

Spring 2016 Project Abstracts

Laruen Bagwell

Exploring the Use of Group Therapy to Address Insecure Attachment Styles

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore group therapy as a treatment modality to address insecure attachment styles. Four clinicians were interviewed about their experiences facilitating group therapy. Four major themes emerged from the data: (a) connection, (b) safety and boundaries, (c) interpersonal skills, and (d) corrective emotional experiences. The results of this study showed how group therapy provides a unique and conducive environment for treating individuals with an insecure attachment style. Results of this study also have implications for clinical application for further research to help support individuals with an insecure attachment style find effective treatment options such as group therapy.

Heather Bridge

Counselors' Experience Using Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy with Postnatal Women At-Risk for Developing Postpartum Depression

Postpartum depression (PPD) affects nearly one out of eight women and is the leading cause of maternal morbidity. PPD can lead to poor infant-mother attachment, cognitive development problems in children, and prolonged mental illness for the mother, especially if left untreated. Deterioration of the family is also at stake; specifically, the marital relationship and its negative effects on the husband. This study explored three counselors' actual experience with using mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) techniques with postnatal women experiencing PPD. A goal of this study was to understand how these techniques were used with women from a wide variety of cultures and explore its applicability in different settings, such as individual counseling versus couples or group counseling. The interviews were recorded and transcribed, and qualitative analysis methods were used to analyze the data. Several themes were found including: frequently experienced symptoms of PPD, risk factors correlated with the development of PPD, cultural differences in postpartum adjustment, stigmas related to PPD, and commonly used MBCT interventions. The hope is that with the knowledge about risk factors of PPD and the efficacy of mindfulness-based techniques with women already experiencing this disorder, it could be used as a preventive tool during the early perinatal phase.

Eduardo Ceja

Exploring the Use of Narrative Therapy with Suicidal Adolescents

This study explores the use of narrative therapy and how it could be useful with an adolescents facing suicide. Three practicing marriage and family therapist were interviewed in the qualitative process to gather information on their experiences of using narrative therapy with various issues such as depression, suicide and suicidal ideation, self-cutting, etc. Through the interviews eight themes emerged (a) re-authoring the narrative for agency, (b) unique outcomes to thicken the preferred narrative, (c) externalization of the problem, (d) alliance against the problem, (e) mapping the relationship with the problem, (f) the need to be direct, (g) not being the expert, and (h) barriers to narrative therapy. The themes were interpreted based on the current level of

research available on narrative theory with adolescents. The study suggests support for externalization of the problem, creating an alliance against the problem, unique outcomes and re-authoring to gain a sense of agency as possible intervention to support an adolescent with suicidality.

Alexandra Clark

Gay Men, Intimacy, and Healthy Relationships: Counselors' Perspectives on Feminist Interventions

This qualitative study explores counselors' utilization of feminist clinical interventions in their work with gay men, particularly related to intimacy and healthy relationships. Readers will discover a review of the literature pertaining to feminist clinical interventions, ethical standards for working with gay men, and a brief overview of scholarly articles on gender roles and intimacy. The study itself employed a semi structured interview protocol to interview 3 clinicians on the paper's topic. After a modified grounded theory analysis of the data, the results were categorized into main themes including how intimacy and gender roles affect the self, the relationship, and culturally significant clinical challenges reported by the participants. Implications for the field of counseling, including areas for future research, and the study's limitations are discussed.

Allen Curry

Marital Satisfaction Among Asian Couples: The Use of Emotion-Focused Therapy

There is a vast amount of prior knowledge with the success rates of EFT and Caucasian couples. Despite the popularity of EFT, there is little to no studies that examine the effects of EFT and Asian cultures. The present study examined the use of EFT and marital satisfaction among Asian couples. Three therapists were interviewed regarding their experience working with Asian couples while implementing EFT. Four major themes emerged from the data with eight sub themes. The major themes were: (a) common themes found among the population, (b) challenges with EFT and Asian couples, (c) psychoeducation and (d) EFT skills that have been successful with the population, and the following sub themes cultural norms, gender roles, saving face and shame, goal setting, validation, focusing on the male, processing emotional connections, and working with attachment. Results suggested that EFT may be beneficial to Asian couples while instilling marital satisfaction with the use of specific skills and techniques catered to Asian couples. Clinical implications of research, areas of future research for the topic, and limitations of the present study were also addressed.

