

Gabriel Brand

Exploring Clinical Experiences with Identity Development and Loss among Retired Professional Athletes

The present study explores clinical experiences with retirement in the elite athlete population. Existing literature regarding the experiences and psychological well-being of elite athletes navigating the retirement process is reviewed. Qualitative data was gathered through semi-structured interviews with four clinicians experienced in working with the athletic population. Four themes emerged from the interviews including involuntary retirement from athletics, clinical considerations, masculine norms, and working with clients transitioning to retirement. The discussion and analysis of the results highlight the implications of forced retirement on athletes, the complexity of athletic identity, the role of masculinity in the sporting culture, and preferred modalities of clinicians in this field of study. All participants emphasized the need to consider the culture of the sporting world in building a therapeutic environment that is fitting for this unique population. The participants recognized cognitive behavioral therapy as the preferred modality in working with athletes transitioning to retirement.

Kaylin Fitzgerald

Examining Treatments of Social Anxiety Disorder in Adults with Histories of Childhood Maltreatment

The present study examines the presentation of symptoms, developmental risk factors, and treatment approaches related to social anxiety disorder in adults with histories of complex trauma or childhood maltreatment. A review of the current research literature is included in addition to qualitative data involving four mental health professionals who were interviewed about their clinical experiences with this population. Eight major themes were identified from the interviews: functional impairments, family histories, the therapeutic relationship, cultural identities, psychopharmacology, cognitive behavioral therapy, mindfulness, and motivation. Results suggest that this population suffers with cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and relational impairments, and that the development of this diagnosis may relate to insecure attachment relationships with early caregivers. Additionally, experiences of cultural mistreatment may also contribute to the progression of this disorder. This population appears to benefit from treatments including pharmacotherapy, cognitive behavioral interventions, mindfulness, and a positive therapeutic alliance. Clinical considerations, limitations, and areas for future research are also included in this study.

Juana Esmeralda Hernandez

Exploring Burnout and Resilience with Therapists Working with Severe Mentally Ill Clients

The present study explored burnout and resilience among marriage and family therapists working with the severely mentally ill population. Three licensed marriage and family therapists who have remained in the field for over seven years were interviewed about their experiences and challenges working with severely mentally ill clients in an agency setting. Five major themes emerged from the interviews: features unique to the severely mentally ill population, contributing factors to burnout, consequences of burnout on service delivery and engagement with others, role of resilience to counteract burnout, and factors that foster resilience. Aside from the challenging nature of working with the severely mentally ill, the following were reported as contributing factors to burnout: denial, having to balance several demands, lack of energy to

want to engage in self-care, lack of boundaries between work and home, perceived isolation, and emotional drainage. All participants acknowledged that their engagement with clients and coworkers were negatively affected when they experienced burn out. Most participants described themselves as resilient and all attributed remaining in the field for so long by taking time off, having social support, maintaining boundaries between work and home, and gaining self-awareness to engage in effective self-care.

Jessica Johnson

Examining the Clinical Process of Counseling Fire Wives

There is scant research about the lived experiences of firefighter wives, and none found on working with fire wives in a clinical setting. This study aims to explore how fire wives are impacted from the firefighter's experience of on-the-job trauma, fire culture, and logistics of the career. Three participants were identified based on their extensive clinical work with firefighters and firefighters. These participants interviewed about their clinical experience of working with fire wives and themes emerged about the impact of chronic trauma of the firefighter on the wife, the overall lack of support for the wife, and the overwhelming loneliness and isolation. This research could be used to inform departmental leadership in creating a culture to improve for fire families as well as helping clinicians work with fire wives in ways that builds resiliency.

Nicole Laub

Exploring How Therapists Address Family Influences on Disordered Eating in Girls and Women

The present qualitative study explores the ways in which the family system can foster disordered eating patterns in girls and women and how therapists involve the family in treatment. Three clinicians were interviewed to share their experiences working with clients who suffer from disorder eating habits using family-based treatment. The data from these interviews was then categorized through thematic analysis which revealed five main themes: observed family impact, what works in treatment, challenges in treatment, family-based treatment for adults, and treatment for subclinical eating disorders. The results were examined to determine where they confirmed, challenged, or added to existing literature. The findings of this study suggest clinicians who treat eating disorders should consider the role of the family in their client's condition as well as maintain flexibility in treatment. The researcher concluded by offering clinical implications of the results and proposing future areas of research.

Sally Roub

The Holistic Soul: A Humanistic Approach to Exploring Sexual Energy and Self-Expression

The present study explores the impact of cultural stigma and normative expectations on an individual's capacity to live authentically and freely express their experienced sexuality. Humanistic approaches for working with sexual identity repression were also reviewed to expand clinical knowledge regarding holistic sexualities and spiritual aspects of the self. Qualitative data was gathered, and semi-structured interviews were conducted with five mental health professionals that specialize in human sexuality and treating identity repression. Seven primary themes emerged from the interviews: clinical understandings of sexuality, authenticity, modeling and representation, sexual identity repression, prideful sexuality, humanistic approaches, and counselor considerations. Findings suggest that clinicians and clients could benefit from a better understanding of how one's multiple intersecting identities contribute to an individual's

sexuality. Furthermore, as humanistic approaches often focus on empowerment and client-centered treatment, the findings infer that this framework may be useful when externalizing shame and providing clients with a space to generate nonmyopic personal narratives.

Recognizing the value of self-acceptance and connection to one's sexual energy, the results also indicate that holistic perspectives and expressions of the self may serve as a precursor to pride for one's sexuality.