North Atlantic Region

Association for Counselor Education and

Supervision (NARACES)

Spring 2024 Newsletter

Edited by;   In Collaboration with

Derek J. Parker, PhD, LPC, NCC, ACS   NARACES Executive Council

NARACES Spring 2024 Edition

Table of Contents

NARACES Executive Council

President

Devona Stalnaker-Shofner

President Elect

Matthew Nice

Past President

Sherritta Hughes

Secretary

Ashley Leudke

Secretary Elect

Joseph Charette

Past Secretary

Candice Crawford

Treasurer

Ali Corey

Graduate Student Representative

Justin McDonald

Graduate Student Representative Elect

Crystal Socha

Past Graduate Student Representative

Carolyn Bazan

Greetings!

Dear NARACES Members,

Greetings, and welcome to the Spring 2024 NARACES Newsletter!

I would like to thank you for taking time to review this issue, and I hope you enjoy the content. The goal of this newsletter is to present a mixture of content to include information from Officers and Committees, as well as showcase research from NARACES members. As a Communication Committee, we are going to continue to explore ways which we can highlight the amazing work that you are all doing in the profession. If you have any suggestions, please email us at naraces.newsletter@gmail.com.

Our Fall issue of the newsletter will be published in early October 2024. We are always willing to accept research that you would like us to consider in future issues. We do ask that the articles focus on Counselor Education, Supervision, Advocacy, Leadership, or Clinical. If you have questions, please feel free to send us an email.

Additionally, if you are interested in volunteering to serve on this committee, please reach out to me. I would love to have some additional support.

We hope that you enjoy this issue!

Derek J. Parker PhD, LPC, NCC, ACS

Congratulations to our newly elected officers!

2024-2025
NARACES LEADERSHIP

DR. ASHLEY LUEDKE
President

DR. FATMA SALEM
Secretary

SAIBER SIAKH
Graduate Student Representative

Committee Updates and Information

NARACES Affiliates Committee

Dear state affiliates,

As we plan for our upcoming conference, please let me know of any state representative changes by emailing me, Melissa Ramdas, at sramdas@mercy.edu. Thank you!

S. Melissa Ramdas, PhD, LMHC

Awards Committee

Hello NARACES Members!

We hope this email finds you healthy and safe. It is that time again to honor those who we work with on a daily basis through NARACES 2024 Awards.

This is a wonderful way to acknowledge the hard work your colleagues, supervisors, students, and/or faculty are doing in their communities, academic program, and the field of counselor education. Anyone is eligible to nominate a NARACES member for any of these awards. Our award recipients will be honored at 2024 NARACES Regional Conference (September 26-29, 2024 in Atlantic City, NJ).

Below are the six award categories for this year:
1. Marijane Fall / NARACES Counselor Educator of the Year
2. Outstanding Graduate Student Award (Two recipients *Master's Level Student and Doctorate Level Student)
3. Janine M. Bernard Outstanding Supervisor Award
4. NARACES Social Justice Award
5. NARACES New Professional Award
6. The Journal of Counselor Preparation & Supervision Outstanding Journal Article Award

To nominate someone for an award, please visit the NARACES website https://naraces.org/ and download the 2024 Award Nomination Packet, located on the front page with the 2024 Conference Information. This packet contains detailed information on each award and procedures for nominations.

The deadline for nominations is **July 1st, 2024**.

If you are interested in being apart of the NARACES Awards Committee or have any questions about awards, please email benjamin.willis@scranton.edu to discuss it.

Thank you, and we will look forward to receiving your nominations!

Ben Willis, Ph.D., NCC, ACS

Committee Updates and Information

<u>Wellness Committee</u>

Spring was an exciting time for the NARACES Wellness Committee. We conducted the

following free webinars with free CEUs offered to participants.

<u>**Upcoming Wellness Committee Webinar**</u>

"Which Faculty Position is Ideal for Me?" A Panel Discussion with Counselor Educators about Important Factors to Consider During the Job Search Process"

Webinar Description:

Have you recently graduated from a doctoral program in counselor education and supervision? Starting the job search process as a new counselor educator can feel overwhelming. In this webinar, attendees will have an opportunity to hear from a panel of four counselor educators who are at varying stages of their professional careers. The panelists will discuss how to consider one's wellness values and interests when searching for a counselor educator position and share helpful tips for the application and interview process. Current doctoral students and graduates from counselor education programs are encouraged to attend!