Brittany Delgado

Dolor Invisible: Using Narrative Therapy and Support Groups with Heterosexual Latino Couples Experiencing Infertility

The experience of infertility can often be seen as an invisible grief that must be concealed and left unsaid. Couples and individuals who are experiencing infertility must often conceal the stress, pain, and loss without seeking help from mental health professionals. The cultural stigma surrounding infertility has often left out the experience of minority populations and the unique factors that can affect Latino and other minority populations when they experience infertility. There are specific factors that counselors must consider

when working with this population such as medical terminology, invisible grief, spirituality, and cultural background. Unfortunately much of the research has left a gap in the experience of Latino couples that are experiencing infertility and more needs to be done to include the experience of Latinos. Counselors who work with this population were interviewed to gain a better understanding of the infertility experience. These counselors advocate for the use of empowerment and social support to help couples and individuals rewrite the narrative of what a family is supposed to be and the way that it can be built.

Molly Duncan

Counselors' Use of Animal-Assisted Therapy for Youth with Trauma

Animal-assisted therapy is a new, innovative approach to treating children and adolescents who have experienced trauma; however, there is little qualitative research on what makes animal-assisted therapy effective. For this project, four mental health professionals that use animal-assisted therapy for youth with trauma were interviewed regarding their experiences. These in-depth interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed in collaboration with another graduate student. Qualitative data analysis revealed six salient themes: involving the family, trauma and guilt, letting the child choose the treatment, a tool not a therapy, benefits of animal-assisted therapy and challenges of animal-assisted therapy. Within the benefits of animal-assisted therapy, there are six subthemes: empowerment, expedited rapport-building, grounding, comfort and safety, reconstructing boundaries, and animal intuition. Findings from this study offer insight into the healing power of therapy animals for youth with traumatic experiences. Implications for counselors who wish to use animal-assisted therapy are discussed, along with directions for future research.

Annette Garcia

Exploring How Counselors Address Bullying and Suicide

The present study examined the problem of bullying and suicide for adolescents and teens and how it can be addressed in therapy. Three therapists were interviewed regarding their experience working with this population. Information was gathered through a semi-structured interview format and analyzed to address common themes and differences between the participants that may confirm or negate previous literature. The results indicated six major themes beginning with the early development of bullying behaviors, targets of bullying, gender differences, consequences of bullying, sexual components of bullying, and lastly therapeutic approaches and treatment strategies. Results suggest that bullying among youth significantly impact the victims in multiple ways. The participants explored several approaches that could assist survivors of bullying victimization in processing their experience. Results of the study and limitations are further discussed.

Martha Godlasky

An Exploration of Therapists' Experiences with the Use of EMDR in the Treatment of Complex Trauma

Well over half of all men and women will experience at least one traumatic event during the course of their lives, with the majority of them experiencing multiple traumas. As a

result, these individuals often experience ongoing dysregulation of emotional responses, which results in polar extremes in behavior. In this study, four therapists were interviewed regarding their experiences utilizing EMDR with individuals who have experienced complex trauma, along with its effectiveness in reducing the symptomology commonly associated with this population. A primary theme that emerged was that EMDR demonstrated superior efficacy over traditional treatment modalities, not only in the reduction of symptoms, but also in the significant results that were achieved in a far timelier manner. Several treatment themes emerged from the participants' responses as well such as, a strong therapeutic alliance is critical, along with a comprehensive preparation of the client prior to the application of EMDR. Also, it is important to balance the level of exposure to the trauma with the tolerance level of the client. Lastly, treatment can be challenging for the therapist; therefore, thorough training, certification, and self-care are critical.

Rebekah Ann Gonzales

Counselors' Process of Using Family Therapy with Terminally Ill Parents of Young Children

The following study aimed to explore how counselors utilize family therapy work with terminally ill clients. A review of the literature was implemented in order to gain a greater understanding of key concepts in treating dying individuals and the family as a whole. This qualitative research study conducted a semi-structured interview with prearranged questions as well as questions that occurred naturally from the interview process. A total of three mental health professionals participated in this study. The participants were asked questions regarding the concerns for dying individuals and their families, dynamics of the family system during the grieving process, and therapeutic approaches to treating this population. The results found in this study suggested that counselors can help families who are experiencing anticipatory grief and loss by providing psychoeducation on the grieving process as well as modeling an acceptance for the full range of emotions that can be experienced when grieving. Results from the study suggest that families may experience feelings of isolation during the grieving process, counselors may help to reduce feelings of isolation by establishing connection to others who share similar experiences. Lastly, the results of this study found that counselors can facilitate a preparation for the dying process by leading families in redefining hope and creating purpose at the end stage of life. The current study could be beneficial in providing an awareness regarding the needs of terminally ill clients and the family, as well as therapeutic approaches counselors can implement to better serve this population.

