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A Therapeutic Approach for Treating Chronic Illness and Disability Among College Students – DIGEST

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A U T H O R S

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An increasing number of college students with disabilities are enrolling in postsecondary education to increase educational attainment, reach career goals, and enhance their overall quality of life. This population is worthy of receiving further attention to understand their daily struggles adapting to this environment. This article discusses the unique barriers and difficulties faced by college students with disabilities when acclimating to a postsecondary environment while simultaneously introducing a new therapeutic perspective. The authors posit that individuals with disabilities transitioning from high school or the world of work into the postsecondary environment may benefit from a theoretical combination of illness

intrusiveness and cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT).

First, the importance of identity formation and transition amongst this student population is discussed. Adjustment to a university setting and development of a coherent sense of identity is more difficult in this population, and a rationale for therapeutic interventions is provided to assist in the successful transition and completion of a college education. This is followed by a brief history of counseling with persons with disabilities to further bolster the present article's theoretical foundation. Furthermore, the significance of seeking appropriate accommodations and utilization of advocacy skills is emphasized in light of



the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

The theoretical framework provided for therapeutic intervention is founded on the illness intrusiveness model. This theory was selected in order to place an emphasis on social and psychological factors that have a direct effect on life outcomes. The model also encompasses the idea of locus-of-control, or personal self-efficacy, which has generated much discussion in the college literature over the years. Finally, the illness intrusiveness model is said to mediate the impact of psychosocial factors on chronic conditions, which is key when collaborating therapeutically with students with disabilities. The five key domains are presented (e.g., social factors) and facilitates the appropriate monitoring of evidence-based practices using an existing measure, the Illness Intrusiveness Rating Scale (IIRS). Finally, the theoretical framework for CBT is provided and integrated with the illness intrusiveness model. This proposed intervention could be used to enhance students' well-being, adaptation and academic success. Final thoughts and future research directions and application, also are provided.

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Examining the Theory of Historical Trauma Among Native Americans—DIGEST

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Non-Hispanic Native Americans continue to be at greater risk for mental health disorders than any other racial group in the United States, and suicide and substance abuse rates continue to increase among Native Americans. Despite research and intervention efforts, there has been little systematic examination of the underlying causes for these problems in Native American communities. The theory of historical trauma has been introduced to provide a framework for understanding these issues and is considered clinically applicable in working with Native American individuals. However, there has been skepticism from mental health professionals about the validity of this concept due to the lack of empirical

evidence. Thus, there is a lack of research into how past atrocities suffered by the Native American people are connected with the current problems in many Native American communities.

Sotero has provided a theoretical outline of historical trauma that includes three successive phases. The first phase entails the dominant culture perpetrating mass traumas on a population that results in devastation for the population. The second phase occurs when the original generation of the population responds to the trauma by biological, societal and psychological means. The final phase is when the initial responses to trauma are conveyed to successive generations. Based on the theory, Native Americans were subjected to traumas that are

defined in specific historical losses (e.g., loss of people, land, family and culture) that have resulted in historical loss symptoms (e.g., psychological distress, social-environmental distress, physiological distress) that continue today.

In this article, the author explores the specific historical losses and historical loss symptoms for this population. Next, the effect trauma has on a person's psychological functioning is explained. Further, the author identifies how trauma responses are transmitted to subsequent generations. The article concludes with recommendations for professional counselors to utilize in their clinical work, and potential implications and directions for future research. This article helps professional counselors understand how the historical losses suffered generations ago have resulted in the transfer of historical loss symptoms to subsequent and current generations of Native Americans, and provides guidance to counselors for implementing this knowledge in clinical practice and future empirical research.



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Collaborating with the Peace Corps to Maximize Student Learning in Group Counseling—DIGEST

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Group counseling is a core dimension of accredited master's-level counselor education programs, as noted in the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Programs Training Standards. During the group counseling course, students often learn the process of participating in and leading experiential process groups, typically with other counseling students. While process groups are beneficial to student learning, student learning could be maximized by going one step further and providing group counseling to non-counseling students. The authors propose that rather than waiting until students' clinical coursework (e.g., practicum, internship) to provide counseling services

to non-counseling students, participating in a model partnership with the Peace Corps could foster such student learning. This experience offers master's-level group counseling students the opportunity to provide group counseling to non-counseling students under intense supervision. In addition, students provide a service to Returning Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) who traditionally face a myriad of challenges as they transition back into the United States from their international service; thus, counseling students are able to practice multicultural counseling within a group setting.

The partnership between a counselor education program and the Peace Corps

was developed with consideration of the needs of counselor education students and of RPCVs. The authors discuss training standards and ethical considerations in relation to teaching group counseling through the use of experiential groups. Non-peer group members—in this case RPCVs—are described in both their unique diverse experiences and the challenges they face that are suitable for group



exploration. Group counseling students and RPCVs are explored through their unique needs from and contributions to the partnership.