Learning Objectives:

1.Differentiate between institution types and faculty ranks/positions.

2.Identify important factors to consider when searching and applying for counselor educator positions.

3.Learn how to prepare for and navigate the interview process.

Friday, April 26th12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. EST via Zoom

<u>Facilitator:</u>

Jennifer Kennedy, Ph.D, LPC, NCC

<u>Panelists:</u>

Rachele Hartley, Ph.D.

Regine Chung Ph.D., MS, LPC-Associate

Jocelyn Novella Ph.D., LPC, ACS, BC-TMH

Kristine Augustyniak, Ph.D.

Register Using the Link Below:

https://forms.gle/BoBB3hD1kcFvD96z8

1 CEU Credit Hour Available

Committee Updates and Information

<u>Membership Committee</u>

We will host a Spring NARACES Membership Informational Session like we have done in the past. This is for Thursday May 2, 2024 at 12 pm (EST).;

Topic: Spring NARACES Membership Informational Session

Time: May 2, 2024, 12:00pm (EST)
Join Zoom Meeting:
https://kean-edu.zoom.us/j/6310087688?
pwd=dENqMnFteXlFZXU2bVBUdmhwN0hVQT09&omn=95415654802

Meeting ID: 631 008 7688
Passcode: B5Hr2v

Thanks.
Jennifer D. Vinces-Cua, PhD, LMHC, LPC, ACS, NCC

<u>Conference Committee</u>

2024 NARACES CONFERENCE REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!

Registration is now open for the 2024 NARACES Conference to be held September 26-29, 2024, in Atlantic City, NJ.

Early-bird pricing is available now through July 15, 2024.

Venue, registration, and agenda information can be accessed at the link below:

NARACES CONFERENCE INFO:
https://north-atlantic-association-for-counselor-education-and-supervis.ce-go.com/naraces-2024-conference

We hope to see you at this year's conference! Please direct any questions you may have to naraces2024@gmail.com

2024 NARACES Conference—Emerging Leaders Program

This is a formal call for nominations for the Emerging Leaders program at the 2024 NARACES conference this coming September 25-29 in Atlantic City, NJ.

Emerging leaders are new professionals (faculty or supervisors) and current graduate students (both Masters and Doctoral level) who have demonstrated aptitude and interest in leadership within the counseling profession. They will be provided with a half-price registration to attend the conference, and invited to attend the Emerging Leaders workshop during the pre-conference on Thursday, September 26th. This workshop will be conducted by current and past leaders of NARACES.

The Emerging Leaders workshop is designed to help new faculty and graduate students to discover how professional leadership can enhance their career development, contribute to the profession as a whole, and improve NARACES evolving commitment to multiculturalism, social justice, and anti-oppression. Participants will review topics such as developing their own leadership identity, leadership goals, multicultural and social justice leadership, collaboration and communication strategies, and maintaining personal wellness. They will have the opportunity to connect with past leaders of ACA, ACES, and NARACES, and also learn about current leadership opportunities.

A review panel will select nominees with a demonstrated commitment to Counselor Education and Supervision, leadership experience and potential, and any current or past participation in state, regional, or national organizations and conferences. Applicants must be NARACES members. While all applications are welcome, emerging leaders from minority or underrepresented diversity populations in particular are strongly encouraged to apply.

To apply:

Both self-nominations and third-party nominations will be accepted. Applications must be submitted electronically and include

(a) The Nominee's Resume or CV

(b) A letter of recommendation speaking to the nominee's leadership qualities and potential (done by the nominator, or if self-nominated: by another party)

(c) An additional letter of recommendation (two recommendation letters in total)

(d) A written statement from the nominee (500 words max) on the following topic: How do you envision yourself as a future leader working to address a specific diversity, equity, or social justice issue within our profession?

Applications are due by May 31st, 2024.
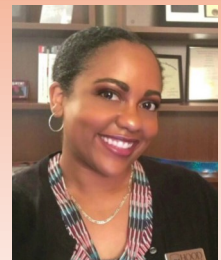Please submit all applications and questions to Mike Mariska at mamariska@plymouth.edu.