Andrea Gustin

Finding Meaning in Loss: Therapist's Use of Existential Therapy to Treat Complicated Grief

Complicated grief may occur after a traumatic loss, and the symptoms can be extremely intrusive to the life of the survivor. Grief is a normal response to loss, but more intense and long-term symptoms can develop if the loss is extremely distressing for the bereaved. Viktor Frankl and Irvin Yalom are two influential existential therapists who base their practice on helping others find their own meaning and purpose as well as acknowledge death, freedom, isolation, and meaninglessness in life. Existential therapy can be a

treatment option to help the survivor navigate the stress of a traumatic loss. There is virtually no research on using existential therapy with complicated grief. In this study, three therapists were interviewed regarding their experience using existential therapy to treat complicated grief. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using qualitative methods. The in-depth interviews revealed three themes which include complicated grief, treatment of complicated grief, and topics related to the therapists themselves, along with multiple subthemes. These findings offer insight into the similarities and differences between the existing research on the use of existential therapy to treat complicated grief and opinions of current professionals, as well as gives a guide for therapists to help grieving clients.

Annie Harrington

Them's Fightin' Words: Therapists' Experiences Using Emotional Coping and Masculinity-Related Interventions with Aggressive Men

The present study explores the use of emotional coping and masculinity-related interventions as an alternative to the standard model of clinical treatment for men with histories of aggressive interpersonal behavior. The author reviews existing empirical literature pertaining to conceptualization and treatment, and then provides a thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews with clinicians who treated men with histories of interpersonal aggression. Major themes related to client conceptualization, intervention strategies, and clinical impediments emerged from the interviews. Participants tended to conceptualize clients' aggressive behavior as being motivated by maladaptive attempts to meet unfulfilled needs for a strong masculine identity, acceptance, and safety. Participants' emotional coping and masculinity-related interventions attempted to help clients meet their needs in more adaptive ways through balancing toughness and compassion to build safe environments, using men's groups to build acceptance, and by helping clients develop more flexible and resilient masculine identities through self-exploration, self-care, and self-forgiveness. Despite acknowledging the utility of those interventions, some participants used them superficially and infrequently because of clinical impediments related to clients' hostile living environments, institutional limitations on clinical resources, and personal safety concerns. The discussion situates the thematic analysis within the existing body of research, and the author suggests clinical implications and recommendations for future research.

Brittany Johns

Counseling Monogamous and Polyamorous Couples: How Counselors Aid With Relationship Satisfaction

Relationships all come with their different presenting problems and as the times change so do relationship configurations. There is minimal previous research around what therapeutic framework aids in achieving relationship satisfaction for polyamorous and non-monogamous individuals. This thesis explores the similarities and differences each relationship type possesses and how therapy can aid in achieving relationship satisfaction for those chosen relationship configurations. The researcher interviewed three clinicians with extensive experience working with monogamous and non-monogamous couples. Semi-structured, qualitative interviews were conducted. This study aimed to give insight and knowledge into the niche area of couples counseling with non-monogamous couples

and to develop and better guide for new therapy techniques that can be utilized with this population.

Ryan J. Hill

Therapists' Experiences with Using Touch in Psychotherapy: Hugs (Not Kisses)

The use of physical touch in psychotherapy is complicated and controversial. Therapists use physical touch in specific treatment models and with somatic-based interventions. Therapists also use physical touch in less clearly defined interventions or relational interactions with their clients. The main purpose of this study is to explore the role of non-sexual touch between therapist and client during the course of psychotherapy, focusing on when touch is used outside the scope of specific somatic-based interventions. A qualitative research design was used for in-depth interviews of four practicing therapists, in order to explore their experiences with using touch during psychotherapy. Several themes emerged from the interviews: touch as a tool to enhance the therapeutic relationship, risks and liabilities, the client has the power, change over time, a missing discussion with two subthemes of informed consent and personal reflections. The study's results may offer insight to mental health professionals regarding their decisions to use touch during psychotherapy, as well as illuminate further areas of study for possible guidelines or best practices in addressing touch between therapists and clients.

