):

Norfolk IV

Traditional suicide assessment tends to be a top-down information-gathering process wherein counselors and other professionals use questionnaires and clinical interviews to determine suicide risk. This approach may not be the best fit for people from populations with historical trauma, or for people who continue to experience oppression or marginalization. In this presentation, John Sommers-Flanagan will review principles of a strengths-based approach to suicide prevention, assessment, and treatment. He will also discuss how to be more sensitive, empowering, collaborative, and how to leverage cultural strengths when working with people who are potentially suicidal. You will learn three practical strengths-based strategies for suicide assessment.

T201 – Update from the American Counseling Association

Presenter: Lynn Lynde, EdD, ACA Fellow, Chief of Professional Practice

Co-Presenter(s):

Norfolk V

This presentation will highlight recent progress and initiatives in the American Counseling Association that impact all aspects of the counseling profession.

T202 – When Systems Fail: School Threat Assessment, Red Flags, and Lessons from a Teen Dating Violence Case (Part 1, ETHICS, SCHOOL)

Presenter: Dr. Wendy Eckenrod-Green

Co-Presenter(s):

Norfolk VI

This session examines gaps in school-based threat assessment through a case-informed analysis of teen dating violence. Participants will identify red flags, explore breakdowns in communication and response systems, and learn strategies for effective intervention, documentation, and advocacy within school settings.

T203 – Maintaining Hope Amid Despair: How to Salvage Optimism When There Is Every Reason for Pessimism

Presenter: Radha Horton-Parker, Ph.D., NCC, NCSC

Co-Presenter(s): Judith Wambui Preston, Ph.D., LPC, NCC, ACS, BC-TMH

Hampton I

How do counselors and clients sustain hope when the evidence points toward despair? This session explores the psychology and neuroscience of hope, distinguishes adaptive optimism from toxic positivity, and equips participants with evidence-based strategies to cultivate and maintain hope in their clients and in themselves.

T204 – Under Development: Serving populations Needing Additional Considerations (Part 1)

Presenter: Drew Edwards, LPC

Co-Presenter(s): Noelle Edwards, MA

Hampton II

This two-part presentation focuses on understanding and reducing barriers to mental health care access for populations who often are overlooked: people who are economically disadvantaged (part 1) and people living or rooted in Virginia's Appalachian Region, a culturally distinct, yet important, part of the state (part 2).

T205 – Global Service Learning: Perspectives of a Host Community in Kenya (Part 1)

Presenter: Sommer Garrett, PhD., LPC/S

Co-Presenter(s):

Hampton III

This session explores global service learning through the host perspective, focusing on a 2-day intensive trauma-focused counseling model. Participants will examine cultural, ethical, and systemic considerations, evaluate program impact, and learn strategies to enhance collaboration, cultural responsiveness, and sustainability in international counseling initiatives.

T206 – Leveraging Pop Culture in Clinical Supervision to Enhance Clinical Development (SUPERVISION)

Presenter: Sharon Silverberg, PhD, LPC, LMFT, ACS, RPT-S, CSOTP

Co-Presenter(s):

Hampton IV

This presentation focuses on clinical supervisor techniques to help counselors develop skills to critically analyze clinical presentations and situations accurately during clinical supervision. Strategies to develop cognitive skills during clinical supervision using pop culture (movies, fictional books, newspaper articles, etc.) and how to assess their progress will be explored.

T207 – Concordism as a model for helping Christian parents affirm their gender-expansive children (Part 1)

Presenter: Charles F. Shepard, PhD, NCC, LPC

Co-Presenter(s):

Hampton V

Christian parents of transgender or gender-expansive (TGE) youth living in Virginia often struggle to reconcile religious practice and affirmation of their child's gender identity. This session provides a means of integrating

science and spirituality that improves the odds of positive mental health outcomes for TGE youth in The Commonwealth.

T208 – Juvenile Justice Recidivism Reduction in the United States: An Integrated Approach (SCHOOL)

Presenter: Elizabeth Kurt, MS, LPC, NCC

Co-Presenter(s):

Hampton VI

Youth reintegrating into their community after detainment in the juvenile justice system show high recidivism and reoffender rates. For these youth to receive adequate support, an integrative approach must be used. The collaborative efforts of social workers, justice workers, counselors, community support organizations, mentors, and educators may bridge individual and systemic gaps in service provision to reduce recidivism. This presentation offers a review of existing literature supporting an integrated approach toward recidivism and strategies for implementation.

T209 – Teen Takeovers: Examining Parental Responsibility, Community Response, and the Role of Professional Counselors

Presenter: Mary Sanderfer-Stull, PhD, LPC, RN, BSN, EMT-B

Co-Presenter(s):

Hampton VII

Teen takeovers are a growing concern across the United States, raising critical questions about adolescent behavior, parental accountability, and community safety. This session examines the psychosocial factors driving teen takeovers and explores how counselors can facilitate parenting skill development, strengthen family systems, and promote pro-social behavior among at-risk adolescents.

T210 – Beyond the Chatbot: Helping Clients Maintain Human Connection in a Digital World

Presenter: Jenny Wagstaff, PhD, LPC- VA, LCMHC-S, NC

Co-Presenter(s): Melissa Reed, LCMHC

Hampton VIII

AI platforms and therapy chatbots are reshaping how people seek emotional support. This session explores the ethical and relational challenges of digital mental health while highlighting digital well being as a form of primary prevention. Participants will examine practical strategies, including JOMO, to promote presence, connection, authenticity, and renewed joy in counseling work.

T211 – Working with Couples Using Emotional Intelligence

Presenter: Edward M. Andrews, LPC, LMFT, NCC, CCMHC, MAC, CT

Co-Presenter(s):

Marriott I

It seems like we continue to move in the direction of gleaning intelligence from a cognitive perspective, learning information, facts and figures from experts and Artificial Intelligence sources. This presentation will suggest that improving and enhancing our Emotional Intelligence is just as important if not more than our I.Q.

T212 – We Carry It All: Somatic and Expressive Approaches for Clients Living with Systemic Stress

Presenter: Danielle L. McDowell, LPC, Virginia Board of Counseling Approved Supervisor

Co-Presenter(s):

Marriott II

Counselors are increasingly working with clients whose distress is not solely rooted in individual experiences but in ongoing exposure to systemic stressors including racism, discrimination, economic instability, caregiving burdens, community violence, political polarization, and chronic uncertainty. Traditional talk therapy alone may not adequately address how these experiences are carried in the body. This interactive workshop explores practical somatic and expressive arts interventions that help clients move beyond cognitive processing and engage the body as a source of healing, regulation, and resilience.

T213 – Serving the Neurodiverse population: Cultivating a Neuroaffirming lens of healing and support

Presenter: Elizabeth O'Neill Hunter PhD LPC ACS NCC

Co-Presenter(s):

Marriott III

This session provides education about serving the Neurodiverse (ND) population in counseling settings. The session will position the clinician to welcome the ND population in their offices with neuro-affirming care and strategies. Together, we will explore crucial diagnostic considerations for the ND population, including current diagnostic criteria, dual and comorbid diagnoses. We will also discuss current assessment options, as well as key terms every clinician should be aware of when treating this population. We will close the session with Implications for practice, including treatment planning considerations.

T214 – Seeing the Unseen: Moving Beyond Awareness to Action in Counseling Practice

Presenter: Audra Lancaster Boyce, M.Ed., PPS

Co-Presenter(s): Rachel Holcombe, M.Ed.

Marriott V

This poster session invites counselors to reflect on who may be overlooked in their practice and the systemic, cultural, and personal factors contributing to these gaps. Participants will move beyond self-awareness to engage in inclusive, equity-centered counseling, leaving with practical strategies for creating socially just counseling environments that reduce barriers.

T215 – Joy-pardy! Putting the Fun Back into the Fundamentals of Ethical Practice through Game-Based Education: Serious Ethics, Joyful Learning! (ETHICS)

Presenter: Holly Tracy, LMFT, LPC, ACS, RPT-S, CTTS, CT, NCC

Co-Presenter(s):

Chesapeake 1 & 2

Joy-pardy! brings ethics to life through game-based learning, a structured, research informed approach. The Jeopardy style format promotes applied ethical reasoning as participants analyze Standards and Regulations using collaborative, scenario-based methods to enhance cognitive flexibility, ethical clarity, reasoning, engagement, decision-making and professional resilience (Wolfer et al., 2022; Streiner et al., 2024; Gaydos et al., 2026).

Session 3

Thursday, November 12, 2026, 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM

T300 – Redirecting the Bad News Brain: How Counselors Can Pursue Greater Happiness for Themselves and Others

Presenter: John Sommers-Flanagan, Ph.D.

Co-Presenter(s):

Norfolk IV

Whether you're teaching or providing mental health services, professional counseling is a demanding profession that requires a foundation of personal well-being and resiliency. Unfortunately, the brain naturally orients toward fear, anxiety, sadness, depression, guilt, outrage, and disappointment. In this workshop, John Sommers-Flanagan will describe four ways the brain undermines our ability to productively grow skills, strengths, and positive experiences. We will engage in three evidence-based activities designed energize the pursuit of happiness for yourself and others.

T301 – Creating Bridges: School Counseling to Clinical Counseling (ETHICS, SCHOOL)

Presenter: Beth Lang, MS NCC NCSC LPC ACS

Co-Presenter(s): Autumn Church, M.Ed, LPC; Lisa Moore, M.Ed, Resident in Counseling
Norfolk V

This interactive workshop introduces a structured transitional supervision model designed to support school counselors pursuing LPC licensure in Virginia. Attendees will explore key similarities and differences between school counseling and clinical mental health practice, hear directly from current LPC residents, and gain practical tools for supervision, training, and workforce development.

T302 – When Systems Fail: School Threat Assessment, Red Flags, and Lessons from a Teen Dating Violence Case (Part 2, ETHICS, SCHOOL COUNSELING)

Presenter: Dr. Wendy Eckenrod-Green

Co-Presenter(s):
Norfolk VI

This session examines gaps in school-based threat assessment through a case-informed analysis of teen dating violence. Participants will identify red flags, explore breakdowns in communication and response systems, and learn strategies for effective intervention, documentation, and advocacy within school settings.

T303 – Bridging the Gap: Mentoring and Incentivizing the Next Generation of Black Counseling Professionals

Presenter: Carlton J. Henderson, Ph.D., LPC

Co-Presenter(s): Brandy K. Richeson, Ph.D., LPC, LSC, ASC
Hampton I

Representation matters. For many Black students, the decision to pursue counseling begins with seeing what is possible. This presentation highlights the role of mentorship, community partnerships, funding opportunities, and affirming educational experiences in encouraging Black students to view counseling as both a viable career and advocacy.

T304 – Under Development: Serving populations Needing Additional Considerations (Part 2)

Presenter: Drew Edwards, LPC
Co-Presenter(s): Noelle Edwards, MA
Hampton II

This two-part presentation focuses on understanding and reducing barriers to mental health care access for populations who often are overlooked: people who are economically disadvantaged (part 1) and people living or rooted in Virginia's Appalachian Region, a culturally distinct, yet important, part of the state (part 2).

T305 – Global Service Learning: Perspectives of a Host Community in Kenya (Part 2)

Presenter: Sommer Garrett, PhD., LPC/S
Co-Presenter(s):
Hampton III

This session explores global service learning through the host perspective, focusing on a 2-day intensive trauma-focused counseling model. Participants will examine cultural, ethical, and systemic considerations, evaluate program impact, and learn strategies to enhance collaboration, cultural responsiveness, and sustainability in international counseling initiatives.

