

SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:

- ACCA/GCCA National Conference, February 6-9, 2008, Savannah, GA
- Counselor Connection
- Publications by GCCA members
- New website information!

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GCCA News

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College Mental Health Beyond ACCA

Rick Hanson, Ph.D.

In my capacity as ACCA President, I have been asked several times about trends in college mental health. One trend that I have noticed is that we are not the only ones interested in college mental health. Events over the past year have certainly caused the media and culture at large to focus more closely on what is happening at the nation's colleges and universities. As I have been involved in many of these discussions, I think it is valuable to take a minute to highlight some of the other groups that are focusing on college mental health.

Most college counseling professionals have at least heard of the Jed Foundation. The Jed Foundation describes itself as the nation's leading organization working to prevent suicide and promote mental health among college students. It was founded in 2000 by parents who had lost their college aged son, Jed, to suicide. The organization pulled together a panel of clinical and public health professionals to develop the widely distributed "Prescription for Prevention" model. They have provided workshops and seminars for college counselors and administrators related to treating depression/suicide and developing comprehensive campus wide models for suicide prevention.

ULifeline is a website that was developed in conjunction with the Jed Foundation to provide resources for both college students and campus professionals. Though originally focused on depression and suicide, ULifeline also provides resources on a wide range of mental health concerns as well as allowing students to follow links connecting them directly with their campus counseling center.

Halfofus.com is a joint venture between the Jed Foundation and mtvU. The purpose of the campaign is to raise awareness about the prevalence of mental health issues on campus and connect students to the appropriate resources to get help. The campaign consists of Public Service Announcements on mtvU (a subscription version of MTV available to universities – typically targeting residence halls) that feature artists, celebrities, and students talking about their experience with common mental health struggles and directing students to the website where they can get more information and link to resources.

CampusBlues.com is another web based organization that provides a wide range of resources to college students and links them back to their on-campus counseling center. CampusBlues has also developed an SAP program (similar to an EAP model) that can compliment and extend counseling center resources.

We are not alone. The list could go on to include organizations that focus on life coaching, eating disorders, and adjustment to college. Certainly many of these organizations mix professional and commercial interests, but in the end they all purport to focus on the mental health of college students. So are they friend or foe? If we see the world from a scarcity model, then we tend to view other groups as competitors – there is only so much to go around you know, and anything "they" get means something I don't get. When we feel afraid that someone else will use up a desired resource, we put up barriers to slow down or eliminate the progress of "competitors." Another option is the abundance model. This model was arrived at out of the observance that, while there may very well be a limited supply of a physical resource, there is also an unlimited supply of ideas and technologies that could be created to expand resources beyond demand.

It is my belief that college counselors need to be aware of the other groups that focus on college students and to function as gatekeepers for our campuses. Gatekeepers who critically review new technologies and resources to keep out those that are clinically or ethically questionable, but also to actively collaborate with and promote those that help our students, provide resources to residence life staff and administrators, and raise money to support ongoing research related to college counseling.

President's Column

President-Elect's Column

Dear Fellow Counselors:

As President-Elect of GCCA, I am honored to co-sponsor our 15th Annual conference with the American College Counseling Association in beautiful Savannah, Georgia.

"New Channels in College Counseling" is the theme for our conference, but it should also be our vocation. During the conference, you will be introduced to new facets of college counseling and techniques and resources to address these situations.

On a personal note, I believe one of the most important aspects and a hallmark of our conferences is the ability to network and build a support mechanism of counseling assistance. I have become a better counselor because of friendships built and the support and knowledge gained by attending the conferences and participating with the association.

To our new members that will be in attendance, seek out the wisdom of this group and join in on conversations and discussions. Do not feel challenged because of your lack of experience with the organization. Remember, we all have joined this great organization to enhance our knowledge, and what you contribute will make us all stronger.

I look forward to making new friends and re-establishing old connections. I hope the 2008 Conference will be an invaluable tool and assist you in your counseling needs.