Elizabeth Ignash

This study explores the role that relationship between shame and addiction and its relationship to the counseling setting. It discusses how shame is conceptualized by clinicians, ways shame presents in counseling settings, and approaches to treating addiction. The present study builds upon existing literature regarding the emotion of shame, its role in substance abuse and approaches to target shame in therapy, including using. The participants in this study are licensed marriage and family therapists and psychologists who have experience in both inpatient and outpatient settings with substance abuse. The data supported the significant impact shame has on addiction; it also implied that there are a multitude of effective ways to attempt to target shameful feelings.

Michelle Emily López

Counselors' Process of Narrative Therapy with Latinos Experiencing Acculturative Stress to Improve Educational Attainment

Experiencing acculturative stress as a Latino in the U.S. can be an impactful journey for those individuals seeking formal education. Cultural and situational variables often hinder the path to accomplishing educational goals. There is a lack of research that focuses on utilizing narrative therapy with Latinos in order to improve educational attainment. The present study utilized a qualitative method which sought to explore counselors' processes in implementing narrative therapy with Latinos experiencing acculturative stress. Four counselors who work with Latino clients and have implemented narrative therapy were interviewed regarding their experience with treatment. Participants were asked a series of questions related to their clinical work with Latinos and their treatment approach with this population. Three major themes emerged from the data which include culture, educational experiences, and distress. Results were

analyzed and situated within the existing body of literature from the literature review. The results indicated that acculturative stress may positively or negatively impact academic success. Implications of this study include methods to conceptualize Latino clients and further research on promoting resiliency factors in therapy to improve academic achievement.

Jonathan Edward Lucero

Counselors' Perspectives on Shared Values with Intercultural Couples in Marital Counseling

A qualitative study of how counselors conceptualize shared values when working with intercultural couples in marital counseling. Three participants, who identified as Jewish, Vietnamese, and Southeast Indian with experience in treating intercultural couples were interviewed for this study using semi-structured interviewing. Transcripts of the interviews were analyzed using axial coding, and the main themes that emerged were (a) cultural identity, (b) communication, (c) navigating cultural differences, and (d) awareness of the counselor's own cultural process. The results indicated that counselors need to consider differing cultural values between spouses in order for them to gain awareness, negotiate differences, and create a new culture for themselves. While similar points were also made in the literature, the communication theme was not as strongly supported. Further research on the relationship between intercultural relationships and communication needs further exploration.

Anthony Madison

Identity Loss, Depression and Unresolved Cognitive Issues in Former NFL Players

The present study examined the issues of transitioning with former NFL players as it related to their depression, identity loss, orthopedic toll, and unresolved cognitive deficits. Three mental health professionals were interviewed in a semi-structured manner which was examined in order to address parallel and unparalleled themes between the participants that may approve or disaffirm forgoing literature. The results uncovered six major themes that delivered insight into the life of several former NFL players. The results revealed transition, identity loss, depression, finances, divorce/ family and physical toll/concussions as emerging themes. Results suggest that former NFL players could benefit from viewing their NFL careers as a springboard into their transition out of the NFL. The participants explored several approaches that could support former NFL players in processing their NFL experience and their transitioning. Results of the study and limitations are further discussed.

Tina Maldonado

Exploring How Gestalt Counselors Treat Introvert-Related Anxiety

Introverts are psychologically and physiologically different from the rest of the population. Their low threshold for stimuli may even cause them to feel easily overwhelmed. Introverts make up almost half of the population, yet they are often overlooked by our society. This qualitative study investigated introvert-related anxiety and how gestalt therapy can help. Three participants were interviewed using a semi-structured interview, because of their expertise in utilizing gestalt therapy and experience with anxious introverts. There were seven major themes that were formulated from the

data collected. These themes included: personal connection to gestalt, awareness, mind-body connection, acceptance, interventions, no agenda, and cultural aspects. Results of this study found that the gestalt approach of awareness and acceptance of the whole individual, may grant validation for anxious introverts in American society. The findings of this study may allow for more knowledge about this specific population as well. Future research and clinical implications are discussed.

Susan McCormick

Counselors Experiences Utilizing Animal Assisted Therapy with Survivors of Domestic Violence

The purpose of this qualitative study was to gain an understanding of how counselors use animal assisted therapy to help victims of domestic violence. Domestic violence victims often come into therapy with a variety of symptoms, including depression, PTSD, anxiety, and lack of self-esteem. Three clinicians were interviewed about their experiences utilizing animal assisted therapy in working with victims of trauma. Five major themes emerged from the data: (a) rapport building, (b) client compliance and attendance, (c) skill building and empowerment, (d) feeling of home, safety, and acceptance, and (e) calmness and reduced anxiety. The results of this study were consistent with what was discovered in the research, but also added new information. The results of this study have implications for clinical application in various settings. Additional research would help promote a deeper understanding of how animal assisted therapy could help benefit not only future trauma clients, but clients with all types of needs.