Voices from the Field

Denise Ebersole PhD, LPC, ACS, NCC, NCSC—Liberty University

Vasti Holstun PhD, Ed.S, MS, LPC, NCC, NCSC—Liberty University

Shannan Shiderly PhD, M.Ed—Liberty University

Atiya Smith—PhD, MS, LCPC, NCC, CATP—Hood College

Promoting Connection, Leadership, and Service Through Virtual Research Groups

Counselor educators are expected to excel across various concurrent roles and responsibilities. While the challenge to perform across all areas is not new, the onset of COVID-19 and other concurrent stressors presented additional challenges. In this context, counselor educators needed to become more intentional about fostering best practices and connecting with their colleagues to ensure the best outcomes for students. Counselor educators have increasingly joined virtual research group that meet regularly to connect, share ideas, and collaborate on counseling-related research, presentations, and publications. Such groups can span across universities and integrate diverse interests and needs within a safe, supportive, and collaborative environment while fostering best practices in teaching and professional development. As such, more counselor educators are encouraged to create or join a virtual research group to collectively promote connection, leadership, and service.

Promoting Connection

Building connection among counselor educators, especially during the COVID-19 era, has become an essential task. Not surprisingly, Butler and Schnellert (2012) found that collaborative relationships best develop when educators connect with other professionals with a shared passion on a topic of interest and with similar knowledge backgrounds. Thankfully, through the use of digital platforms, counselor educators can now easily meet to share ideas on legislative and accreditation updates, pedagogical best practices, advocacy efforts, research ideas, and to simply provide support for each other. For example, for school counselor educators, there are many opportunities such as the ACES' School Counselor Interest Network (SCIN) where there is a range of groups available for research and connection. Additionally, the use of technology has also created opportunities for building connections in other ways such as The School Counselor Educators' Facebook Group and the #scchat hashtag on Twitter. It is highly recommended that counselor educators engage in and create opportunities across the various areas of specialty and interest to ensure that counselor educators connect and collaborate. A wide range of workshops and conferences are now offered online and are provided at a free or reduced rate, making community and collaboration even more accessible.

Voices from the Field

Promoting Leadership

Involvement in research groups can yield tremendous professional growth and promote interest in leadership positions. Additionally, leadership is specifically identified as a core area for the professional identity of counselor educators (CACREP, 2016) and as essential for those seeing professional excellence (CSI, 1999). Opportunities for counselor education leadership include but are not limited to serving across professional organizations, departmental leadership, institutional governance, and serving, advising, and/or mentoring in student organizations. Engaging in leadership opportunities can have a profound effect upon professional identity development while expanding academic networks, and increasing overall productivity and advocacy within the field. Connecting with group members with similar interests strengthens leadership and research efforts in a more concentrated direction. Furthermore, pursuing leadership opportunities not only strengthens leadership and ability to serve, but it also promotes leadership in peers. Virtual research groups encourage members to step into their own unique professional identity development and to pursue leadership opportunities individually and collaboratively to better strengthen the profession and have the biggest positive impact.

Promoting Service

Finally, an intentional effort in promoting service across the profession is recommended. Alongside teaching, research, and scholarship, service is a key factor in the role of counselor educators (Limberg et al., 2013). Through service, counselor educators can enhance the profession, the effectiveness of professional organizations, and strengthen impact on communities. In accordance with CACREP (2016) standards, counselor educators are called to professional service and advocacy (Standard 1.6) placing us in the role of a servant-leader which is highly recommended by counseling organizations such as Chi Sigma Iota (Herr, 2010). Counselor educators who view themselves as servant-leaders focus on the growth and well-being of their students and the communities to which they belong, as servant leadership is encouraged in higher education (Letizia, 2018). Virtual groups can result in significant service to others through collaborative research and advocacy efforts in addition to it being a safe space for social connection, validation, and conversation about how one can continue to promote service.

Conclusion

Through collective participation in virtual research groups, counselor educators can strengthen their connection, leadership, and service to the profession while also fostering best practices in teaching and professional development. The bonds created in such groups can result in improvements in one's professional identity development while strengthening their teaching, scholarship, and service. Additionally, the encouragement provided and received from group members can result in increased professional connections which further promote research on best practices. In conclusion, while striving to excel professionally and serve others across professional roles, counselor educators are encouraged to participate in virtual research groups for increased connection, leadership, and service for the purpose of fostering best practices in education.