T306 – Beyond “Fine”: Counseling High-Functioning Women and the Hidden Roots of Functional Anxiety

Presenter: Judith Wambui Preston, Ph.D., LPC, NCC, ACS, BC-TMH
Co-Presenter(s): Radha Horton-Parker, Ph.D., NCC, NCSC
Hampton IV

Many high-achieving women initially downplay their stress as being contained, manageable, and "no big deal," until anxiety later emerges as permeating all aspects of their lives. This session provides clinicians with practical Feminist/Womanist, ACT, and somatic strategies to help them build awareness, reduce anxiety, and pursue more intentional, values-driven living.

T307 – Concordism as a model for helping Christian parents affirm their gender-expansive children (Part 2)

Presenter: Charles F. Shepard, PhD, NCC, LPC
Co-Presenter(s):
Hampton V

Christian parents of transgender or gender-expansive (TGE) youth living in Virginia often struggle to reconcile religious practice and affirmation of their child's gender identity. This session provides a means of integrating science and spirituality that improves the odds of positive mental health outcomes for TGE youth in The Commonwealth.

T308 – Integrating Faith into Evidence-Based Couples Therapy: A Gottman-Informed Approach

Presenter: Lauran Thomas, LPC, Supervisor

Co-Presenter(s):
Hampton VI

This workshop prepares clinicians to ethically integrate the Gottman Method with clients' spiritual values. Participants will explore parallels between relationship science and faith concepts, assess spiritual beliefs, and adapt interventions using faith-consistent language. Emphasis is placed on cultural humility, informed consent, and maintaining clinical boundaries in faith integrated couples therapy practice.

T309 – The Joy of Being Heard: Influence, Impact, and Authentic Professional Voice

Presenter: Kate Steiner West, Ph.D., LMHP-R

Co-Presenter(s):
Hampton VII

Too many good ideas go unheard. This hands-on workshop helps counseling professionals communicate with clarity, confidence, and authentic presence, turning exhausting meetings and difficult conversations into moments of genuine connection. Walk away with practical tools to present your ideas in ways that actually land, and rediscover the joy in being heard.

T310 – Innovating with Wellness: Integrating wellness into your counseling practice

Presenter: Elias Moitinho, PhD, LPC (VA), LMFT (TX)

Co-Presenter(s):
Hampton VIII

A counselor's theoretical orientation guides assessment, case conceptualization, and treatment planning but in many cases, it tends to focus on a particular facet or dimension of the human experience rather than the whole person. When this happens, the theoretical orientation may limit the counselor's approach to mental health counseling and, consequently, the services are not provided from a holistic perspective. Although the biopsychosocial-spiritual model has become widely recognized and accepted in the counseling profession, still many counselors tend to use approaches that are symptom-focused and compartmentalize the various dimensions of life. On the other hand, wellness models have a holistic framework and go beyond the biopsychosocial-spiritual model as they incorporate other areas of life such as occupational, financial, environmental, and contextual to provide a more comprehensive understanding of factors that influence mental health and well-being. Thus, this workshop will identify holistic models of wellness and mental health, explore wellness assessment tools counselors can use, and describe wellness-focused mental health interventions and collaborative practices to facilitate lifestyle changes to improve clients' mental health and well-being.

T311 – Beyond Referrals: Real Collaboration Strategies Between Schools and Community Mental Health Providers (SCHOOL)

Presenter: Jillian Moreland, MS, LPC

Co-Presenter(s): Calandre Eager, MA, LPC; Christina Quinn, M.Ed
Marriott I

This session explores practical strategies for improving collaboration between school counselors and community mental health providers. Participants will examine role clarity, ethical considerations, and communication barriers while learning actionable tools to strengthen coordination across systems and improve outcomes for students with complex emotional and behavioral needs.

T312 – Fuel that Flame: Evidenced-Based Sex-Affirming Therapy Across the Lifespan- an EFT Approach

Presenter: Dr. Nathaniel Mason, LPC, NCC

Co-Presenter(s): Dr. Betsy Zimmerman, LPC, NCC

Marriott II

Emotionally-focused therapy (EFT) for couples has proven to cultivate emotional safety and strengthen attachment patterns. This presentation uses the EFT model to introduce sex-affirming therapy for couples of all developmental and life stages. The presenters will process the EFT stages and steps for assisting couples with their sexual concerns.

T313 – (Almost) Everything I Learned About Counseling, I Learned From My Clients

Presenter: Alan Forrest, Ed.D., LPC, LMFT

Co-Presenter(s):

Marriott III

Counselors hear a wide array of human experiences, ranging from profound trauma to everyday relationship struggles. Central to this work is the ability to hold space for clients with presence, empathy, and compassion. Counselors often discover that their most effective tool is not always a textbook intervention, but a consistent and authentic therapeutic presence. Through the counseling process, clinicians gain invaluable insights into resilience, human connection, and the transformative power of vulnerability; often learning as much from their clients as they offer in return. This session will provide participants with an opportunity to reflect on and share the wisdom they have gained from clients and explore how these experiences have shaped them personally and professionally as counselors.

T314 – New's Flash: It's Not Just a Hot Flash!

Presenter: Laurie Wright, MS, Resident in Counseling

Co-Presenter(s): Haley Alvis, MS, RIC

Marriott V

Menopause impacts all clients directly or indirectly. Did you know menopause is influenced by adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), yet only 20% of counselors screen for this? What is menopause? How does menopause impact women, partners, and society? Join us to learn about women's health and counseling strategies for midlife women.

T315 – Winning the War Within: Maximizing the Relationship between Self-Compassion and Impostor Phenomenon

Presenter: Sara L. Wood, PhD, LPC, LCMHC, NCC

Co-Presenter(s): Sarah Haney Jarvie, Ed.D., LPC, NCC

Chesapeake 1 & 2

Impostor phenomenon creates an internal professional identity war that detracts from our work with clients and professional quality of life. Fortunately, self-compassion presents a significant safeguard we can engage to emerge victorious. This session will equip counselors to identify impostor phenomenon, employ self-compassion strategies, and promote legitimate self-care.

Poster Session

Thursday, November 12, 2026, 3:00 PM – 4:00 PM

All posters will be presented in Frank/Shang/York

Blending Families Well (0 CE)

Presenter: Chloe Cozort, Graduate Student MFT

Co-Presenter(s):

Blending families has its share of challenges as well as beauty. When bringing together the family members of two different families, it is likely for there to be some difficulties, however if the parents are considerate of the ways in which they can integrate well, they are far more likely to have a less challenging experience.

Trauma, the body, and well-being: Safety within one's physical form as foundational to healing (.5 CE)

Presenter: Kim Hughes, Doctoral Candidate, M.A., Ed.S., CCTP, Resident in Counseling

Co-Presenter(s): Bianca Augustine-Akogu, Ph.D., LPC, CCTP

Effective trauma work entails bodily regulation, requiring a sense of safety and comfort within one's physical form. Factors, like marginalization stress, may impact a sense of bodily connectedness, undercutting healing. This poster provides psychoeducation on the body's role in healing and offers novel interventions for establishing bodily safety and security

Elementary Classroom Calming Corners (.5 CE)

Presenter: Shannon Smith, MA. Ed., School Counselor

Elementary students often struggle with emotional regulation, which can impact learning. This grant-funded project presents a research-based, schoolwide approach to implementing classroom calming corners that provide practical tools and routines. Participants will learn strategies to teach self-regulation, reduce disruptions, and maintain instructional time and a positive classroom environment.

Understanding Counselors'-in-Training and Early-Career Counselors' Conceptualizations of Religion and Spirituality in Counseling Practice (.5 CE)

Presenter: Chimdiogo Onyeani-Nwosu, MA.
Co-Presenter(s):

This poster presentation explores a proposed phenomenological study examining how early-career counselors conceptualize spirituality and religion and how these understandings influence counseling practice. The presentation highlights implications for counselor training, therapeutic relationships, ethical decision-making, and spiritually responsive counseling care within professional counseling settings.

Session 4
Thursday, November 12, 2026, 4:00 PM – 5:00 PM

T400 – Finding Joy in Difficult Supervisory Conversations: Navigating Remediation in Virtual Supervision (SUPERVISION)

Presenter: Joshua Freeman, MA, LPC, ACS, NCC
Co-Presenter(s): Tammy Griffin, Resident In Counseling
Norfolk IV

Remediation conversations are among the most challenging responsibilities in supervision. This presentation introduces a culturally responsive framework for navigating remediation in virtual supervision while balancing supervisee development, gatekeeping responsibilities, and client welfare. Participants will learn practical strategies that reduce ambiguity, strengthen supervisory confidence, and create greater satisfaction in difficult supervisory work.

T401 – Navigating Dual Relationships and Ethical Challenges in Rural Counseling (ETHICS)

Presenter: Mike Takacs, PhD, EdS, LPC-S
Co-Presenter(s):
Norfolk V

Counselors practicing in rural communities face unique ethical challenges related to dual relationships, community visibility, confidentiality, and limited referral options. This presentation explores practical ethical decision-making strategies and risk management approaches that support effective counseling while maintaining professional boundaries in rural settings.

T402 – Neurodiversity-Affirming Counseling: Practical Interventions and Creative Strategies for Working with Neurodivergent Clients

Presenter: Susanne Preston-Josey, PhD, LPC
Co-Presenter(s): Christine Lindh, PhD
Norfolk VI

This interactive session will provide practical, neurodiversity-affirming counseling strategies and interventions for working with neurodivergent children, adolescents, and adults. Participants will learn hands-on techniques

that support communication, emotional regulation, sensory needs, executive functioning, and therapeutic engagement using creative and adaptable approaches.

T403 – From Session to Documentation: The Art of the Progress Note

Presenter: Austin Francis, LPC, CCTP

Co-Presenter(s):

Hampton I

This presentation explores practical approaches to writing clear, concise, and clinically meaningful progress notes that support continuity of care, communicate treatment progress, and satisfy documentation expectations across counseling settings, with AI use, and with insurance billing. Participants will learn sustainable documentation strategies that balance clinical usefulness, client protection, and compliance requirements.

T404 – Virtual Reality Based Interventions for Children and Adolescents With Autism Spectrum Disorder

Presenter: Samantha Redd, M.A.

Co-Presenter(s):

Hampton II

This session explores how the Suzee Leone Grant Project: VR Connection uses immersive virtual reality to bridge therapy and real-world application. Children and youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ages 7-18) practice social interaction and emotional regulation in safe & brave spaces, transforming anxiety into confidence and supporting independent use of skills in everyday situations.

T405 – Exposed: Comparing In-Vivo and Imaginal Exposure Therapy in Clinical Practice

Presenter: Eric Reitz, LPC

Co-Presenter(s):

Hampton III

This presentation examines in-vivo and imaginal exposure therapy across obsessive-compulsive disorder, anxiety disorders, and PTSD, exploring habituation, emotional processing, and inhibitory learning models. Clinicians will gain practical tools for building exposure hierarchies, implementing response prevention, targeting covert compulsions, managing safety behaviors, and integrating both modalities for superior, evidence-based client outcomes.

T406 – DinoRoar! Beyond Talk-Therapy, Rediscovering Joy, Play, and Connection Through Creative, Interactive, Ethical Interventions: Roaring Toward Repair

Presenter: Holly Tracy, LMFT, LPC, ACS, RPT-S, CTTS, CT, NCC

Co-Presenter(s):

Hampton IV

Dinoroar! introduces research supported experiential interventions, including games, dinosaur-based role play, storytelling, and creative arts, to deepen emotional insight in couples and families. Using 7 Dinoroar Archetypes, participants learn ethical, culturally responsive, bias aware strategies that move therapy beyond talk only methods while embodying the VCA theme, "Finding Joy in the Work We Do."