Joy Marie Menzel

Animal Assisted Therapy with the Treatment of Trauma: Therapists' Perspective

People can experience a wide range of traumatic events, which may happen through onetime events, occupational events, or repeated abuse. Understanding that traditional modes of therapy are limited in their efficacy, new methods and interventions may be needed in the future. One intervention that has shown to have some success is animal assisted therapy. This qualitative study explores how mental health practitioners employ animals in their therapeutic approach to working victims of trauma. A variety of animals and therapeutic modalities are described by the participants involved in the study. Findings may provide a clinical introduction to clinicians interested in pursuing animal assisted trauma treatment.

Hayley Niles

Counselors' Experience Using School-Based Interventions with Perpetrators of Bullying in K-12 Schools

This study explores counselors' experience utilizing school-based interventions with perpetrators of bullying in K-12 schools. Three mental health professionals with experience working with perpetrators of bullying in a school setting were interviewed for this qualitative study, and from these interviews emerged seven prominent themes: why bullies bully, what happens at home does not stay at home, creating a strong therapeutic relationship, emotional exploration and empathy, individual and group therapy, dealing with resistance and countertransference, and finally the big picture: why bullies need

therapy. The results from this study highlight important clinical implications for counselors working with perpetrators of bullying. Specifically, perpetrators of bullying often engage in this type of behavior due to problematic home lives or other systemic factors and it is important to uncover these underlying issues in therapy in order for change to occur; there is a reason for their behavior. It is crucial for counselors working with this population to approach children and adolescents involved in bullying in a caring and non-judgmental way in order to build a strong therapeutic relationship. Counseling for bullies is not only beneficial for the individuals involved in bullying behavior, but also for their potential victims and for the entire school system which is impacted by acts of bullying. Bullying situations in the school setting are often handled through disciplinary actions, with little else done to actually help the bully change. This study reveals the importance of utilizing therapy in the school-setting to help bullies alter their behavior in positive ways.

Marianna L. Oller

Exploring the Use of Art Therapy to Address Grief Associated with Parkinson's Disease
Parkinson's disease (PD) is a prevalent neurodegenerative disease that is often identified by its visible motor symptoms. However, the disease also manifests non-motor symptoms, such as depression, anxiety, and grief, which can negatively impact an individual's quality of life. These non-motor symptoms have historically been underreported, overlooked, or misdiagnosed. This qualitative study examined the use of art therapy to address non-motor symptoms associated with PD. Four participants were interviewed about their experience using art therapy as a treatment modality for grief. The nine major themes that emerged from the present study, included: (1) the diverse symptomology, (2) cognitive impairment and the loss of dopamine, (3) apathy, (4) grief and loss, (5) expressed non-motor symptoms, (6) isolation, (7) impact on caregivers, (8) effective treatment modalities for non-motor symptoms, and (9) the importance of human connection and group therapy. The results highlighted the impact of non-motor symptoms and loss of dopamine on cognition and executive functioning, which may result in the client developing an apathetic affect; feelings of isolation; and potentially, cause a strain on intimate relationships. The results also emphasized the potential efficacy of art therapy and the presence of grief and loss for the client and their caregiver. Furthermore, the results supported the need for validated assessment tools and effective treatment modalities for the non-motor symptoms of PD. Finally, the implications for clinical practice, limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research were discussed.

April Painter

Counselors' Use of Expressive Arts Therapy with Adult Female Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse

This qualitative investigation explored counselors' use of expressive arts modalities with adult female survivors of childhood sexual abuse. Five participants were included in this study who had experience working with adult female survivors and utilizing expressive arts modalities. Participants were recruited through snowball sampling (Noy, 2008). A semi-structured interview was used to collect data (Galletta, 2013). Interviews were transcribed and reviewed for emerging themes. Grounded theory strategies were used for

data analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). There were three predominant themes: client traits of adult female survivors of childhood sexual abuse, types of expressive arts, and clinical considerations for working with adult female survivors of childhood sexual abuse and utilizing expressive arts modalities. The data was compared to literature related to topic to explain the findings. Suggestions for future study were given in order to improve the empirical study of expressive arts therapy with adult female survivors of childhood sexual abuse.