Voices from the Field

CONTINUE

References

American Counseling Association. (2014). *ACA code of ethics*. Alexandria, VA: Author.

      Retrieved from https://www.counseling.org/resources/aca-code-of-ethics.pdf

Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (2021). *ACES interest networks*.

      https://acesonline.net/interest-networks/

Association for Counselor Education and Supervision Taskforce on Best Practices in Clinical Supervision (2011). *Best practices in clinical supervision*.

      https://acesonline.net/knowledge-base/aces-best-practices-in-clinical-supervision-2011/

Butler, D. L., & Schnellert, L. (2012). Collaborative inquiry in teacher professional development. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 28*(8), 1206-1220.

      https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2012.07.009

Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs. (2016). *CACREP Standards*.

      https://www.cacrep.org/for-programs/2016-cacrep-standards/

Chi Sigma Iota Academy of Leaders. (1999). *Principles and practices of leadership excellence.* Greensboro, NC: Author.

      Retrieved from http://www.csi-net.org/?Leadership_Practices

Herr, E. L. (2010). Leadership: A position paper. www.csi-net.org/?leadership_practices

Limberg, D., Bell, H., Super, J. T., Jacobson, L., Fox, J., DePue, M. K., Christmas, C., Young, M. E., & Lambie, G. W. (2013). Professional Identity Development of

      Counselor Education Doctoral Students: A Qualitative Investigation. *The Professional Counselor, 3*(1), 40–53. https://doi.org/10.15241/dll.3.1.40

Letizia, A. J. (2018). *Using servant leadership: How to reframe the core functions of higher education*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Robert K. Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership. (2021). *The servant as leader*. https://www.greenleaf.org/what-is-servant-leadership/

Voices from the Field

Derek J. Parker PhD, MA, LPC, NCC, ACS—Liberty University

Alysha Blagg, Ph.D., LPCC-S, NCC—Liberty University

Impact of COVID-19 on Emerging-Aged Adult

The emergence of COVID-19 in 2020 dramatically impacted the lives of individuals across the globe. This pandemic changed the way we experienced life in dramatic ways. Beginning in March 2020, the United States has been deeply impacted by COVID-19, and the response to this pandemic has continued to impact the lives of millions each day. One population that has been deeply affected by COVID-19 is emerging-aged adults. COVID-19 has dramatically impacted the way emerging-aged adults learn, engage in work, and interact with each other. Increased symptomology has emerged within this population, which is clinically significant and warrants additional discussion.

Emerging-Aged Adulthood

Emerging adulthood is often defined as the period of time between 18-years-old and mid-20s but due to societal changes, researchers are acknowledging that it may, in fact, last into the late-20s or early 30s for some individuals (Arnett, 2000; Arnett, 2006). This expansion is due, in part, to developmental changes among millennials (Arnett, 2006). This period is marked by exiting childhood; however, not fully engaged in adulthood. Arnett (2000) began studying this population and found unique challenges which he described as five markers or "pillars" of the developmental period, including possibilities, instability, identity exploration, self-focus, and ambivalence toward adulthood.

Arnett (2000) noted that during this period of development, individuals begin to explore who they are and what they want their lives to be like. This period involves the development of career goals, educational pursuits, testing potential jobs, exploring new relationships (including friendships, romantic relationships, and amorous relationships), and exploration of individuality and separation from the familial environment and values/beliefs. Arnett (2000) continued that this period is also one of identity development, where individuals explore who they are, who they like, and what they believe. This period presents many opportunities to explore different paths, which may come across as impulsive and unstable by others. These tasks became dramatically altered by the emergence of COVID-19.

COVID-19 and Emerging-Aged Adults

The onset of COVID-19 and the ensuing lockdowns impacted everyone. However, emerging-aged adults also faced some unique challenges. High school students got pulled from their school buildings and moved online. College students transitioned to remote learning. The workforce had to learn how to navigate work while also taking precautions. Some experienced cuts in hours or job loss altogether while others experienced increase in hours and demands in their employment, while trying to navigate the uncertainty of a pandemic. Additionally, there was a loss. High school proms, high school graduation, end-of-year activities for seniors, and college graduations all were canceled. Often viewed as hallmark events in one's academic journey, these events were lost.