T407 – Finding joy across your school counseling career (SCHOOL)

Presenter: Kristen Tuxbury, Ph.D.

Co-Presenter(s):

Hampton V

School counselors possess transferable skills valuable in many different career environments. This panel will include career school counselors and those who have moved into positions as administrators, faculty members, and other areas of counseling. Our panelists will explore how their different career trajectories have brought them joy.

T408 – From Discernment to Decision: Integrating Emotionally Focused Therapy and Discernment Counseling with Couples Facing Divorce

Presenter: Betsy Zimmerman, PhD, LPC, NCC

Co-Presenter(s): Nathaniel Mason, PhD, LPC, NCC

Hampton VI

Mixed-agenda couples often enter therapy with different hopes for the relationship's future. This presentation integrates Discernment Counseling and EFT to help clinicians maintain neutrality while understanding the attachment processes beneath ambivalence, withdrawal, pursuit, and distress, supporting couples in making clearer, more accountable decisions about reconciliation, therapy, or separation.

T409 – Garden and Grow

Presenter: Emily Bowles, MA.Ed, Resident in Counseling

Co-Presenter(s): Katie Scott, B.S.

Hampton VII

"Garden and Grow" is a grant-funded, community-based counseling initiative that blends nature-informed counseling interventions with experiential learning. This program aims to foster emotional resilience and peer connection for youth from low-income backgrounds.

T410 – Who Cares for the Caregiver? Supporting Clients with Aging Parents

Presenter: Jennifer Gerlach, Ph.D., NCC, Resident in Counseling

Co-Presenter(s): Laura McGrath, M.Ed.

Hampton VIII

As the U.S. population ages, many people may become caregivers to aging parents or relatives. Caregiving can be a significant source of stress that impacts mental health and wellbeing. Based on personal and

professional experiences, the presenters will share common challenges and helpful strategies to support client caregivers.

T411 – Outsourcing Thought: AI Use and Student Emotional Development

Presenter: Alivia L. Evans, M.S. Ed.

Co-Presenter(s):

Marriott I

Artificial intelligence is transforming how students think, learn, and cope with academic demands. This session explores the cognitive and emotional impact of AI use, including effects on self-efficacy, identity, and resilience. Participants will gain practical, ethical strategies to support balanced AI use and promote student wellness in evolving school environments.

T412 – Applying Cultural Competencies to Enhance Therapeutic Outcomes with First Responders

Presenter: Angelia Dickens, PhD, LPC, LMFT, NCC, ACS

Co-Presenter(s): Averi Pino, MA

Marriott II

This presentation reviews best practices as well as supporting research to assist counselors in applying cultural competencies to strengthen therapeutic rapport and enhance therapeutic outcomes when working with first responders such as law enforcement officers, emergency medical service professionals, and firefighters.

T413 – Integrating Problem Gambling Treatment into Current Practice

Presenter: Marie Bage, LMHC-D

Co-Presenter(s):

Marriott III

This session will explore how to screen, assess, and treat Problem Gambling concerns utilizing common addiction treatment practices. It will identify the need for Gambling treatment and the benefits of integrating it into current practices.

T414 – The Inherited Brain: A transdiagnostic approach to understanding and treating ADHD and Intergenerational Trauma across the lifespan

Presenter: Ellen Winsor Chaffin, LPC, EMDR-T, CAGS, CCTP

Co-Presenter(s): Bryan Prinzivalli, LPC-S, LMFT-S, ACS, A-D/HD-CCSP, EMDR-T

Marriott V

Though they often present with similar symptomology, ADHD and Intergenerational Trauma have different etiological and treatment considerations that are critical to effective clinical care. This presentation discusses a transdiagnostic and multifactorial assessment and treatment approach for the conceptualization and clinical management of intergenerational trauma and ADHD in diverse populations.

Thursday, November 12, 2026, 5:00 PM – 6:00 PM

T500 – Evening Mindfulness Practice Group

Presenter: Alan Forrest, EdD, LPC, LMFT

Frank/Shang/York

This session concludes the day with a guided meditation and brief discussion designed to help conference participants integrate the day's learning and process emotionally impactful content. This grounding and reflective time encourages participants to release accumulated physical and emotional tension, and nurture mental clarity and emotional balance. The meditation will allow space to shift from a state of doing to one of presence and being. Participants are invited to recognize and share personal and professional insights, celebrate moments of growth and success, and cultivate a sense of completion and closure. The practice concludes by gently bringing awareness back to the present moment while promoting reflection, resilience, and self-care.

Session 6

Friday, November 13, 2026, 7:30 AM – 8:30 AM

F600 – Morning Mindfulness Practice Group

Presenter: Alan Forrest, EdD, LPC, LMFT

Frank/Shang/York

Mindfulness is present moment awareness and the art of conscious living. It is the intentional attending to what is happening right now without judgment or reactivity. This morning practice group will provide an opportunity for participants to have a place to begin their day in stillness and silence; it can serve as a calming touchstone to return to throughout the day. The structure of the practice session will consist of a welcome, lightly guided period, and silent sit. We are all each other's teachers; therefore, we will conclude with an optional open discussion. Beginners and seasoned meditation practitioners are welcome. This is a gentle way to begin your day.

Session 7

Friday, November 13, 2026, 8:45 AM – 9:45 AM

F700 – **HOLD FOR Update from the Virginia Department of Education**

Presenter: Brittany Everett, VA Department of Education, Postsecondary Access and Success Specialist

Co-Presenter(s):

Norfolk IV

F701 – The Sleep-Deprived Counselor: Why Your Sleep Is an Ethical Issue and How to Improve It (Part 1, ETHICS)

Presenter: Kevin B. Handley, Ph.D.

Co-Presenter(s):

Norfolk V

You are ethically obligated to maintain competence and practice self-care, but sleep is rarely part of that conversation. This workshop makes the case that sleep deprivation is an ethics problem, not just a wellness concern, and gives you practical, evidence-based tools to improve your own sleep and your clients' outcomes.

F702 – Strengthening Clinical Care Through Peer Integration and Collaborative Practice (Part 1, SUPERVISION)

Presenter: A. Polly Jessen, RPRS-CS, CPRS

Co-Presenter(s): Brittany Samaniego Greer, LPC, LSATP-R

Norfolk VI

Peer Recovery Specialists are increasingly integrated into behavioral health programs, yet many counselors receive little guidance on effective collaboration. This session presents a practical framework for integrating peers into treatment teams while maintaining role clarity, strengthening engagement, supporting continuity of care, and improving outcomes through coordinated peer support and clinical care.

F703 – Issues and Techniques for Clinicians Working with LGBTQ Clients (Part 1)

Presenter: Edward M. Andrews, LPC, LMFT, NCC, CCMHC, MAC, CT

Co-Presenter(s):

Hampton I

When it comes to working with LGBT clients, we seem to be moving in several conflicting directions concurrently. While acceptance of Gays and Lesbians, Gay Marriage and openness to the issue of sexuality in general seems to be more tolerant than in years, some governmental guidelines and societal opinions seem to be becoming more intolerant and negative. As mental health professionals, we should be more welcoming, supportive and affirming than ever to our LGBTQ clients. This presentation will outline some of the current issues and suggest ways to incorporate affirmation with our clinical techniques and so, offer the best therapy to our clients.

F704 – The Hidden Wounds of Service: What Every Counselor Should Know About Military and Veteran Mental Health

Presenter: Ann B. Iniguez, LPC, CCHP

Co-Presenter(s):

Hampton II

This presentation explores the hidden psychological impact of military service beyond PTSD, including military culture, stigma, reintegration challenges, suicide risk, moral injury, and barriers to care. Participants will gain practical clinical insights and culturally responsive strategies to improve engagement, assessment, and treatment outcomes with veterans and service members.

F705 – Working with Adolescents’ Emotions from the Integrative Therapy Framework

Presenter: Elena Savina, PhD

Co-Presenter(s):

Hampton III

Difficulty dealing with emotions often brings adolescents to therapy. Many of them lack emotional skills including emotional awareness, emotion regulation, and understanding others emotions. The presentation will demonstrate how to integrate therapeutic approaches including ACT, CBT, mentalization-based, and expressive therapy to work with adolescents' emotions and train their emotional skills.

F706 – Pleasure-Based Counseling Strategies to Support Intimate Partners’ Relational and Sexual Health (Part 1)

Presenter: Amber L. Pope, PhD, LPC, LMHC

Co-Presenter(s): Kim Hughes, M.A., Ed.S.; Chelsea Yang, LCPC, CST; Crystal Jones LMFT, RYT-200HR

Hampton IV

The presenters introduce a pleasure-based framework for relational and sexual health in intimate partnerships. Participants will explore how relational patterns shape sexual satisfaction and erotic connection. Through case-based application of multiple counseling modalities, attendees will learn interventions that support clients' erotic pleasure and intimacy while challenging deficit-based approaches to sexuality.

F707 – Ethical Consideration and Integration Strategies in Bridging Spiritual Incongruence in Counseling (ETHICS)

Presenter: Bosede Balogun, PhD, LPC

Co-Presenter(s): Bradley Scott Ellis, PhD, LPC, NCC

Hampton V

Clinicians are trained in multicultural competence; however, some may not be comfortable with spiritual integration. Many clients embrace spirituality as an important part of their lives and prefer integrating it into their counseling experience. This incongruence between a client's identity and clinician competency can negatively impact holistic conceptualization and clinical outcomes.

F708 – Disability and Intersectionality: Implications for theory and practice.

Presenter: Aaron Albright, M.Ed., LPC-R (VA), Doctoral Candidate

Co-Presenter(s):

Hampton VI

Disability is often addressed as a single identity. However, disabled people live within multiple intersecting systems of identity, privilege, and marginalization. This session uses results from a phenomenological study of college students with disabilities to explore intersectional disability experiences. Findings and implications will be discussed.

F709 – Beyond Resilience: Addressing the Intersections of Race, Gender, and Professional Identity Among Women Counselors of Color (Part 1)

Presenter: LaConda Fanning, PsyD, RN, LPC, LSATP
Co-Presenter(s): Karen Pender LPC; Sonya Allen LPC
Hampton VII

This two-part workshop examines how race, gender, and professional identity intersect to shape the experiences of women counselors of Color. Participants will explore workplace challenges, emotional labor, wellness, leadership, and resilience while developing practical strategies that promote psychological safety, professional flourishing, advocacy, and sustainable career success in counseling.

F710 – Beyond Masking: Authenticity, Sustainability, and Joy for Neurodivergent Counselors (Part 1)

Presenter: Chelsea R. Piechowski, M.S.Ed., NCC, LPC
Co-Presenter(s):
Hampton VIII

This two-part session explores how neurodivergent counselors often navigate masking, burnout, perfectionism, and chronic emotional labor while offering neurodiversity-affirming strategies to cultivate sustainable practice, professional fulfillment, and joy in counseling work.

F711 – Creative Connections: Practical Play Therapy and Art Therapy Techniques for Children and Teens

Presenter: Susanne Preston-Josey, PhD, LPC
Co-Presenter(s): Katy Mattox, Resident in Counseling and Provisional Registered Art Therapist
Marriott I

Participants will learn engaging play therapy and art therapy interventions that can be immediately implemented in counseling sessions with children and adolescents. This interactive presentation will demonstrate hands-on creative techniques that support emotional expression, regulation, communication, rapport-building, and therapeutic engagement across a variety of clinical settings.