Predita Howard

Greetings Fellow GCCA Members

I hope all are enjoying their summers. For some of us who work at colleges or universities, summertime is a slower period when we brainstorm and plan new workshops, groups, new student orientations and training for the fall. For others, summer may be just as busy as other times. Counselors in private practice may experience a slowdown due to family vacations so they find it a good time to work on marketing strategies and catch up on filing and billing.

Whatever area of counseling you find yourself in, it is very important to carve out time for yourself, your family and your friends. All of us have worked with students and other individuals who were stressed, burned out, trying to do too much, worrying excessively and just plain tired. Advising our clients to take care of themselves, and being aware that we need to do so as well, is nothing new. However, we know that counselor burnout occurs, often because we are guilty of not taking our own advice.

Counseling is a wonderful and special career. It attracts people who are loving, nurturing, giving, and generous of their time, spirit and energy. It can also attract those who put everyone else before themselves, sometimes unconsciously. I remember a wise supervisor saying to me once, "Don't let me catch you working harder than your clients." In my inexperienced exuberance, I thought, "Well, gee, I've got to 'cure' this person. He is counting on me!" A little later I realized that people sometimes come to counseling just to talk and be supported -- so the pressure to "cure" them was coming from my ego and inexperience.

I guess what I'm trying to say here is that the best way to help our clients is to live a balanced and content life ourselves. My definition of a balanced lifestyle may not be the same as yours but here goes. For myself, healthy equals: getting yearly physicals and dental exams, eating as healthily as you can, sleeping at least 7 hours a night, relaxing with family and friends, keeping your romantic and family relationships on track, taking your vacation time, getting regular exercise, laughing a lot, having fun hobbies and interests and being able to recognize when you are overly stressed, anxious or sad, and asking for help! We ask these things of our clients so how can we not ask them of ourselves? We are role models, especially for students who are just figuring out what balance and a healthy lifestyle looks like.

I am always somewhat amazed when students come to me and say they don't know why they are making poor grades. I then hear them say that they are sleeping 4 hours a night or less, eating junk food, socializing/partying too much, not making it to class and not turning in assignments on time or at all. I sometimes have to remind myself that they are just 18 years old and haven't yet experienced the consequences needed to turn them around and to cause them to make some major behavioral changes.

But, it is a complete joy to work with college students because when they get it, they really do get it. It's been my privilege to watch many students grow up, graduate and receive amazing job offers in their fields. So when I sometimes feel tired and question why I chose this profession, I re-read emails and letters I have received from grateful students and I get a great big smile on my face and I know I'm in the right place.

Enjoy your summers, take care of yourselves, and know that we make lasting differences in the lives of many.

Susan

Susan Ristau, Ed.S., L.P.C.

President of the Georgia College Counselors Association

“Counselor Connection”

By: Donjanea L. Fletcher, M.Ed., LAPC, University of West Georgia

Dealing with conflict. As a mental health professional in a college or university setting, you probably have encountered this issue many times either through trainings for campus organizations or during individual counseling sessions. Although a familiar topic to college counselors, conflict can quickly evolve into a strange and scary phenomenon when it's lurking in your own backyard, especially when it involves you and your supervisor. This is why the very first edition of “Counselor Connection” explores ways employees can effectively handle conflict in the career setting.

“Can't you just tell me how I can avoid conflict all together?” If this or similar thoughts are crossing your mind right now, chances are that you are looking at conflict as a negative factor, but some conflict resolution experts say you shouldn't. Conflict can be a positive thing, according to Denise Overfield, Co-Liaison for the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Program at the University of West Georgia (UWG). She says the secret to that happening is all in how you handle the situation and knowing that such incidents can be dealt with positively. “Tell me how I can do that and quickly!” is what some people might be thinking right now. Well, if you fall into this category, read on. Overfield, along with several other conflict resolution professionals, handed out the following advice for employees facing supervisory conflict.

Advice 1: Make sure your conflict is justifiable before addressing it.