Jessica Prause

Examining How Counselors Experience the Connection Between Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder and Trauma

This qualitative study examines how counselors experience the connection between the development of OCD following a traumatic event. Four participants were interviewed using a semi-structured interview based on their experience of working with individuals who struggle with OCD. The data revealed four major themes: (a) understanding obsessive-compulsive disorder, (b) impact on family members, (c) traumatic experiences, and (d) treatment. The results of this study suggest that there may be a genetic predisposition to developing OCD, which could account for the reason why some people develop OCD following a traumatic event, while others do not. Additionally, the results also suggest that attachment to caregivers may also be a contributing factor in the development of obsessive-compulsive symptoms in adulthood.

Lori Rodriguez

Examining How Counselors Provide Gestalt Therapy to Female Survivors of Intimate Partner Emotional Abuse

The vast majority of research on intimate partner violence is heavily focused on physical abuse. Emotional abuse among intimate partners is a fairly new topic of which mental health treatment approaches have been scarcely studied. This is despite the growing amount of research that suggests this type of abuse has hugely negative long-term effects on survivors' well-being. In the present study, three therapists specializing in Gestalt therapy were interviewed in a semi-structured format regarding their work with female survivors of intimate partner emotional abuse. The results were then compared to current literature related to the topic. Six salient themes were identified and analyzed to offer further insight to the minimal data available. Findings both align with current research as well as extend current knowledge of how mental health professionals can help survivors with the devastating consequences of emotional abuse by their partners.

Heather Ritchie

Exploring the Use of Family Therapy with Concurrent Parental Substance Abuse and Child Neglect

There is a clear link between parental substance abuse and child neglect, however, despite this fact, standard of care is currently to treat the two clinical issues independently. This was a qualitative study that examines counselors' use of family therapy to concurrently treat parental substance abuse and child neglect. Three participants that worked with this population were interviewed utilizing a semi-structured interview format. Data from each interview was gathered and analyzed in order to locate

common themes. Five major themes arose as the result of this study and were as follows: (a) childhood trauma, (b) different treatment methods, (c) the relationship between substance abuse and neglect, (d) gender differences, and (e) the effects of substance abuse on the family. The results suggest that treating parental substance abuse and child neglect concurrently with family therapy could effectively treat both clinical issues as well as address the unique issues that occur within a family system when parental substance abuse is present. The implications for clinical practice, limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research were also discussed.

Bonita Russell

Exploring the Use of Spiritual Based Counseling for African-American Families Who Have Children with ADHD

This qualitative study explored an alternate approach of spiritual based counseling with African American families who have a child with Attention Deficit /Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). A review of the current literature and an in-depth qualitative assessment was conducted to gather further information on ADHD, the impact the condition has on the African American population, and use of spirituality in treatment. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with five counselors, each of whom had experience working with families with a child with ADHD, specifically African Americans, and have used spiritual based counseling. The interviews were recorded and transcribed, and qualitative analysis methods were used to analyze the data. Relevant themes that emerged from the interviews, included: (a) lack of knowledge, (b) lack of resources, (c) racial differences, (d) religion, (e) resistance, (f) diagnosis, (g) parents, (h) treatment, (i) family, (j) gender differences, (k) outcomes, (l) stigma, and (m) roadblocks. Overall, the results were positive and suggested spirituality based counseling as a way for the client, parents, and family to enhance self-awareness and gain a greater spiritual connection. Potential clinical implications for these findings support the increased need for clinician development and training in culturally sensitive practices with the African American population as well as both spiritually integrative treatments.

Yussef Naji Shtayyeh

Counseling Men with Sexual Dysfunction: Clinical Perspectives on Working with Sexual Fetishes

Fetishism has historically been depicted as deviant or fringe sexual behavior. The existing literature has broadly explored negative effects associated with fetishism, such as sexual dysfunction or relationship issues. The attitudes and beliefs on sexuality and sexual expression continue to change; however, there has been minimal research examining the relationship between fetishism and sexual dysfunction, and how fetishism is currently viewed in the field of counseling. This paper investigates clinical perspectives on fetishism and interventions of associated issues, while consolidating what appears to be known about fetishes and what needs to be further researched. The researcher interviewed four clinicians who specialize in issues of sex and sexuality. A semi-structured, qualitative interview format was used to collect data. Clinicians' reports indicated that fetishism can impact sexual relationships positively and negatively. The data also suggested that helping clients find self-acceptance pertaining to their fetish, while integrating their fetish into a sexual relationship, may diminish sexual dysfunctions

associated with fetishism. This study explores conceptualizations of fetishism and its relationship with sexual dysfunctions, and effective treatment options for clinicians.