F712 – Focusing and Empathetic Confrontation: Micro-Skills that transform counseling with Military Female Veterans

Presenter: Kaycee Colon Roberts, PhD, LPC, NCC, CCMHC
Co-Presenter(s):

Marriott II

This session will explore how the microskills of focusing and empathetic confrontation can help transform your work with military female veterans. Participants will learn concrete strategies that support emotional access, reduce avoidance, and strengthen the therapeutic relationship while honoring the lived experiences of women who have served.

F713 – Beyond the Behavior: Understanding What Students Bring Into the Classroom (SCHOOL)

Presenter: Daija Monroe, LPC

Co-Presenter(s):

Marriott III

This session examines student behavior through a trauma-informed lens, helping counselors and educators recognize the underlying factors driving behavior. Participants will learn how to move beyond punitive responses and implement practical, relationship-centered strategies that support student success across educational settings.

F714 – Suicide Prevention: Examining the possibilities interactively

Presenter: Randall Lucas , LPC

Co-Presenter(s):

Marriott V

A suicide awareness and prevention activity that uses a humorous and interactive scenario to demonstrate that even in the direst of circumstances there are options and there is hope.

F715 – Love, Compassion, and Spirituality in Counseling: Creating a Culture of Healing (Part 1)

Presenter: Alan Forrest, Ed.D., LPC, LMFT

Co-Presenter(s):

Frank/Shang/York

Love, compassion, and spirituality are increasingly recognized as essential elements in counseling and psychotherapy, transforming the clinical space from a purely diagnostic environment into a true “culture of healing.” This approach moves beyond simply fixing problems; it emphasizes nurturing self-worth, fostering deep emotional connection, and addressing clients’ existential needs. By integrating these dimensions, counselors can cultivate a “soul-to-soul” practice that supports clients in moving from shame and self-criticism toward wholeness and self-compassion.

In this context, love and compassion are not sentimental or superficial emotions. Rather, they reflect a profound presence characterized by genuine connection, empathy, and unconditional positive regard. At its core is the counselor’s unwavering belief in the client’s capacity for healing; a belief that creates a sense of safety, allowing clients to explore and work through their deepest wounds.

This program invites participants to explore the often overlooked yet essential roles of love, compassion, and spirituality within the counseling process. Participants will also have opportunities to share and reflect on how these qualities are integrated into their own counseling practice.

F716 – The Road to Understanding: Using Parts and Patterns to Map Internal Experiences

Presenter: Decca Knight, LPC, EMDR Certified Therapist

Co-Presenter(s):

Chesapeake 1 & 2

This session introduces the “Road to Understanding,” a framework created by the presenter that uses parts work to help clients visualize internal patterns that lead to distress. Participants will also have the opportunity to create their own Road to Understanding while learning to support insight, reduce stigma, and build integration.

Session 8

Friday, November 13, 2026, 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM

F800 – VA BOARD OF COUNSELING

Presenter:

Co-Presenter(s):

Norfolk IV

F801 – The Sleep-Deprived Counselor: Why Your Sleep Is an Ethical Issue and How to Improve It (Part 2, ETHICS)

Presenter: Kevin B. Handley, Ph.D.

Co-Presenter(s):

Norfolk V

You are ethically obligated to maintain competence and practice self-care, but sleep is rarely part of that conversation. This workshop makes the case that sleep deprivation is an ethics problem, not just a wellness concern, and gives you practical, evidence-based tools to improve your own sleep and your clients' outcomes.

F802 – Strengthening Clinical Care Through Peer Integration and Collaborative Practice (Part 2, SUPERVISION)

Presenter: A. Polly Jessen, RPRS-CS, CPRS

Co-Presenter(s): Brittany Samaniego Greer, LPC, LSATP-R

Norfolk VI

Peer Recovery Specialists are increasingly integrated into behavioral health programs, yet many counselors receive little guidance on effective collaboration. This session presents a practical framework for integrating

peers into treatment teams while maintaining role clarity, strengthening engagement, supporting continuity of care, and improving outcomes through coordinated peer support and clinical care.

F803 – Issues and Techniques for Clinicians Working with LGBTQ Clients (Part 2)

Presenter: Edward M. Andrews, LPC, LMFT, NCC, CCMHC, MAC, CT

Co-Presenter(s):

Hampton I

When it comes to working with LGBT clients, we seem to be moving in several conflicting directions concurrently. While acceptance of Gays and Lesbians, Gay Marriage and openness to the issue of sexuality in general seems to be more tolerant than in years, some governmental guidelines and societal opinions seem to be becoming more intolerant and negative. As mental health professionals, we should be more welcoming, supportive and affirming than ever to our LGBTQ clients. This presentation will outline some of the current issues and suggest ways to incorporate affirmation with our clinical techniques and so, offer the best therapy to our clients.

F804 – Three Counselors, Three Paths: Building a Career in Mental Health

Presenter: Rosa Jones, LPC

Co-Presenter(s): Shaterra Walker, LPC; Tameesha Curry, MFT Resident

Hampton II

Every counselor's career journey is different. Through three unique professional stories, participants will explore multiple pathways into the counseling profession, examine key career decisions, and identify practical strategies for building a sustainable, fulfilling, and values-driven career in mental health.

F805 – Understanding aggression as a part of survival: Treating reactive abuse in the counseling room

Presenter: Jennifer Gobble, PhD, LPC, NCC, ACS

Co-Presenter(s): Trevor Gobble, MA, LPC

Hampton III

This session will explore the concept of reactive abuse and look closely at the trauma drive survival responses within coercive and emotionally abusive relationships. Participants will be able to address nervous system dysregulation, identity restoration and emotional reactivity through trauma informed assessment and interventions.

F806 – Pleasure-Based Counseling Strategies to Support Intimate Partners' Relational and Sexual Health (Part 2)

Presenter: Amber L. Pope, PhD, LPC, LMHC

Co-Presenter(s): Kim Hughes, M.A., Ed.S.; [Xihlovo Mabunda, LPC](#); Chelsea Yang, LCPC, CST; Crystal Jones LMFT, RYT-200HR

Hampton IV

The presenters introduce a pleasure-based framework for relational and sexual health in intimate partnerships. Participants will explore how relational patterns shape sexual satisfaction and erotic connection. Through case-based application of multiple counseling modalities, attendees will learn interventions that support clients' erotic pleasure and intimacy while challenging deficit-based approaches to sexuality.

F807– Enhancing Wellness: Creativity in Counselor Supervision (SUPERVISION)

Presenter: Renee Staton, Ph.D., LPC

Co-Presenter(s): Michele Kiely, Ph.D., LPC

Hampton V

Counselor supervision is a cornerstone of professional development, ethical practice, and personal growth in the counseling profession. However, the increasing demands on counselors in all settings have highlighted the need for supervision models that not only ensure clinical competence but also promote counselor wellness and creativity. This presentation explores an integrative framework that embeds wellness practices and creative expression into the supervisory relationship. Drawing from positive psychology, expressive arts, and trauma-informed supervision, this session will offer practical strategies for supervisors to foster resilience, innovation, and reflective practice in their supervisees. Participants will engage in experiential activities and leave with tools to enhance both their supervisory practice and their own well-being.

F808 – Let 'Em Know: Actively Building Micro-Collectives for Black Therapists to Combat Burnout

Presenter: Dr. JaNae Taylor, LPC

Co-Presenter(s): Denisha Hosey, LPC; Danielle McDowell, LPC; Dr. LaToya Edwards, LCSW

Hampton VI

This experiential session transforms professional development into a live lab for collective healing. Black therapists will actively connect, process systemic burnout, and practice immediate, actionable peer-support steps. Participants will leave with an established micro-community and a practical framework to sustain regional wellness-centered collectives.

F809 – Beyond Resilience: Addressing the Intersections of Race, Gender, and Professional Identity Among Women Counselors of Color (Part 2)

Presenter: LaConda Fanning, PsyD, RN, LPC, LSATP

Co-Presenter(s): Karen Pender LPC; Sonya Allen LPC

Hampton VII

This two-part workshop examines how race, gender, and professional identity intersect to shape the experiences of women counselors of Color. Participants will explore workplace challenges, emotional labor, wellness, leadership, and resilience while developing practical strategies that promote psychological safety, professional flourishing, advocacy, and sustainable career success in counseling.

F810 – Beyond Masking: Authenticity, Sustainability, and Joy for Neurodivergent Counselors (Part 2)

Presenter: Chelsea R. Piechowski, M.S.Ed., NCC, LPC
Co-Presenter(s):
Hampton VIII

This two-part session explores how neurodivergent counselors often navigate masking, burnout, perfectionism, and chronic emotional labor while offering neurodiversity-affirming strategies to cultivate sustainable practice, professional fulfillment, and joy in counseling work.

F811 – Gray Divorce Through an Attachment Lens: Emotionally Focused Therapy with Couples Over 50

Presenter: Nathaniel Mason, PhD, LPC, NCC
Co-Presenter(s): Betsy Zimmerman, PhD, LPC, NCC
Marriott I

Gray divorce is more than a late-life separation; it often ruptures a long-standing attachment bond. Using EFT, this presentation explores how later-life transitions, accumulated injuries, emotional disconnection, and grief shape couples over 50 as they consider whether to rebuild, separate, or mourn what the relationship has become.

F812 – Counseling Christian Couples: Multicultural Competencies Every Counselor Needs to Know

Presenter: Elias Moitinho, PhD, LPC (VA), LMFT (TX)
Co-Presenter(s): Denise Moitinho, PhD, EdD
Marriott II

Sixty-two percent of U.S. adults identify as Christians (Pew Research Center, 2025). Although the Christian population in the U.S. encompasses various denominations and shared core beliefs, it is a diverse community of believers that expresses faith and spirituality in distinct ways (Dochuk & Van Dyke, 2026). Additionally, most Christians hold strong values regarding marriage, family, and relationships (Köstenberger & Jones, 2010; Moitinho & Moitinho, 2026), which influence how they participate in counseling. Developing multicultural competencies is essential for mental health counselors (American Counseling Association, 2014) and growing in multicultural competence, particularly in religious diversity, is an integral aspect of counseling (Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling - ASERVIC, 2024). Thus, this workshop will discuss some of the core values and beliefs of the Christian faith and their implications to marriage counseling. It will also describe strategies to help increase cultural competencies so that counselors can engage in faith-based counseling in an ethically and clinically responsive manner. Finally, this workshop will present research-based best practices for counseling Christian married couples.

F813 – Think Like a Business Owner, Not Just a Therapist

Presenter: Mikenley Lundy, EdD, MBA, LPC (VA), LPCC (MN), LMHC (MA, FL)
Co-Presenter(s):
Marriott III

The session will help counselors build a business owner perspective, going beyond only clinical abilities. Participants will discover practical techniques for positioning, marketing, operations, financial sustainability, risk management and ethical growth. Participants will walk away with concrete strategies to create sustainable, client-centered, and mission-driven practices using techniques learned in the MBA.

F814 – Love, Compassion, and Spirituality in Counseling: Creating a Culture of Healing (Part 2)

Presenter: Alan Forrest, Ed.D., LPC, LMFT

Co-Presenter(s):

Frank/Shang/York

Love, compassion, and spirituality are increasingly recognized as essential elements in counseling and psychotherapy, transforming the clinical space from a purely diagnostic environment into a true “culture of healing.” This approach moves beyond simply fixing problems; it emphasizes nurturing self-worth, fostering deep emotional connection, and addressing clients’ existential needs. By integrating these dimensions, counselors can cultivate a “soul-to-soul” practice that supports clients in moving from shame and self-criticism toward wholeness and self-compassion.