Voices from the Field

CONTINUE

Impact on Emerging-Aged Adults

COVID-19 uniquely impacted emerging-aged adults. Halliburton et al. (2021) noted that COVID-19 and the mitigation practices put into place for public safety disturbed a critical developmental period for emerging-aged adults and their ability to transition into adulthood successfully. Halliburton et al. (2021) noted that the three most important factors contributing to this are the changing of communication methods, disrupted routines, and financial stress, all increased levels of distress for emerging-aged adults. This created an environment with increased anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation (Germani et al., 2020; Halliburton et al., 2021; Kujawa, et al., 2020). Halliburton et al. (2021) reported that 66 percent of the study's participants demonstrated moderate to severe anxiety and depression, and nearly a third reported suicidal ideation. The challenges faced by emerging-aged adults impacted them developmentally and increased the prevalence of mental health symptoms.

Among emerging-aged adults, it was found that females may have experienced a disproportionately higher level of anxiety and depression (Minhas et al., 2021). Minhas et al. (2021) found that females struggled with irritability, sadness, and increased stress due to the pandemic. Minhas et al. (2021) found that a contributing factor was a significant loss of income during the pandemic, which resulted in their findings suggesting a 188 percent increase in depressive symptoms. These critical factors negatively impact the developmental processes of emerging-aged adults.

The LGBTQ+ population was also negatively impacted by the pandemic. Scroggs et al. (2020) found that the LGBTQ+ population was deeply impacted by social distancing and the mitigation process. This resulted in decreased access to supportive communities, loss of hope, increased substance use, and a reduced sense of self-identity. Many of these individuals were on college campuses, and were forced to return home, often to homes that were not supportive and encouraging. The decreased level of connection within the LGBTQ+ population had a detrimental effect on Arnett's (2020) identity exploration pillar.

International students are another group that has been highly effected by the pandemic. Between the fall of 2019 and fall of 2020, there were reports of a 23 percent increase in severe anxiety, 10 percent increase in moderate anxiety, and 9 percent increase in severe depression in college students (Zhou et al., 2021). International students saw an even larger increase in severe anxiety and depression compared to non-international students (Zhou et al., 2021). Also, due to initial reports and rumors regarding the epicenter of COVID-19, college students reported increased discrimination or hostility toward Asian/Pacific Islander students (Zhou et al., 2021).

Conclusion

There is an increasing number of studies being conducted at this point to explore COVID-19's impact on society. Hopefully, emerging-aged adults will continue to be studied to examine the effects of the pandemic on this population. This will allow clinicians to be better prepared to serve this population. There are unique factors that have emerged from the studies which have been conducted. Recognizing the impact that COVID-19 has had and will have on social skills, development and maintenance of relationships, setting and adhering to appropriate boundaries in the workplace, and more is crucial to providing best care to emerging-aged adults. It is essential to continue to assess the ongoing impact that COVID-19 has on emerging-aged adults and ascertain the lasting impact it may have on this developmental period.
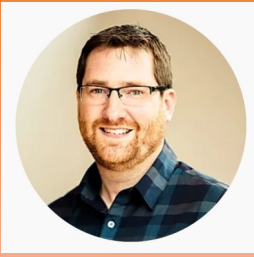
Voices from the Field

CONTINUE

A key area of future research should focus on effective assessment strategies, treatment protocols, and how the pandemic has impacted emerging adults' developmental tasks. This research should explore the effectiveness of assessment strategies that are beneficial for the early detection of mental health and addiction symptoms. Additionally, treatment protocols should be examined to assess which ones have empirical support. Lastly, reexploring the emerging-aged adult developmental period determines any lasting changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

References

Arnett, J. J. (2000). Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from the late teens through the twenties. *American Psychologist, 55*, 469-480. https://doi.org/10.1037//0003-066X.55.5.469

Arnett, J. J. (2006). Emerging adulthood: Understanding the new way of coming of age. In J. J. Arnett & J. L. Tanner (Eds.), *Emerging adulthood: Coming of age in the 21st century* (pp. 3-20). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Germani, A., Buratta, L., Delvecchio, E., & Mazzeschi, C. (2020). Emerging adults and COVID-19: The role of individualism-collectivism on perceived risks and psychological maladjustment. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 17*, 1-15. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17103497.