Tara Sohrabpartovi

Counselors' Process of Using Culturally Sensitive Therapy with Iranian Immigrants Struggling with Acculturation

This qualitative study was conducted to gain a deeper understanding of acculturation issues for Iranian immigrants in the United States and to provide ways of working effectively with this population in counseling. Several factors including intercultural conflict within the family and age at immigration were examined. Four Iranian-American therapists primarily providing therapy to Iranian immigrants were recruited for the study. They were asked semi-structured questions about their experiences working with this population. Three themes of social status, intercultural conflict, and culture specific concerns in counseling, along with several subthemes emerged from analysis of the data.

Crystal Swart

Breaking the Taboo: Exploring the Use of Touch as an Adjunct to Psychotherapy

The present study examined the benefits and potential consequences of using touch as an adjunct to psychotherapy; as well as any existing views towards touch in the field. Five therapists were interviewed regarding their experience using touch techniques with clients. Information was gathered through a semi-structures interview format and analyzed to address common themes and differences between participants that may confirm or contradict previous literature. The results indicated nine themes including development and training, techniques used, the benefits of touch, the intricacies of touch, crucial aspects of therapy, client demographics, talk therapy versus the use of touch, using caution with clients, and the taboo of touch. Results suggest that touch may have beneficial application as an adjunct to therapy despite mixed views of the use of touch in the therapy field. Results of the study and limitations were further discussed.

Shannon Tobias

Exploration of School Based Interventions to Enhance Resiliency and Educational Success of Students in Foster Care

Youth in the foster care system face challenges that can include trauma, abuse, neglect, and multiple foster placement changes. This study explores the ways in which these challenges affect the educational success and resiliency of students in foster care. In depth interviews with four participants revealed seven themes related to how schools can increase foster student success and resiliency. Study results confirmed that the issues facing the education of foster students are complex and require practical steps to effectively respond. Themes identified by interview analysis focus on practical ways that the schools can increase success of resiliency; the efficient transfer student records to decrease gaps in education due to placement changes, the importance of training personnel in trauma-informed practices to reduce re-traumatization and conflicts at school, the use of special education for dealing with trauma symptoms, ways to efficiently comply with related legislation, and coordination and communication with the many agencies involved in caring for youth who are in foster care. This qualitative study yielded some significant insight valuable to those working with students in foster care in

the school setting.

Curtis A. Thompson

Psychotherapists of Color's Experiences of Racial Microaggressions In and Out of Therapy

There has been a paucity of studies that have examined the effect of racial microaggressions (i.e., subtle discrimination) in the therapy context. Most of these studies have investigated the effect of racial microaggressions on clients. Yet few, if any, have explored the effect of racial microaggressions on psychotherapists and how it may also affect the therapeutic alliance because of its bidirectional nature. Therefore, utilizing semi-structured interviews, this study examined four psychotherapists of color's reported racial microaggressive experiences that clients and colleagues delivered towards them in the therapy context. Results produced five racial microaggressions themes such as assumption of inferior career status or lower credentials, pathologizing or minimizing culture, and coping strategies. This study's findings suggest that psychotherapists of color are not immune to the adverse effects of racial microaggressions because of their positions of power; racial microaggressions that clients or colleagues (in supervision) deliver towards psychotherapists of color may indirectly and negatively affect their therapeutic alliance with their clients; and White psychotherapist-supervisors who are culturally competent and sensitive might be particularly beneficial in buffering and affirming psychotherapist of color's negative racial microaggressive experiences in the therapy context. Counseling recommendations and future areas of research are discussed.

Ngoc Tran

Exploring Narratives of Parenting, Acculturation, and Mental Health Among Asian Americans

This qualitative study examined the application of narrative therapy with Asian Americans and its effectiveness in facilitating integration of non-dominant and dominant cultures. This study also seeks to understand how the application of narrative therapy can aid in alleviating immigration related concerns and how cultural aspects play a role in treatment outcome in Asian American populations. Three participants who utilized narrative therapy were interviewed about their experiences in working with this population. Four major themes emerged and these themes included cultural components, counselor challenges, effective treatment requirements, and benefits of narrative therapy. Implications for counseling and future research were also addressed.