In this context, love and compassion are not sentimental or superficial emotions. Rather, they reflect a profound presence characterized by genuine connection, empathy, and unconditional positive regard. At its core is the counselor’s unwavering belief in the client’s capacity for healing; a belief that creates a sense of safety, allowing clients to explore and work through their deepest wounds.

This program invites participants to explore the often overlooked yet essential roles of love, compassion, and spirituality within the counseling process. Participants will also have opportunities to share and reflect on how these qualities are integrated into their own counseling practice.

F815 – Effective Methods to Address Gateslipping in Counselor Education Programs (ETHICS)

Presenter: Keesha Kerns, PhD, LPC, LCMHC-S, LSATP, CRP, NCC, ACS, CCTP, PSC

Co-Presenter(s): Nicole Harris, EdD, LPC (VA, TX, GA), LCMHC, LCPC, LSATP, CRP, HS-BCP, BC-TMH, ACS; Jennifer Perry, Ph.D., LCMHCA, NCC, ACS

Chesapeake 1 & 2

Counselor education programs’ purpose is to produce competent counseling professionals. While the purpose remains, there are a growing number of itinerant students from other graduate programs looking to enter a counselor program, not the counseling profession. To avoid gateslipping, counselor education programs must infuse ethical standards and staples throughout the program

Session 9

Friday, November 13, 2026, 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

F900 – Navigating Change: What Do We Expect in the New ACA Code of Ethics? (ETHICS)

Presenter: Robert J. Froehlich, Ed.D., LPC, CRC

Co-Presenter(s): Kathleen McClesky, Ph.D., NCC; Aimee Brickner, Ph.D., LPC; Rachel Boykin, MS, LPC
Norfolk IV

The first revisions to the American Counseling Association Code of Ethics since the 2014 Code are expected to be released this year. This session will provide an overview of the proposed updates including guidance relative to artificial intelligence (AI), forensic practice, telehealth, and multicultural considerations. Implication for practice will be discussed.

F901 – The Grieving Counselor: How Grief Strategies Promote Sustainable Practice

Presenter: Taylor Patterson, PhD, LPC

Co-Presenter(s): Cindy Charles, LMFT

Norfolk V

As counselors engage with suffering, it naturally elicits grief. In this interactive presentation, participants will consider the research around grief and compassion fatigue. Participants will reflect upon their own loss templates, apply evidence-based models of emotion regulation and grief processes, and develop a toolkit of resources to promote sustainable practice.

F902 – Psychotropic Medication Literacy for Counselors: Having Informed Client Conversations

Presenter: Sophia Sills-Tailor, Ph.D., LPC

Co-Presenter(s): Elizabeth Pound, PMHNP

Norfolk VI

Counselors frequently discuss psychotropic medication with clients yet often receive limited training in medication literacy and psychoeducation. This interdisciplinary presentation provides counselors with practical knowledge, ethical guidance, and client-centered communication strategies to support informed conversations about psychotropic medication, treatment collaboration, and medication management.

F903 – When Parenthood Hurts the Partnership: Love, Labor, and the Transition from Partners to Parents

Presenter: Ashley Peterson, LPC

Co-Presenter(s):

Hampton I

This presentation examines how postpartum depression, anxiety, OCD, trauma, identity shifts, and changing relational roles contribute to relationship distress during the transition into parenthood. Through a trauma-informed and emotionally focused lens, clinicians will explore practical interventions, assessment strategies, and psychoeducational tools to support couples navigating postpartum relationship challenges.

F904 – Making a Difference: Turning Advocacy into Action

Presenter: Adrienne Randle, LPC, NCC

Co-Presenter(s): Rebecca Kaderli, LPC, LSATP, C-DBT, NCC, ACS; Ashley Spanfelner, LPC, LSATP

Hampton II

This is where passion meets policy. Advocacy isn't just policy talk—it's power, influence, and the key to shaping the future of counselors. Join VCA's Advocacy Committee for a look at how to take action to effectively advocate by looking at how everyday conversations can translate into real legislative wins.

F905 – What is behind the story? Restoring identity and healing through the use of self-as-context and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy

Presenter: Jennifer Gobble, PhD, LPC, NCC, ACS

Co-Presenter(s): Trevor Gobble, MA, LPC

Hampton III

This session will explore the Acceptance and Commitment theory concept of self-as-context and the benefits of this technique in the treatment of identity healing, emotional regulation and recovery from trauma. Participants will learn and apply interventions to help clients separate from painful self-stories and move toward wellness.

F906 – Using a Cultural Humility Framework for LGBTGEQIAP+ Accompliceship Development

Presenter: Amber L. Pope, PhD, LPC, LMHC

Co-Presenter(s):

Hampton IV

In today's sociopolitical climate, counselors must actively support LGBTGEQIAP+ communities to reduce barriers to well-being. Drawing from research and training experience, the presenter offers practical accompliceship strategies grounded in cultural humility, including advocacy at micro, meso, and macro levels, navigating challenges, and fostering ongoing personal and professional accompliceship development.

F907– The Amalgamation Supervision Model (ASM): An Integrative and Developmental Approach to Clinical Supervision (SUPERVISION)

Presenter: Bosede Balogun, PhD, LPC

Co-Presenter(s):

Hampton V

Clinical supervision is essential to counselor professional identity development and gatekeeping responsibilities. This presentation introduces the Amalgamation Supervision Model (ASM), an integrative and developmental approach to supervision. It examines supervisory relationships, use of the Counseling Competencies Scale, and strategies that promote supervisee growth, autonomy, and effective professional development.

F908 – Treating ADHD in Girls (SCHOOL)

Presenter: Gabriel Villarreal, LPC

Co-Presenter(s): Rachel Finch, Resident in Counseling

Hampton VI

This session examines best practices for identifying and treating ADHD in girls into adulthood. Clinicians will explore gender differences in ADHD presentation, barriers to diagnosis, emotional dysregulation, masking, and evidence-informed treatment approaches, including psychoeducation, DBT-informed interventions, and executive functioning support strategies.

F909 – From Participants to Partners: A Practical Introduction to Participatory Action Research for Counselors and Counselor Educators

Presenter: Naomi Wheeler, PhD, LPC, LMHC, NCC

Co-Presenter(s):

Hampton VII

Participatory Action Research (PAR) offers counselors and counselor educators a collaborative approach to scholarship grounded in partnership, advocacy, and community voice. This introductory session will provide an accessible overview of PAR principles, practical applications in counseling settings, ethical considerations, and strategies for developing community-engaged research and program evaluation partnerships.

F910 – Operation Expressive Arts: Supporting Mission Readiness in Military Youth (SCHOOL)

Presenter: Yonsenia White, LPC, ATR, CMCC, MFA

Co-Presenter(s):

Hampton VIII

Like dandelions, military children are resilient, adaptive and bloom wherever planted. Although military life presents challenges and constant change, the expressive arts provides them with a voice, sense of control, self-expression and mindfulness. This session explores how expressive arts practices supports mission readiness through catharsis, coping skills and community building.

F911 – How To Use Your "Senses" When Conducting Mental Status Exams

Presenter: Sharon Silverberg, PhD, LPC, LMFT, ACS, RPT-S, CSOTP

Co-Presenter(s):

Marriott I

Conducting Mental Status Exams (MSE) is an essential clinical skill for counselors to master. This presentation will focus on introducing counselors and counselor educators/supervisors a new way to approach this essential clinical task. Special attention will be given to cultural factors and how they can potentially impact clinical impressions.

F912 – Relax, Relate, Release: Practical Self-Regulation & Self-Care Tools for Therapists to Enhance Co-Regulation and Clinical Effectiveness

Presenter: Meagan E. Graham, LPC, CCTP-II, CCATP, CCFP

Co-Presenter(s):

Marriott III

This presentation explores the role of co-regulation in the therapeutic relationship and highlights the importance of therapist well-being. Participants will learn practical self-regulation strategies, including EFT tapping, diaphragmatic breathing, somatic and mindfulness practices, time management, gratitude, affirmations, and meeting basic physical needs to enhance therapeutic presence and effectiveness.

F913 – Beyond Student Trauma: Responding to Educators in this Time of Crisis

Presenter: Stephanie Filio, M.Ed.

Co-Presenter(s):

Marriott V

This session will increase counselor understanding of the burnout crisis in education. Learn practical and deliverable skills to help your client-educators who stay in or transition out, from someone who has been on the inside. who has been through it on a three year journey of perspective shifting work within the heart, mind, and counseling office.

F914 – Successful VCA Foundation Suzee Leone Grant Applications (No CE hours)

Presenter: Celeste Hall, M.Ed.

Co-Presenter(s): Lorraine K. Hall, M.A.; Anne Henry M.Ed.; Renee Staton Ph.D., LPC

Frank/Shang/York

This session will highlight strategies for writing successful VCAF Suzee Leone Grant applications. Recent grant recipients will share ideas for utilizing grant funding to enhance the counseling profession.

F915 – Invisible Sentences: Children and Families Serve Sentences, Too, Without Ever Being Sentenced

Presenter: Dr. Lakesha Roney Ed.D., LPC

Co-Presenter(s): JaNell Jones, M.Ed., QMHP-T, CSAC Supervisor

Chesapeake 1 & 2

This presentation explores the mental health impact incarceration has on children and families, including trauma, grief, stigma, attachment disruptions, and reunification challenges. Attendees will learn trauma-informed and culturally responsive counseling approaches that support healing, resilience, and family stabilization within clinical, school, and community counseling settings.

Session 10

Friday, November 13, 2026, 2:45 PM – 3:45 PM

F1000 – Affirming and Embracing Neurodiversity in Counselor Education and Supervision (SUPERVISION)

Presenter: Carrie Lynn Bailey, Ph.D., LPC, NCC

Co-Presenter(s):

Norfolk IV

This presentation will promote awareness, share knowledge, and affirm strengths of those within the neurodivergent population. Participants will gain insights into how understanding and embracing neurodiversity fosters inclusive practices, enhances empathy, aligns with ethical and cultural competencies, and supports the well-being of counselors in training, supervisors, faculty, and clients.

F1001 – Nonlinear Healing After Intimate Partner Violence: A Relational-Cultural Understanding of Recovery, Rupture, and Return (Pete Warren Student Fellow)

Presenter: Syreeta Wright, EdS, LPC, CSAC, NCC

Co-Presenter(s): Dina Berenshteyn-Barger;

Norfolk V

This presentation applies Relational-Cultural Theory to intimate partner violence healing to reframe recovery as a non-linear cycle of recovery, rupture, and return. It emphasizes systemic and cultural influences, relational dynamics in counseling, and the importance of connection. Interactive activities seek to promote culturally responsive, relationally grounded practice and reflection.

F1002 – But there are two of them: Overcoming Fears of Working with Couples

Presenter: Mike Takacs, PhD, EdS, LPC-S

Co-Presenter(s):

Norfolk VI

Working with couples is often described as anxiety provoking by counselors at various levels. This often creates disparity with the availability for couples to find assistance with their relationships. This session assists counselors with encouraging interest, addressing misconceptions, and promoting engagement.

F1003 – The Counselor's Guide to Going Deeper: Trauma-Informed Treatment Planning That Fosters Meaningful Change (Part 1)

Presenter: Katie Askren, PhD, LPC, LSATP, NCC, ACS

Co-Presenter(s):

Hampton I

Many counselors struggle to move beyond surface-level interventions and develop treatment plans that create meaningful change. This session explores trauma-informed approaches to addressing shame and low self-esteem, building depth in counseling, creating personalized treatment plans, and improving documentation efficiency without sacrificing clinical quality.