The first section of this article briefly highlights the importance of student learning through experiential group counseling, especially with non-counseling students. Additionally, the authors discuss RPCVs and their potential needs following deployment. The second section of the article describes the partnership between a counselor education program and the Peace Corps that has evolved over several years to include group counseling services to RPCVs. The logistic aspects involved (e.g., class assignments) are offered as a model for future adaptation, as well as overall trends in group members' and facilitators' feedback. Finally, the authors provide suggestions for counselor education and supervision in similar partnerships with local organizations and other programs on campus.

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Treatment Fit: A Description and Demonstration via Video of a Brief and Functional Treatment Fit Model – DIGEST

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One of the strongest treatment variables for increasing the likelihood of a positive counseling outcome is the degree to which client and counselor agree on the issues, goals and treatment plans, otherwise known as treatment fit. Treatment fit has been shown to improve client outcome, reduce early termination, decrease clients' complaints against therapists, and reduce treatment costs. Despite evidence indicating the importance of treatment fit for improving client outcome, there is a dearth of literature

explaining how to conduct a brief, functional and collaborative treatment fit plan in the first session. And, although it is recognized that developing a treatment plan is advisable, there is a modicum of information describing how to create treatment fit in a brief and practical format that can be used in clinical settings.

The purpose of this article is to describe and demonstrate how a brief treatment fit strategy, the treatment fit model (TFM), can be utilized to address specific client



issues, goals and treatment plans. To further enhance counselors' ability to apply the TFM, the authors have provided a link to a video, "How to conduct a 1st counseling session," which demonstrates the process for effectively conducting the TFM: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xrHgOoNBiWk>.

The purpose of creating and providing this video is to utilize the growing popularity of social media to enhance learning and practice. Despite more than 3 billion YouTube videos viewed daily, educators underutilize YouTube and other readily available social media. There is, however, evidence indicating potential benefits of utilizing YouTube and other forms of social media when educating health care professionals, providing medical information to patients, disseminating public health messages to adolescents, modeling pro-social behavior to K–12 students, and enhancing counselor skill development. Social media is an innovative tool for teaching the application of counseling strategies, which can be used at the convenience of the counselor, even on handheld devices in between client sessions. It is hoped that the video demonstration of this model will further enhance counselors' ability to apply the proposed model.

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The Relationship Between Counselors and Their State Professional Association: Exploring Counselor Professional Identity – DIGEST

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A state's professional counseling association conducted a demographic study to explore the characteristics of licensed mental health counselors in the state. Respondents indicated high satisfaction with their employment as full-time private practitioners, and peer support from coworkers or external support from other work settings was reported as highly beneficial to the respondents' successful practice. Additionally, respondents selected five priorities for their professional counseling association: (1) professional development and education opportunities, (2) information sharing, (3) advocacy, (4) promoting visibility and name recognition,

and (5) providing liaisons at the state and national levels.

The study explores ways that the state professional association can meet the needs of counselors. Since most respondents were private practitioners, the possibility of the association serving as a source of social support is discussed, with the association currently being an underutilized resource. Results indicate that respondents had higher levels of perceived competence with professional activities such as service to clients and counseling supervision, but lower levels of competence with understanding legislation, standards, and codes, and working with insurance companies. The



results indicate ways the professional association can address the needs of the state's counselors in these areas.

The areas of low perceived competence and stated preferences for the role of the professional association are at the core of the association's efforts to revitalize its mission. Recognizing that professional competence for licensed mental health counselors develops on a continuum from pre-service to post-licensure, the authors discuss collaborative relationships with counselor education programs as one way to strengthen the long-term development of professional counselors.

Ultimately, challenges facing the profession of mental health counseling can best be addressed when strong professional associations work in concert with counselors and counselor education programs to advance the interests of the profession. This exploratory study serves as an early step for one state to more explicitly focus on these important connections.

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Integrating Motivational Interviewing into a Basic Counseling Skills Course to Enhance Counseling Self-Efficacy – DIGEST

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Counselor skill development and self-efficacy are important constructs to consider in graduate counselor education programs. Counseling skills courses are designed to teach counselors-in-training how to develop effective therapeutic relationships and interact with clients in a helpful manner. Hundreds of research studies have demonstrated that counseling skills training is effective in increasing skills of graduate-level counseling students. Skills typically taught in graduate courses include attending behavior (e.g., eye contact, body language, verbal tracking), open and closed questions, paraphrasing, summarizing, reflecting feeling, reflecting content, self-disclosure, confrontation, immediacy, and others.