If you bring up every little thing you find wrong or dislike, your manager might very well conclude that you can't work things out on your own, says Overfield and colleague, Diane Smith. They suggest that an employee first consider whether the issue is something the manager can change. Then, the employee should consider whether this issue affects his/her ability to be effective on the job. If your answer is yes in both cases, they say you likely have a legitimate reason for addressing your concern.

Advice 2: Address Your Manager With Concerns Early On

Overfield and Smith warn not to let the conflict fester because this leads to rising tension and anger. Such feelings, they say, can hinder the negotiation process between you and your supervisor.

Advice 3: Prepare for Negotiation With Your Supervisor

Lin Inlow, Director of Education and Mediation for Georgia State University Consortium on Negotiation and Conflict (CNCR), emphasizes this is an important factor in resolving conflict that many employees don't think about. She suggests employees consider the following: their primary interests, what they are willing to forgo as a part of negotiating, the supervisor's needs and interests, and creative options to meet both party's desires. She also recommends thinking about what it would mean to you if you don't get what you want and suggests coming to terms with such a reality. In addition, Overfield and Smith suggest employees think clearly about what is at the root of the conflict and be clear on what they want before approaching a manager.

Advice 4: Consider the nature of your conflict and the temperament of your supervisor before deciding how to address the issue.

Smith and Overfield say the nature of your conflict will dictate how you approach it. For example, if you are dealing with a more severe issue such as sexual harassment, you likely would involve a human resource professional in the situation, whereas this wouldn't apply if the conflict involved miscommunication between you and your manager. Inlow also advises employees to think about whether they are dealing with a rational supervisor or not. If the manager is generally logical and emotionally stable, she says it doesn't hurt to approach the person, inform them you have a concern or that you need clarification on an issue, and honestly and openly address the issue from your standpoint, as well as your feelings about the situation. She then suggests acknowledging your supervisor's point of view, as previously mentioned, and having creative solutions that will satisfy both of you. Overfield and Smith also suggest asking your manager to clarify his or her position. However, if you are dealing with a manager that is extremely sensitive, Inlow suggests approaching him/her from a standpoint of you wanting to clarify both of your general expectations for your job. She warns against sharing personal feelings or views because this could make you vulnerable to hurt in the long run.

Advice 5: After the talk, follow up, follow up, follow up

Inlow says this is significant in lowering residual tensions that might arise after such talks. By keeping the lines of communication open and periodically setting aside time to revisit the issue and evaluate it, she says negative feelings will less likely surface. Moreover, Overfield and Smith warn that lingering negative feelings often indicate an unresolved issue. They say it's likely one party didn't leave the negotiation table satisfied so another talk might be needed.

Continued on next page

The Georgia College Counseling Association (GCCA)

in Conjunction with the

American College Counseling Association (ACCA)

Present:



ACCA / GCCA National Conference

February 6th - 9th, 2008

Savannah, Georgia

"Opening New Channels In College Counseling"

Keynote Speaker: Richard Kadison, M.D.

Author of

"College of the Overwhelmed: The Campus Mental Health Crisis and What to Do About It"

Hyatt Regency - Savannah Historic Riverfront

2 W. Bay Street, Savannah, Georgia 31401

For Reservations, Call — (912) 238-1234 -- Mention the ACCA Conference

Room rates for conference attendees:

Single Occupancy: \$160

Double Occupancy: \$170

Triple Occupancy: \$185

Quadruple Occupancy: \$210

Counselor Connection, cont.

Advice 6: When direct talk doesn't work, it might be time to move up the ladder

While Smith, Overfield and Inlow say it's best to handle conflict at the lowest possible level, they agree that sometimes the employee might have to take the issue to the higher powers that be. That includes your school's Alternative Dispute Resolution Program or your supervisor's superior. They suggest employees consider this option if the situation cannot be resolved directly with the supervisor. In addition, Smith and Overfield suggest consulting with an objective person to evaluate whether the situation warrants taking such action. If the employee remains dissatisfied after this point, Smith says he/she might consider a new job.