F1004 – Sacred Spaces and Healing Pathways: Exploring the Role of Spirituality and the Black Church in Black Mental Wellness

Presenter: Carlton J. Henderson, Ph.D., LPC

Co-Presenter(s): Brittany G. Suggs, Ph.D., MPH, LPC

Hampton II

Mental health stigma and systemic barriers continue to affect Black communities, while spirituality and the Black church remain important sources of resilience, support, and meaning-making. This presentation explores how the Black church promotes mental wellness, influences help-seeking behaviors, and serves as a potential partner in culturally responsive mental wellness.

F1005 – From Love Bombing to Lethality: Assessing and Intervening in Intimate Partner Violence and Domestic Murder-Suicide (Part 1)

Presenter: Dr. Wendy Eckenrod-Green

Co-Presenter(s):

Hampton III

This two-part presentation equips clinicians to assess and intervene in intimate partner violence and domestic murder-suicide while integrating ethical decision-making and standards of practice. Participants will identify warning signs, assess risk, apply safety strategies, and navigate ACA ethical responsibilities including duty to warn, documentation, and client protection.

F1006 – Working With PDA: Practical, Relationship-Based Strategies for Supporting Children with Pathological Demand Avoidance

Presenter: Brett Welch, LPC, NCC

Co-Presenter(s):

Hampton IV

Children with PDA often experience everyday demands as threats, leading to resistance, shutdowns, or explosive behaviors. This session explores relationship-based, low-demand approaches that reduce anxiety, build trust, and improve collaboration in the therapy room, at home and school while honoring neurodiversity and preserving dignity for all.

F1007– I Graduated! Now What? Empowering New Clinicians in Their School-to-Practice Transition

Presenter: Dawn White, LPC

Co-Presenter(s): Maria Morgan, graduate student; Sarah Rieke, LPC

Hampton V

New clinicians often graduate with strong clinical skills but limited knowledge of the administrative demands of practice. This interactive session explores common gaps in billing, documentation, compliance, and practice management and offers practical strategies for practice owners, educators, and new clinicians to bridge this divide and build sustainable and joyful careers.

F1008 – Beyond the Crisis: Creating Safe and Successful Student Pathways Through Collaborative Partnerships (Part 1)

Presenter: Amanda G. Francis, M.Ed./Ed.S, LPC

Co-Presenter(s):

Hampton VI

As student mental health needs continue to rise, school counselors are increasingly responsible for supporting students in crisis, and in returning to school following significant mental health or safety concerns. This session explores collaborative reentry planning, threat assessment considerations, safety planning, and establishing realistic expectations among schools, families, and mental health professionals.

F109 – Grief Across Cultures: Introducing the Cultural-Structural Good Grief Model (CSGGM) for Culturally Aware Bereavement Care

Presenter: Chimdiogo Onyeani-Nwosu, M.A.

Co-Presenter(s):

Hampton VIII

This presentation introduces the Cultural-Structural Good Grief Model (CSGGM), a framework for culturally responsive bereavement care. In this interactive session participants will examine cross-cultural grief traditions, explore limitations of dominant Western grief frameworks, and learn practical strategies for assessing and supporting grief experiences across diverse cultural and structural contexts.

F1010 – Psycho-Sensory Intervention: Integrating Sensory Processing, Movement, and Creative Expression in Trauma-Informed Mental Health Care

Presenter: Jillian Moreland, MS, LPC

Co-Presenter(s):

Marriott I

This interactive training explores how trauma impacts sensory processing, attachment, movement, and emotional regulation in children and adolescents. Participants will learn practical psycho-sensory, movement-based, and expressive interventions that support nervous system regulation, therapeutic engagement, and trauma-informed care across clinical, school-based, and community settings.

F1011 – The Military Mindset

Presenter: Gregory Lemich, Ph.D., LPC

Co-Presenter(s):

Marriott II

From day one, military members are taught to think differently. They learn how to work during a crisis and how to function when in danger. To thrive, they acquire very specific cognitive traits atypical for the civilian world. We will explore these traits and the identity that arises from them.

F1012 – A Counselor's Critique of the 12 Steps: No Client is Powerless

Presenter: Justin Jordan, PhD, LPC, LSATP

Co-Presenter(s):

Marriott III

Counselor Profession Identity emphasizes holistic wellness, prevention, healthy development, client empowerment, and social justice. While the 12 Steps of various self-help groups (primarily for addiction)

have helped many people, these prescriptive steps are not a perfect fit for all clients and are misaligned with counselor professional identity.

F1113 – The Sustainable Counselor: Trauma-Informed, Fully Booked, and Finding Joy

Presenter: Shay Malone, Ed.S., LPC

Co-Presenter(s):

Marriott V

Counselor burnout often stems from feeling isolated and unsupported, professionally and financially. This session reframes joy as a direct outcome of competence. Participants will learn to replace siloed care with trauma-informed, holistic care, empowering them to support clients effectively and practice in a way that is fulfilling and financially sustainable.

F1014 – Healing in Motion: Dance Movement Therapy for Black Girls with Anxiety (Michelle Dowdy Emerging Leader)

Presenter: Amanda Gilbert, M.A., Resident in Counseling, Doctoral Student

Co-Presenter(s):

Frank/Shang/York

Dance Movement Therapy (DMT) is a culturally responsive community intervention that is embodied, creative, and relevant to Black adolescent girls experiencing anxiety. This presentation will present research about the efficacy and implementation of a DMT intervention for increasing positive mental health outcomes in Black girls with anxiety. Implications for counselors and counselor educators and strategies for implementation are highlighted.

F1015 – The Ultimate Intervention: Using Attunement and the Nervous System to Deepen the Therapeutic Alliance (Part 1)

Presenter: Sirena Pangelinan, LPC, EMDR-C, PhD

Co-Presenter(s): Ellen Winsor Chaffin, LPC, CAGS, EMDR-T, SEP, CCTP

Chesapeake 1 & 2

Working cognitively without understanding the nervous system limits our therapeutic effectiveness. For counselors, this can lead to burnout, compassion fatigue, and imposter syndrome, while for clients it can look like resistance, avoidance, delayed progress, and even retraumatization. This 2-hour presentation seeks to address this gap by providing a framework for using awareness and knowledge of the nervous system as the primary intervention supporting and sustaining the healing process for both clients and counselors.

Session11

Friday, November 13, 2026, 4:00 PM – 5:00 PM

F1100 – “Please Don’t Tell Anyone”: Ethical Decision-Making in Identity Exploration and Confidentiality (ETHICS)

Presenter: Dawn White, LPC

Co-Presenter(s):

Norfolk IV

What do you do when a client trusts you with something they’re not ready to share with others? Using Reamer’s model, this session walks through ethical dilemmas with confidentiality, documentation, and conflict offering practical, affirming strategies clinicians can use immediately.

F1101 – The Living Goodbye: Finding Joy in a Palliative Approach to Grief, Unresolved Anger, and Spiritual Loss

Presenter: Avivah Knowles, LPC, NCC, MAR in Pastoral Counseling, MDiv Student in Interreligious Chaplaincy

Co-Presenter(s):

Norfolk V

This session applies palliative care philosophy to the living losses of grief, unresolved anger, and spiritual loss through two original, low-cost, spiritually neutral interventions: The Clinical Wind Phone™ and The Iron Haven™. Participants explore how walking alongside clients, rather than directing healing, transforms client outcomes and renews the counselor's joy through hope and practice.

F1102 – From Crispy to Thriving: Rediscovering Joy Through Burnout Recovery

Presenter: Kate Steiner West, Ph.D., LMHP-R

Co-Presenter(s):

Norfolk VI

Burnout doesn't just drain your energy; it steals your joy. This session helps counselors recognize their personal burnout warning signs, build sustainable boundaries and routines, and reconnect with the meaning that brought them to this work, using the Steiner Self-Reflection Sustainability & Wellness (SSRSW) Model as a practical guide.

F1103 – The Counselor's Guide to Going Deeper: Trauma-Informed Treatment Planning That Fosters Meaningful Change (Part 2)

Presenter: Katie Askren, PhD, LPC, LSATP, NCC, ACS

Co-Presenter(s):

Hampton I

Many counselors struggle to move beyond surface-level interventions and develop treatment plans that create meaningful change. This 2-hour session explores trauma-informed approaches to addressing shame and low self-esteem, building depth in counseling, creating personalized treatment plans, and improving documentation efficiency without sacrificing clinical quality.

F1104 – Productive, Burned Out, and Praised for It: Counseling in a Performance-Driven Culture

Presenter: James Harris, LPC

Co-Presenter(s): Devonte Tucker, Resident in Counseling
Hampton II

This presentation examines how performance-driven culture, social media, and chronic productivity can mask burnout and emotional distress in high-functioning clients. Participants will explore the impact of survival mode and emotional suppression while gaining culturally responsive strategies for recognizing hidden struggles within modern counseling practice.

F1105 – From Love Bombing to Lethality: Assessing and Intervening in Intimate Partner Violence and Domestic Murder-Suicide (Part 2)

Presenter: Dr. Wendy Eckenrod-Green

Co-Presenter(s):
Hampton III

This two-part presentation equips clinicians to assess and intervene in intimate partner violence and domestic murder-suicide while integrating ethical decision-making and standards of practice. Participants will identify warning signs, assess risk, apply safety strategies, and navigate ACA ethical responsibilities including duty to warn, documentation, and client protection.

F1106 – More Than Good Intentions: Cultural Humility in Counseling and Supervision

Presenter: Mashal Bilal, M.S., M.A., NCC, Ph.D. Student

Co-Presenter(s): Ayesha Liaqat, MA, Ph.D. Student
Hampton IV

How can counselors remain grounded in evidence-based practice while responding meaningfully to clients' cultural worlds? This session invites participants to explore cultural humility as a practical counseling stance rooted in empathy, openness, self-reflection, authenticity, and relational repair. Drawing from research on cultural humility (Hook et al., 2017; Zhu et al., 2021) and culturally adapted psychotherapy (Bernal & Domenech Rodriguez, 2012), participants will examine how humility can guide ethical and culturally responsive practice in counseling, supervision, and classroom settings. Through case analyses and reflective journaling prompts, attendees will gain tools for recognizing assumptions, responding to cultural ruptures, and fostering stronger relationships with clients, supervisees, and students.

F1107 – Finding Joy in Supervision: Promoting Wellness, Resilience, and Professional Sustainability in Counseling (SUPERVISION)

Presenter: Janita Daggy, Ph.D., LPC-S, NCC

Co-Presenter(s): Deepa Emmanuel, PhD Candidate
Hampton V

Professional counselors and supervisors face increasing demands that contribute to burnout, compassion fatigue, and emotional exhaustion. Wellness-oriented supervision serves as a critical protective factor that promotes resilience, ethical practice, professional identity, and long-term sustainability. This presentation explores supervision in cultivating joy, meaning, and professional fulfillment while addressing daily challenges.

F1108 – Beyond the Crisis: Creating Safe and Successful Student Pathways Through Collaborative Partnerships (Part 2)

Presenter: Amanda G. Francis, M.Ed./Ed.S, LPC

Co-Presenter(s):

Hampton VI

As student mental health needs continue to rise, school counselors are increasingly responsible for supporting students in crisis, and in returning to school following significant mental health or safety concerns. This 2-hour session explores collaborative reentry planning, threat assessment considerations, safety planning, and establishing realistic expectations among schools, families, and mental health professionals.

F1109 – Considerations and Impacts of Non-Consensual Intimate Material Distribution

Presenter: Adrienne Randle, LPC, NCC

Co-Presenter(s):

Hampton VII

You may have heard of NCIMD, particularly in cases of celebrity intimate material leaks. While stories have been blasted across media, there can be stigma and impacts that are not considered and ways that sharing and contributing to the stigma have been normalized. Join for a deeper dive into this.