Motivational interviewing (MI) is an evidence-based counseling approach that requires the counselor to practice counseling skills often taught in a basic counseling skills course. It is a collaborative, person-centered counseling style intended to elicit and explore clients' personal motivations to change in an accepting and compassionate environment. In addition, MI must be practiced with a humanistic "spirit" that encompasses the notions of collaboration, evocation, and promotion of client autonomy. MI can be used specifically to foster client engagement in the counseling process, diminish resistance within the counselor-client relationship, and explore and resolve client ambivalence about change. Outcome research conducted on MI has demonstrated its beneficial and lasting results



when used to help people change a wide range of problem behaviors.

This study investigated self-efficacy measures in 19 counseling students and reported their experiences of participating in a basic counseling skills course that integrated MI. Posttest results indicated that students' self-efficacy increased at rates comparable to alternative skills courses. Further, students reported positive overall experiences of learning MI in the course, including themes highlighting their skill development and self-assuredness in working with challenging clients. Students also reported some challenges in implementing MI; however, this may be moderated by their early stages of counselor development. Overall, the inclusion of MI in the basic counseling skills course appeared useful to enhance students' self-efficacy, emphasize basic humanistic counseling skills, and provide students with strategies to work with clients who are not yet ready to change. Although more research on this topic is warranted, this study provides preliminary support for the integration of MI into a counseling skills course.

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Identifying Role Diffusion in School Counseling – DIGEST

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Role ambiguity in professional school counseling has been an ongoing concern for many decades. The current study explored the potential impact of role diffusion as a contributor to role ambiguity among professional school counselors. Role diffusion refers to the process of assuming or being appointed to roles and duties that individuals from other fields or specialties are equally qualified to perform in the work environment. The authors hypothesize that the role of professional school counselors may be weakened when school counselors regularly engage in duties that do not draw upon their unique counseling expertise. The researchers therefore posed three research questions for this study:

1. Of the typical duties suggested for school counselors, which duties are the

most unique to the role of the counselor (i.e., least role diffused)?

2. Of the typical duties suggested for school counselors, which duties are the least unique to the role of the counselor (i.e., most role diffused)?

3. What other school personnel are identified as equally qualified to perform various duties suggested for professional school counselors?

The researchers developed an instrument to assess for potential role diffusion among typical school counseling duties as outlined in the American School Counselor Association's National Model. Participants in the study included 108 graduate counseling students enrolled in a CACREP-accredited

counseling program in a large southwestern university. The instrument asked participants to identify which of eight school personnel would be competent to perform duties in five domains: Career, Academic, Personal-Social, Direct Counseling, and Support.

The researchers found that participants rated Direct Counseling services as the least diffused, and thus most unique, role of the school

counselor. On the other hand, participants rated duties in the Academic, Personal-Social, and Career domains as significantly more diffused, suggesting that duties in these domains may be competently performed by other school personnel including school psychologists and school social workers. Another finding was that teachers were rated as equally competent to perform duties suggested of school counselors in all domains except Direct Counseling.

Based on these findings, the researchers suggest that professional school counselors and school counselor education programs may need to advocate for the increased provision of direct counseling services in school settings. The researchers also recommend further research to help clarify which roles suggested for school counselors are in fact duplicative of the efforts of other school personnel.



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The Black Gender Gap: A Commentary on Intimacy and Identity Issues of Black College Women – DIGEST

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The purpose of this article is to explore some of the issues young Black college women face when seeking long-term intimate relationships with Black men during their college years. For many women, the college years afford them ample opportunities to fraternize with equally ambited, similarly situated men from the same cultural and racial background. This is not always the case for young Black women in college. Because of sociopolitical realities, which have resulted in disproportionate representation of Black men versus Black women in college, young Black college women are left to grapple with a host of challenges related to developing meaningful love relationships with Black men. Some of these issues include the quest for a male partner with equal educational status, threats of sexually related health

risks, conflicts with interracial dating, and questions concerning dating significantly younger or older men.

It is important to recognize that the dating dilemmas some young Black college women face not only threaten their ability to engage in meaningful love relationships but also have the potential to negatively impact their identity development. Because researchers exploring women's development have placed the importance of interpersonal relationships at the center of identity formation, it is essential to explore the effects of dating dilemmas and decisions on the self-identity of young Black college women. This perspective acknowledges that concerns and choices regarding intimate relationships with men are among the elements young Black college women integrate into their evolving

identities. Helms' Womanist Identity Development model and Cross' Black Identity Development theory are used to contextualize the impact that the quest for long-term intimate relationships has upon the identity formation of young Black women during their college years, as well as the role that identity development plays in these women's dating decisions. These



theories suggest that young Black college women who have progressed to the final stage of Helms' and Cross' models, internalization, may make better dating decisions that are grounded in a positive self-identity. Mental health professionals and student affairs practitioners are uniquely positioned to assist young Black women in navigating the complexities of pursuing and engaging in intimate relationships in college. These groups of helping professionals must not only adopt a culturally relevant counseling framework, but also must be aware of culturally appropriate counseling techniques in order to more successfully accompany young Black college women on their journey to develop intimate relationships and a healthy sense of self.

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