Finally, Smith and Overfield leave readers with two important messages: Be knowledgeable of your school's policy on handling workplace disputes, and remember that conflict can be positive. It seems some college counselors both in Georgia and beyond are already utilizing the above recommendations. When faced with a recent conflict, Terri Cordle of Berry College says she directly addressed her supervisor, researched the issue and consulted with another counselor to ensure she had legitimate and rational claims. Cordle admits not having a favorable outcome in the dispute, but found consolation in the fact that her voice was heard. University of Arkansas counselor Jim Guinee also utilized the direct approach when faced with a supervisory conflict as an intern. When it comes to putting the issue out in the open, he says, "That honesty helped us break through some initial friction and eventually we worked pretty well together. I learned a lot about being honest with your supervisor."

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mary Jane Phillips, Director of Counseling Services at GCSU, would like to announce the addition of new staff members!

“Georgia College & State University Counseling Services welcomes Steve Wilson and Eva Paziak. Steve, who completed a practicum at the GCSU Counseling Services last year, is in a temporary position for 2007-08, after which he’ll be seeking an internship for his doctoral program. The position he now holds will be restructured to become a Coordinator of Clinical Services. Eva is a third-year doctoral student at Argosy who will be doing her therapy practicum with us this year. Michelle Burkey, a masters intern, will be completing her time with us in October.”

Kel Lee Cutrell, a counselor at Piedmont College & GCCA Treasurer, authored *The Basics of Basic Counseling* in 2006. The publisher is Robbie Dean Press, and you can purchase the book online at Mana Bookstore.

Louise Bedrossian, Office of Disability Services, Georgia State University, has co-authored a book on Asperger Syndrome, entitled *College Students with Asperger Syndrome: Practical Strategies for Academic and Social Success*. She and her co-author, Rodney E. Pennamon, co-hosted an audio conference on June 27, “Supporting Students with Asperger Syndrome,” and they presented at the AHEAD National Conference in Charlotte, NC, July 2007.

Visit the website for information on the annual conference, the council members and CEU opportunities!

www.gacollegecounseling.org

Dr. Christine Smith joined Clayton State as the new director of Counseling Services on July 23, 2007. Dr. Smith, a licensed psychologist, completed her doctoral internship at Virginia Commonwealth University and received her doctorate from Ball State University. In her new role, one of Dr. Smith’s major objectives is to provide necessary leadership for the International Association of Counseling Services accreditation. Dr. Smith previously worked in the counseling center at Auburn University where she served as the training coordinator and supervisor for graduate interns. In addition, she provided individual and group counseling to students and coordinated the Eating Disorder Treatment Team. We look forward to her involvement and leadership as Counseling Services at Clayton State moves forward with many new exciting ventures and challenges!

Savannah Region Addictions Workshop, reported by **Pat Mooney**, Savannah Region Representative and counselor at SCAD

Frank Barker and Andrea Epting of Recovery Place in Savannah offered a 4.5 hour GCCA workshop on “Addiction in Teens and Young Adults” on July 27, 2007 in York Hall at the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) in Savannah.

Twenty-eight people attended in the Savannah region and two GCCA members in the Atlanta region attended via computer linkup with full video, audio and slide presentation sharing. GCCA gained 20 new members at the workshop. The workshop was well received with an average “Quality of Workshop” rating of 4.5 and “Presenter’s Knowledge” rating of 4.7.

GEORGIA COLLEGE COUNSELING ASSOCIATION



GCCA is a locally and nationally recognized professional association. Its continuing education credits satisfy the Licensed Professional Counselor continuing education requirements of the Georgia Composite Board of Professional Counselors, Social Workers, and Marriage and Family Therapists Licensing Act, outlined in section 43-10A-16 of the law and in chapter 135-9-.01, (2) & (3), (a), 1 of the rules. Credits also satisfy the continuing education requirements of the National Board of Certified Counselors which recognizes the American College Counseling Association which adheres to the board’s continuing education guidelines. ACCA’s provider number is 1024 and can be used to complete certification forms. A record of attendance is maintained for the members of the Association. More detailed information may be obtained from the Continuing Education Committee Director and the association’s bylaws, article IX.