F1110 – Internet Use Disorder: Research, Assessment, Diagnosis and Treatment

Presenter: Dr. Ben Newman LPC, LSATP

Co-Presenter(s): Abigail Williams LPC, CSAC, ATR-BC; Traci Powers Resident in Counseling

Hampton VIII

This presentation explores the evolving clinical landscape of internet use disorders, addressing current empirical research and diagnostic frameworks (American Psychiatric Association, 2022). Attendees will examine validated assessment measures and evidence-based treatment modalities, including specialized cognitive-behavioral techniques (Zou et al., 2026), to equip counselors with practical strategies for addressing digital addictions.

F1111 – Messy, Painful, Necessary: Collective Healing Beyond the Therapy Room

Presenter: Danielle L. McDowell, LPC, Virginia Board of Counseling Approved Supervisor

Co-Presenter(s):

Marriott I

Many client concerns are rooted in community, culture, historical trauma, and systemic inequities. This workshop explores collective healing as a counseling framework and challenges participants to consider how connection, belonging, advocacy, and community engagement can support healing beyond individual symptom reduction.

F1112 – The Future of Online Supervision is Now

Presenter: Nicole Harris, EdD, LPC (VA, TX, GA), LCMHC, LCPC, LSATP, CRP, HS-BCP, BC-TMH, ACS
Co-Presenter(s): Keesha Kerns, PhD, LPC, LCMHC-S, LSATP, CRP, NCC, ACS, CCTP, PSC
Marriott II

The current counseling climate has motivated the profession to perfect online counseling supervision to address the diverse cultural populations of future counselors. Coupled with the latest technological advances, the many successes and ethical challenges indicate the permanency of online counseling supervision and its benefits to supervisors and supervisees alike.

F1113 – Beyond Burnout: Lessons in Leadership and Resilience from Physician Residents

Presenter: Cory Gerwe, PhD, LPC, ACS
Co-Presenter(s): LaConda Fanning, PsyD, LPC, ACS; Agatha Parks-Savage, EdD, LPC, ACS
Marriott V

Through coaching physician residents in high-stress healthcare settings, counselors can gain valuable insight into resilience, leadership, and human needs. Grounded in Self-Determination Theory, this session explores how autonomy, competence, and connection influence wellbeing while highlighting counselor-driven wellness initiatives designed to strengthen psychologically safe and sustainable professional environments.

F1114 – Why We Stay: Reclaiming Meaning and Joy in Counseling Work

Presenter: Tammy Griffin, MA, Resident in Counseling
Co-Presenter(s): Joshua Freeman, MA, LPC, NCC, ACS,
Frank/Shang/York

Counseling professionals often focus on preventing burnout, compassion fatigue, and impairment. Focus is typically on preventing harm rather than cultivating fulfillment. This presentation examines joy as a resource contributing to counselor functioning, resilience, and long-term sustainability while offering practical strategies for reconnecting with purpose and engagement in counseling work.

F1115 – The Ultimate Intervention: Using Attunement and the Nervous System to Deepen the Therapeutic Alliance (Part 2)

Presenter: Sirena Pangelinan, LPC, EMDR-C, PhD
Co-Presenter(s): Ellen Winsor Chaffin, LPC, CAGS, EMDR-T, SEP, CCTP
Chesapeake 1 & 2

Working cognitively without understanding the nervous system limits our therapeutic effectiveness. For counselors, this can lead to burnout, compassion fatigue, and imposter syndrome, while for clients it can

look like resistance, avoidance, delayed progress, and even retraumatization. This 2-hour presentation seeks to address this gap by providing a framework for using awareness and knowledge of the nervous system as the primary intervention supporting and sustaining the healing process for both clients and counselors.

Session 12

Friday, November 13, 2026, 5:00 PM – 6:00 PM

F1200 – Evening Mindfulness Practice Group

Presenter: Alan Forrest, EdD, LPC, LMFT

Frank/Shang/York

This session concludes the day with a guided meditation and brief discussion designed to help conference participants integrate the day's learning and process emotionally impactful content. This grounding and reflective time encourages participants to release accumulated physical and emotional tension, and nurture mental clarity and emotional balance. The meditation will allow space to shift from a state of doing to one of presence and being. Participants are invited to recognize and share personal and professional insights, celebrate moments of growth and success, and cultivate a sense of completion and closure. The practice concludes by gently bringing awareness back to the present moment while promoting reflection, resilience, and self-care.

Session 13

Saturday, November 14, 2026, 7:30 AM – 8:30 AM

S1300 - Morning Mindfulness Practice Group

Presenter: Alan Forrest, EdD, LPC, LMFT

Frank/Shang/York

Mindfulness is present moment awareness and the art of conscious living. It is the intentional attending to what is happening right now without judgment or reactivity. This morning practice group will provide an opportunity for participants to have a place to begin their day in stillness and silence; it can serve as a calming touchstone to return to throughout the day. The structure of the practice session will consist of a welcome, lightly guided period, and silent sit. We are all each other's teachers; therefore, we will conclude with an optional open discussion. Beginners and seasoned meditation practitioners are welcome. This is a gentle way to begin your day.

Session 14

Saturday, November 14, 2026, 8:45 AM – 9:45 AM

S1400 – When Trauma Looks Like Conflict: Beyond Communication Skills in Trauma-Informed Couples Counseling

Presenter: Naomi Wheeler, PhD, LPC, LMHC, NCC

Co-Presenter(s):

Norfolk IV

Many couples presenting with communication problems are actually struggling with: trauma-shaped survival responses, attachment-based protection strategies, emotional dysregulation, and relational safety threats. At the same time, counselors must carefully differentiate trauma reactivity from coercive control and abusive relationship dynamics. This presentation provides counselors with a trauma-informed framework for understanding couple conflict beyond surface-level communication patterns while helping clinicians assess for safety, power, and appropriateness of conjoint treatment.

S1401 – Safety, Readiness, and Ethics: Why Stabilization Matters (Part 1, ETHICS)

Presenter: Austin Francis, LPC, CCTP

Co-Presenter(s): Amanda G. Francis, M.Ed./Ed.S, LPC

Norfolk V

This 2-hour presentation examines stabilization and resourcing in trauma counseling as necessary and ethical under the ACA Code of Ethics. We will explore how adequate preparation for trauma processing aligns with ethical obligations related to competence and client welfare, while learning practical stabilization interventions that participants can immediately begin using with clients.

S1402 – Finding Joy Through Resilience - Strategies for Counselor Wellness

Presenter: Kathleen McCleskey, PhD, NCC

Co-Presenter(s): Elizabeth Mottley, BA

Norfolk VI

This interactive session will focus on counselor resilience, joy, and wellness. The stress of counseling work will be explored and then balanced with the joys, vicarious growth, and significance the work brings. Self-care and meaning-making activities will be included. Come spend some time with us learning how to build resilience!

S1403 – The Solitary Nomad: Navigating Loneliness, Identity, and Belonging in Third Culture Kids

Presenter: Heyde Luz, PhD, LPC, NCC

Co-Presenter(s): Katie Solvig, LPC

Hampton I

This session explores the unique cultural framework of Third Culture Kids (TCKs) and the persistent loneliness that often shapes their development. Attendees will learn specific narrative and attachment-focused interventions to help TCK clients process grief, reframe their migratory histories, and cultivate a lasting sense of internal belonging.

S1404 – Group Counseling for International Populations: Practice-Based Evidence from the Field

Presenter: Sam Steen, PhD, Prek-12 PPSL

Co-Presenter(s): Dina Berenshteyn-Barger, Sarah Yi, Aidan Markley,
Hampton II

This interactive session integrates research and field experts'™ perspectives on group counseling with international populations. Presenters illustrate creative and non-traditional facilitation strategies designed to promote joy and connection with a variety of international populations in the U.S. and abroad. Participants gain strategies immediately applicable in their own clinical practice.

S1405 – Grounded in Roots: An Earth Centered Approach to Decolonized and Re-indigenized Mental Health Therapy

Presenter: Lupita Rodriguez, LPC

Co-Presenter(s): Javier Omar Melendez-Vega, LCSW
Hampton III

The presentation explores colonialization's enduring effects on mental health, intergenerational trauma, and Eurocentric clinical practices. Participants will examine professional identity through an eco-centric lens, practice culturally responsive approaches avoiding ethnic glossing, experience land-based therapeutic interventions, and develop ethical frameworks for integrating Indigenous wisdom while honoring sacred traditions and environmental interconnectedness.

S1406 – Mind, Body, & Trauma: Navigating the Unique Challenges of our Disabled Clients (Part 1)

Presenter: Brandy Fallon, M.Ed, RIC

Co-Presenter(s):
Hampton IV

Whether they were born with a disability or have acquired it, our disabled clients face a unique set of challenges: physical or emotional trauma, isolation, fear, and distrust of any type of healthcare provider. In this 2-hour presentation, we discuss the use of Acceptance & Commitment Therapy to help them reconnect with themselves and others.

S1407– Waiting to Feel Ready: What Imposter Phenomenon Costs Counselors-in-Training and What to Do About It (Part 1)

Presenter: Kevin B. Handley, Ph.D.

Co-Presenter(s):

Hampton V

You know the feeling: certain that someone will discover you don't belong here. Among counseling trainees, the imposter phenomenon is nearly universal. And waiting for it to disappear before showing up fully is a career-limiting move. This 2-hour workshop gives you practical, evidence-based tools to lead yourself through it, not around it.

Session 15

Saturday, November 14, 2026, 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM

S1500 – Supervising Smarter: Ethical Applications of AI in Clinical Supervision (SUPERVISION)

Presenter: Katie Askren, PhD, LPC, LSATP, NCC, ACS

Co-Presenter(s):

Norfolk IV

As artificial intelligence becomes more common in counseling, supervisors face new opportunities and ethical questions. This presentation explores how AI may be integrated into clinical supervision to support counselor growth and improve client care while addressing confidentiality, ACA ethical standards, and Virginia regulations. Participants will leave with practical strategies and a clear framework for ethically incorporating AI into supervision.

S1501 – Safety, Readiness, and Ethics: Why Stabilization Matters (Part 2, ETHICS)

Presenter: Austin Francis, LPC, CCTP

Co-Presenter(s): Amanda G. Francis, M.Ed./Ed.S, LPC

Norfolk V

This 2-hour presentation examines stabilization and resourcing in trauma counseling as necessary and ethical under the ACA Code of Ethics. We will explore how adequate preparation for trauma processing aligns with ethical obligations related to competence and client welfare, while learning practical stabilization interventions that participants can immediately begin using with clients.

S1502 – From Clinician to Clinical Leader: Managing, Supervising, and Leading Healthcare Professionals in Mental Health

Presenter: Jessica Houston, LPC

Co-Presenter(s): Teresa Adams, LPC; Scott Sawyer, Supervisee in Substance Abuse Counseling

Norfolk VI

Mental health leaders are often promoted based on their clinical skills, yet many receive little formal training in supervision, staff accountability, crisis leadership, or team management. In high-risk community mental health settings, ineffective leadership can directly impact staff performance, documentation quality, clinician retention, and ultimately client care. This presentation explores practical leadership strategies for supervising

mental health professionals while balancing compliance, compassion, accountability, and organizational expectations.

S1503 – Numbing vs. Newness: Differentiating True Self-Care from Escapism in Clinical Practice

Presenter: Heyde Luz, PhD, LPC, NCC

Co-Presenter(s): Steve Warren, PhD.