Halliburton, A.E., Hill, M.B., Dawson, B.L., Hightower, J.M., & Rueden, H. (2021). Increased stress, declining mental health: Emerging adults' experiences in college during COVID-19. *Emerging Adulthood, 9*(5), 433-448. https://doi.org/10.1177/21676968211025348

Katsiaficas, D. (2017). "I know I'm an adult when…I can care for myself and others": The role of social responsibilities in emerging adulthood for community college students. *Emerging Adulthood, 5*(6), 392-405. https://doi.org/10.1177/2167696817698301

Kujawa, A., Green, H., Compas, B.E., Dickey, L., Pegg, S. (2020). Exposure to COVID-19 pandemic stress: Associations with depression and anxiety in emerging adults in the United States. *Depression and Anxiety, 37*, 1280-1288. https://doi.org/10.1002/da.23109.

Larson, R. (1990). The solitary side of life: An examination of the time people spend alone from childhood to old age. *Developmental Review, 10*, 155-183.

Minhas, M., Belisario, K., Gonzalez-Roz, A., Halladay, J., Murphy, J.G., & MacKillop, J. (2021). COVID-19 impacts on drinking and mental health in emerging adults: Longitudinal changes and moderation by economic disruption and sex. *Alcoholism Clinical and Experimental Research, 45*, 1448-1457. https://doi.org/10.1111/acer.14624

Scroggs, B., Love, H.A., & Torgerson, C. (2020). COVID-19 and LGBTQ emerging adults: Risk in the face of social distancing. *Emerging Adulthood, 9*(5), 639-644. https://doi.org/10.1177/2167696820968699.

Zhou, S., Banawa, R., & Oh, H. (2021). Stop Asian hate: The mental health impact of racial discrimination among Asian Pacific Islander young and emerging adults during COVID-19. *Journal of Affective Disorders, 325*, 346-353. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2022.12.132

Zorotovich, J. & Johnson, E. I. (2019). Five dimensions of emerging adulthood: A comparison between college students, nonstudents, and graduates. *College Student Journal, 53*(3), 376-384.

Voices from the Field

Brandon Waggoner PhD, MA, MS, LPC-S, NCC - Liberty University

More Than a Quirk: Let's Talk About OCD

"Having a graveyard in your brain of the things you once loved, that OCD waged a war on and just decimated."

"A nightmare of a mental illness that has derailed my life."

"An evil crippling monster"

"Treading water but you can't reach the bottom or the top, you feel like you are drowning."

"It's like being in hell, a hell that you are aware of."

These quotes are real descriptions from clients who suffer from obsessive-compulsive disorder or OCD. Too often, the term for many brings up thoughts of someone who likes things in order or is a bit quirky about counting or numbers. It can be a joke to throw out when someone dislikes chaos: "Oh I'm just a little OCD." However, as you can see, this disorder is much more disturbing. It is a monster that consumes the lives of those who suffer from it. I have worked in the field for many years but early in my career I never really understood this disorder. Much of my journey in working with OCD clients came from experience and a more reactionary exploration of treatment. I hope that the following will help us as counselors better understand OCD and how to identify, diagnosis, and treat this disorder to bring hope and freedom to those suffering.

The Diagnostic and Statistic Manual (DSM-5-TR) gives specific diagnostic criteria for this disorder. To give a diagnosis, there must be the presence of obsessions, compulsions, or both. Interestingly, both do not have to be present to give a diagnosis. However, I do argue that compulsions are nearly always present either mentally or in avoidance. The thoughts, or obsessions, must be intrusive or unwanted as well as time consuming (1 hour a day or clinically significant distress). An additional diagnostic identifier can be added for insight (high, medium, or low). Only 4% or less of those diagnosed had no insight and 30% will have a tic disorder as well (American Psychiatric Association, 2022). Another important diagnostic factor to consider is the difference between OCD and obsessive-compulsive personality disorder (OCPD). OCPD is more identified through the cultural perceptions of cleanliness and having things in order. It does not have the debilitating ruminations that rob clients of their lives that is found in OCD. Additionally, OCD can be comorbid with anxiety, depression, and other OCD related disorders making diagnosis challenging at times (Clark et al., 2014). Too often OCD is mistaken for an anxiety disorder.