Pamela Van Diepen

Counselor's Perspectives of Resiliency and Protective Factors for Adult Children of Divorce

This qualitative study examined the resiliency and protective factors of adult children of divorce. Resiliency is defined as the ability to bounce back or overcome adversity. Protective factors are the people, places, or things that allowed an adult child of divorce to become successful throughout life. The literature review revealed that little treatment options existed for this population because few adult children of divorce went to therapy for the initial parental divorce. This population tends to enter counseling for anxiety, depression, and relationship issues. Four participants were interviewed who have

extensive knowledge in working with adult children of divorce individually and as couples. Each participant conducted therapy from a different treatment modality that furthered the research in working with this population. The predominant themes that emerged from this study include: (a) strengths, (b) areas of growth, (c) family dynamics, (d) empowerment, and (e) treatment.

Caitlin Van Wormer

Therapists' Perspectives on the Role Spirituality Plays in the Therapeutic Process with Adolescents Diagnosed with Cancer

A qualitative study of therapists' experiences was performed to investigate the role spirituality has in the therapeutic process with adolescents diagnosed with cancer. The literature review examined how cognitive development, concept of death, and spirituality can impact the cancer journey for the adolescents. In this study, four participants were interviewed regarding their experience working with adolescents diagnosed with cancer and how they integrate the spiritual or religious component into therapy. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using qualitative methods. The detailed interviews exposed seven themes which include spirituality, grief, challenges for therapists, understanding adolescent spiritual development, treatment, importance of incorporating spirituality, and spiritual lessons, in addition to various subthemes. These findings provide insight into the connections and dissimilarities among the existing literature and the opinions of current mental health professionals, in addition to offering a better understanding of this population in order to provide the best care possible.

Adriana Vasquez

Disrupted Identity among Undocumented Latino Adolescents: What about Group Therapy?

This qualitative study examined the relationship between disrupted identity among undocumented Latino adolescents in the United States and the potential benefits of group therapy to assist with the challenges faced by this population. Data collection included a semi-structured interview of four participants who possess experience providing group therapy and serving undocumented Latino youth. Data analysis revealed four major themes: (1) Undocumented Latino immigrants generally experience similar emotional responses associated with being undocumented (e.g., fear of deportation, lack of trust related to challenges faced by interacting with the dominant culture, isolation, and identity disruption due to language barrier and acculturation issues), (2) Poor access to services exists due to immigration status, (3) A lack of specific supports or services exists that address the emotional issues in #1, and (4) Group therapy appears to have potential to restore a sense of self by acting as an educational and healing service to undocumented Latino youth by addressing specific needs of that age group. The following implications of this study were discussed: (1) Undocumented Latino youth have specific needs that can be identified and categorized, and (2) Group therapy is uniquely designed to meet the needs of adolescents experiencing identity disruption related to being undocumented immigrants. Finally, the limitations of the study are discussed, the possible implications for future research are explored, and the personal reflections of the primary researcher are offered.

Michelle Vinal*The Transitioning Athlete: The Loss and Gain of Athletic Identity*

The purpose of this qualitative study was to develop a better understanding the loss and gain of athletic identity and explore the therapeutic treatment modalities when working with transitioning athletes. Four professional licensed psychologists were interviewed about their experiences working with athletes. Five major themes were revealed in the data: (a) athletic Identity, (b) adjustment, (c) counseling the athlete, (d) boundaries, and (e) sports psychology vs. counseling. Ten subthemes were identified within the major themes. Results led to a deeper appreciation of what aspects coincide with athletic identity, which provide the therapists with more awareness and empathy with athletes. Results also suggest that further research should be conducted in reference to better understand the comparison between Sport's Psychology and Sport's Counseling.

Josilyn Wick*Shifting Pathways: Resolving Trauma Associated with Irritable Bowel Syndrome Using EMDR Therapy*

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) is an incurable, debilitating disorder that impacts a significant percentage of the world's population. This qualitative study explores an alternative approach to treating individuals with IBS using Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) therapy. Four participants were interviewed about their experience using EMDR therapy with clients who have IBS. Nine themes emerged in this study: (a) confusion/hesitance towards EMDR therapy and EMDR training, (b) trauma, (c) somatic connection and mind-body syndrome, (d) emotional regulation and processing on all levels, (e) individual differences and internal/external resources, (f) empowerment/catharsis, (g) expedited healing, (h) the therapeutic relationship, and (i) using caution. The findings emphasized the importance of working with clients on a holistic level and customizing interventions for every client. The implications for clinical practice, limitations of study, and recommendations for future research were discussed in this study.