Hampton I

Counselors are frequently encouraged to practice self-care, yet many struggle to translate that advice into sustainable habits. This interactive roundtable explores practical, evidence-informed strategies for preventing burnout, fostering professional resilience, and reconnecting with meaning and joy in counseling work through discussion, reflection, and collaborative problem-solving.

S1504 – Our New Social Life: Bridging Social Psychology and Counseling Practice to Rebuild Meaningful Human Connection

Presenter: Natalie Kerr, Ph.D.

Co-Presenter(s): Elizabeth Shoop, LPC, LMHC, CCTP

Hampton II

This presentation explores how social psychology can inform counseling practices, introducing common barriers to social connection in the modern world and evidence-based strategies for overcoming them. Attendees will gain practical tools to help clients initiate and deepen social connections.

S1505 – Building Resilient Counseling Teams in Community Mental Health Settings

Presenter: Sonya A. Allen, LPC

Co-Presenter(s): Karen D. Pender, LPC, Laconda Fanning Psy.D, RN, LPC, LSATP

Hampton III

Community mental health (CMH) settings present some of the most demanding conditions in the behavioral health workforce. Clinicians in these environments routinely carry high-acuity caseloads, navigate chronic resource limitations, and absorb significant secondary traumatic stress (STS), often without adequate organizational support. The consequences are well-documented: burnout rates approaching 50%, STS prevalence between 34-56% among trauma-serving clinicians, and annual staff turnover averaging 25-40% (Acker, 2018; Hensel et al., 2015; SAMHSA, 2023). These figures represent not only a workforce crisis but a direct threat to equitable, continuous care for the communities CMH practitioners serve.

This workshop responds to that crisis with a structured, evidence-based approach to building team-level resilience from within clinical systems. Designed for licensed practitioners across disciplines including LPCs, LCSWs, LMFTs, and psychologists” the session moves beyond individual self-care rhetoric to address resilience as a collective, organizational capacity requiring deliberate design and sustained leadership commitment. Participants will leave with validated assessment instruments, a curated evidence-based resource list, and a practical action plan grounded in their specific clinical environment.

S1506 – Mind, Body, & Trauma: Navigating the Unique Challenges of our Disabled Clients (Part 2)

Presenter: Brandy Fallon, M.Ed, RIC

Co-Presenter(s):

Hampton IV

Whether they were born with a disability or have acquired it, our disabled clients face a unique set of challenges: physical or emotional trauma, isolation, fear, and distrust of any type of healthcare provider. In this 2-hour presentation, we discuss the use of Acceptance & Commitment Therapy to help them reconnect with themselves and others.

S1507– Waiting to Feel Ready: What Imposter Phenomenon Costs Counselors-in-Training and What to Do About It (Part 2)

Presenter: Kevin B. Handley, Ph.D.

Co-Presenter(s):

Hampton V

You know the feeling: certain that someone will discover you don't belong here. Among counseling trainees, the imposter phenomenon is nearly universal. And waiting for it to disappear before showing up fully is a career-limiting move. This 2-hour workshop gives you practical, evidence-based tools to lead yourself through it, not around it.

Session 16

Saturday, November 14, 2026, 12:45 PM – 1:45 PM

S1600 – Transitioning from Counselor Education Program to Counseling Agency Owner

Presenter: Keesha Kerns, PhD, LPC, LCMHC-S, LSATP, CRP, NCC, ACS, CCTP, PSC

Co-Presenter(s): Nicole Harris, EdD, LPC (VA, TX, GA), LCMHC, LCPC, LSATP, CRP, HS-BCP, BC-TMH, ACS; LaConda Ambrose Fanning, RN LPC, LSATP, ACS, CCTP; Richard Mason, PhD, LPC, CCMHC, NCC, ACS

Norfolk IV

Counselor education programs teach theoretical frameworks of counseling but not always the business aspect of the profession. Preparing counselor education graduates to eventually own businesses in the counseling profession, coursework needs to include counseling business ethics, billing practices, developing organizational procedures and licensing statutes to build foundations for counseling entrepreneurship.

S1601 – The Ethical Application of Art in Therapy for Counselors & Counselor Supervisors (Part 1, ETHICS)

Presenter: Abigail "Albie" Williams, LPC

Co-Presenter(s): Lauren Tatro, LPC, ATR; Ashley Tuttle, LPC, CSAC

Norfolk V

Using art in counseling is not the same as practicing art therapy. This session clarifies what distinguishes art therapy as a profession from the ethical, adjunctive use of art in counseling, covering scope, documentation, trauma risk, Virginia regulation, and supervision, so counselors and supervisors can practice creatively within their scope.

S1602 – Why Do I Keep Doing This? How to Break Toxic Cycles, Heal Origin Wounds, and Rebuild Self-Trust (Part 1)

Presenter: Laura Copley, PhD, LPC

Co-Presenter(s):

Norfolk VI

Trauma doesn't just damage trust in others; it damages trust in the self. This highly experiential workshop explores how attachment wounds and origin trauma teach clients to override their instincts, emotions, and needs. Participants will learn innovative psychosensory interventions designed to restore self-trust and create lasting change.

S1603 – How to Protect Yourself: at the Office and in Court Difficult Clients & How to Deal with Parental Alienation/Triangulation (Part 1)

Presenter: Heather Massey, LPC, NCC, CCMHC, CFMHE

Co-Presenter(s): Kim Montgomery, LPC

Hampton I

In today's world, there are more reports to the board and counselors being taken to court to testify than ever before. We have gathered information on how to protect your practice and put together a summary of how to protect yourself before you go to court and during court proceedings. The next hour will be concerning difficult clients and how to tell the difference between Parental Alienation and Triangulation.

S1604 – Developing Your Scholarly Voice: Academic Writing in the Age of AI (Part 1)

Presenter: Sophia Sills-Tailor, Ph.D., LPC

Co-Presenter(s):

Hampton II

Graduate students are frequently expected to write with scholarly authority without explicit instruction in scholarly voice, synthesis, or academic discourse. This interactive workshop explores scholarly writing as a teachable process of synthesis, positioning, and participation in academic discourse. and provides practical strategies for developing scholarly voice, ethical AI use, synthesis skills, and confidence in graduate-level writing.

S1605 – From Bravo to Breakthroughs: Using Reality Television to Explore Relationships, Trauma, Attachment, and Cultural Narratives

Presenter: Ashley Peterson, LPC, ADHD-CCSP

Co-Presenter(s):
Hampton III

This presentation explores how reality television can be ethically utilized as a psychoeducational and rapport-building tool in clinical practice. Through a trauma-informed and culturally responsive lens, clinicians will examine how reality television reflects attachment dynamics, trauma responses, communication patterns, identity performance, and relational conflict while supporting client insight, engagement, and emotional exploration.

S1606 – Learning from Mistakes in Clinical Practice: Building an Edison Mindset as an Inherent Part of Deliberate Practice

Presenter: Katherine "Katie" Worsham, LPC, ACS
Co-Presenter(s): Charis Miller, M.A., LPC, NCC, ACS, BC-TMH
Hampton IV

Do you ever feel frustrated or discouraged in your clinical practice? The feelings of imposter syndrome, failure, and “not getting it right” may impede growth and hinder healthy work with our clients. Participants will leave with tools in their toolbelt for making meaning from mistakes leading to improved attunement, responsiveness, and therapeutic outcomes.

S1607 – Building a CES and Public School Partnership: Graduate Student Experiences in a School-Based Mental Health Model (SCHOOL, Michelle Dowdy Student Fellow)

Presenter: Amanda Gilbert, Resident in Counseling, Doctoral Student
Co-Presenter(s)
Hampton V

This presentation shares findings from a case study of counseling graduate students involved in the first year of a school-based mental health partnership between a counselor education program and an urban public school district. The results of semi-structured interviews will be shared including strategies for effective implementation and impacts on counselor-in-training development.

S1608 – The Tree of Life: A Trauma-Informed, Culturally-Rooted Approach to Healing and Connection

Presenter: Rachael Goodman, PhD, LPC
Co-Presenter(s): Maribel Tohara Nakamatsu, M.Ed.; Alejandra Salazar Salame, M.S. Ed.
Frank/Shang/York

This presentation introduces the Tree of Life (Árbol de Vida), a culturally-aligned, trauma-informed, and strengths-based intervention using expressive arts and nature-based metaphors. We demonstrate its application with Central American immigrant mothers through community-based participatory research. Attendees will learn practical implementation strategies for individual and group settings across diverse clinical contexts.

Session 17
Saturday, November 14, 2026, 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM

S1700 – The Creative Mirror: Using Art-Based Interventions in Supervision (SUPERVISION)

Presenter: Julia Baruffi, LPC

Co-Presenter(s):

Norfolk IV

Transform your supervision using the Integrated Developmental Model and expressive art. This session provides a roadmap for using creative interventions to navigate the shifts from novice anxiety to professional integration. Discover how "painting the process" can illuminate blind spots, resolve parallel processes, and accelerate clinical maturation in supervisees.

S1701 – The Ethical Application of Art in Therapy for Counselors & Counselor Supervisors (Part 2, ETHICS)

Presenter: Abigail "Albie" Williams, LPC

Co-Presenter(s): Lauren Tatro, LPC, ATR; Ashley Tuttle, LPC, CSAC

Norfolk V

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Co-Presenter(s):

Norfolk VI

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Presenter: Heather Massey, LPC, NCC, CCMHC, CFMHE

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Hampton I

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how to protect yourself before you go to court and during court proceedings. The next hour will be concerning difficult clients and how to tell the difference between Parental Alienation and Triangulation.

S1704 – Developing Your Scholarly Voice: Academic Writing in the Age of AI (Part 2)

Presenter: Sophia Sills-Tailor, Ph.D., LPC

Co-Presenter(s):

Hampton II

Graduate students are frequently expected to write with scholarly authority without explicit instruction in scholarly voice, synthesis, or academic discourse. This interactive workshop explores scholarly writing as a teachable process of synthesis, positioning, and participation in academic discourse. and provides practical strategies for developing scholarly voice, ethical AI use, synthesis skills, and confidence in graduate-level writing.

S1705 – “I’m Still Here”: Retreating to Remember the “You” in Counseling

Presenter: Sara L. Wood, PhD, LPC (VA), LCMHC(NC), NCC

Co-Presenter(s): Jason Wood, BA

Hampton III

Counselors often sacrifice themselves for the good of those they serve, resulting in burnout and turnover. Retreating presents an opportunity to remember oneself amidst ever-growing professional demands. This session will equip counselors to examine the burden of self-sacrifice, engage the solace of retreat, and develop a rhythm of retreating to promote professional fulfillment, resilience, and retention.

S1706 – The Cost of Caring: How Suicidal Clients Impacts Counselors

Presenter: Katie Greene Kegley, PhD

Co-Presenter(s):

Hampton IV

This session explores the personal and professional impact suicidal clients have on their counselors. Participants will examine the mental, emotional, and professional implications counselors face when navigating this phenomenon, while also identifying strategies for resilience and self-care.

S1707– Decolonizing Eating Disorders Through An Afrocentric Paradigm

Presenter: Mina Attia, PhD, NCC

Co-Presenter(s): Isadora Gallanar, BA; Keziah Chinebuah, BA

Hampton V

This presentation deepens and expands beyond Eurocentric conceptualizations of eating disorders (EDs) through an Afrocentric paradigm. Presenters will explore Ubuntu philosophy and Relational-Cultural Theory

(RCT) as frameworks for understanding EDs among Black Americans, highlighting culturally responsive approaches that address systemic influences, relational dynamics, culture-specific factors, and treatment disparities.