The statistics for OCD can be surprising once you dig into them. Diagnostically, 1 in 100 adults have OCD (2-3 million adults in the US). It is more prevalent than schizophrenia and bipolar disorders with a mean age of onset of 19.5 years. It can occur at any age but is often very difficult to detect in children. One of the most surprising statistics of all is that it takes an average of 14-17 years from symptom onset to obtaining appropriate treatment (National OCD Foundation, 2022). This means individuals are living with this life consuming disorder for decades with no treatment, which is deepening their compulsive behaviors.
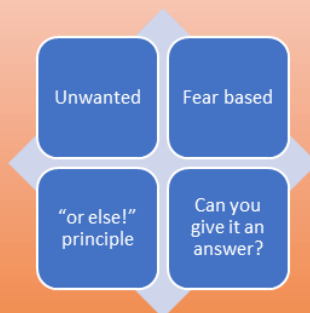
Voices from the Field

CONTINUE

        The compulsive behaviors which are part of the disorder are only one aspect of the OCD cycle. The cycle begins with a random, unwanted thought. While those without OCD (and I always argue all of us have random unwanted thoughts often) can simply discredit these thoughts as improbable or not based in reality, those with the disorder are stuck in the thought of "yeah, but what if…". For example, a headache for a client can spiral into a time consuming, doctor appointment making endeavor to try to prove the sufferer has no brain tumor. The emotion following is anxiety and distress which necessitates a compulsion or relief attempt. While this compulsion alleviates the anxiety for the short term, the long-term impact is a reinforcement of the unwanted thought and feeds the OCD. The individual is then a slave to the cycle.
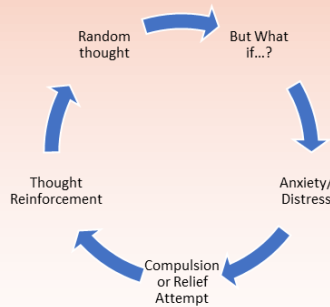
        This cycle can get stuck around a number of categories for individuals such as responsibility for harm or mistakes, contamination, symmetry and order, violence and aggression, sex, and religion and morality (Abramowitz, 2018). Each category having its own variations and branches depending on the individual. Thoughts can be found on the spectrum from the more benign ("Did I turn the stove off at home?") to the more bizarre ("Did I not wash my underwear good enough and now impregnated my mother who folded them?"). The problem I have encountered in getting to an OCD diagnosis is to know if these thoughts would classify as an OCD thought or be another diagnosis such as a phobia or anxiety. One of the common trends I have seen with all my OCD clients is that the OCD thought is always centered on a fear of self. The client thinks or fears there is something wrong with themselves and OCD never lets them find peace. Additionally, OCD will always attack the things the client values or loves the most in their lives. You can begin to see the insidious aspects of this disorder that add to the torment. Clients will often present low-level fears and hide other thought such as fear of harming others or disturbing sexual thoughts due to the shame of even having these thoughts.

        In order to help bring out and evaluate intrusive thoughts and aid in diagnosis of OCD, I have developed a grid to filter a client's thoughts through. There are four criteria that I apply to a thought to see if it truly is OCD. The four areas are:

Voices from the Field

CONTINUE

These may seems simple, but they are critical in being able to differentiate thoughts. One example of using this grid can be used with thoughts of suicide. For example, true suicidal thoughts by a client are wanted in some way to alleviate or escape from a difficult circumstance or life. OCD suicidal thoughts are unwanted and distressing. If a client has a suicidal thought that is OCD based, there will be a fear of suicide rather than a desire for ending their life (Agne et al., 2022). Always accompanying the OCD thought is what I call the "or else!" principle. This aspect will always be a thought telling the client they need to do something...or else...something bad will happen, or their anxiety will continue. However, as we have seen, if they give in with a compulsion, the illusion of peace is never able to be fulfilled. The final determination that can be used to identify OCD is just simply try to give the thought an answer. OCD will never be satisfied with an answer because there is always a "what if..." concept. Therefore, traditional CBT or thought replacement interventions will not work and be frustrating to a counselor trying to implement this technique.

Much more could be said to the nuances and identification of OCD, but my hope is that this outline can give you a jump start into spotlighting this disorder. I have become passionate about advocating for individuals suffering with OCD and encourage anyone wanting to explore more to visit and look into the International OCD Foundation (https://iocdf.org/). May we as counselors begin to help our clients find hope and be able to change the narratives described above into:

"I don't know if anyone can say they know the exact moment they felt joy....but I can."

References

Abramowitz, J. S. (2018). *Getting over OCD: a 10-step workbook for taking back your life*. Guilford Publications.

Agne, N. A., Tisott, C. G., Ballester, P., Passos, I. C., & Ferrão, Y. A. (2022). Predictors of suicide attempt in patients with obsessive-compulsive disorder: an exploratory study with machine learning analysis. *Psychological medicine, 52*(4), 715-725.

American Psychiatric Association. (2022). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (5th ed., text rev.)*. https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.books.9780890425787

Clark, David A. & Radomsky, Adam S. (2014). Introduction: A global perspective on unwanted intrusive thoughts. *Journal of Obsessive-Compulsive and Related Disorders*. Available online 18 February 2014. DOI: 10.1016/j.jocrd.2014.02.001

National OCD Foundation. (2022). *What is OCD? Facts About Obsessive Compulsive Disorder* [Brochure]. https://iocdf.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/What-Is-OCD-Brochure.pdf

NARACES Announcements

Save the Date

2024 NARACES Conference

September 26-29, 2024

Atlantic City, N.J.

Early-Bird Pricing is available now through July 15, 2024

NARACES 2024 Conference (ce-go.com)

Location: Sheraton Atlantic City—2 Convention Blvd. Atlantic City, NJ 08401

Questions: naraces2024@gmail.com

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Amanda Giordano, PhD, LPC.

Amanda L. Giordano, PhD, LPC is an associate professor at the University of Georgia who specializes in addictions counseling. She is the sole author of a clinical reference book titled, A Clinical Guide to Treating Behavioral Addictions and co-author of a textbook titled, Addiction Counseling: A Practical Approach. Dr. Giordano also created two online credential courses with Mental Health Academy that focus on clinical work with behavioral addictions, and clinical work with substance use disorders. As a scholar, Dr. Giordano works to advance the counseling field with rigorous research and has published over 60 peer-reviewed articles and book chapters. In 2018, she received the Addictions/Offender Educator of Excellence Award from the International Association of Addictions and Offender Counselors and in 2024 she was awarded the Garry R. Waltz Trailblazer Award from the American Counseling Association in recognition of her work with behavioral addictions. Dr. Giordano collaborates with domestic and international organizations to provide trainings to increase awareness related to addictions counseling and has been an invited keynote speaker. She maintains a blog called Understanding Addiction for Psychology Today and has been a guest on several podcasts.

The NARACES Accessibility Committee is working to provide physical access in line with ADA requirements and will also be coordinating disability-related accommodations. If you require disability-related accommodations or have questions related to accessibility and disability equity at the conference, please contact the chair, Lynn Pierce at pierce_k03@mercer.edu or contact 215-839-8567

NARACES Announcements

Fall 2024 Newsletter—Accepting Submissions

We are currently seeking submissions for consideration in your future issues of the NARACES Newsletter. These topics can apply to practitioners, supervisors, counselor educators, and students. The focus of your submission should be on the NARACES Objectives:

Navigating

Affirming

Regional

Advocacy and Education through

Culturally Sensitivity

Evolving

Service

Submissions must be between 500 and 800 words and sent electronically as a Word document to naraces.newsletter@gmail.com

Please include the author name(s), credentials, affiliation(s), and photo(s) in .jpg, .tif, or .gif format.

Students are encouraged to contribute with the support of a faculty member.

Tentative deadline for the Fall 2024 edition is Friday October 4, 2024 by 5:00pm.

New Area: Doctoral Student Corner— an opportunity for Doctoral students to submit abstracts on what they are working on (to include dissertation). Additionally may submit 300 word summaries of the latest clinical, teaching, and/or research-based initiatives.

New Area: Hot Moment in Teaching—300 word summaries of teaching dilemmas or other teaching related content.

For questions, more information, or submissions please contact the co-editors at naraces.newsletter@gmail.com

Derek J. Parker, PhD, LPC, NCC, ACS