



VACES 2025 GRADUATE STUDENT CONFERENCE

Conference Schedule | Saturday, March 8, 2025

7:00 am - 8:00 am Conference Registration and Check-In		
8:00 am - 8:15 am	Welcome and Opening Remarks	Dr. Brittany G. Suggs VACES President NGE Room 101
	VCA Foundation Presentation	Kysha Washington LPC, ACS VCAF President NGE Room 101
8:15 am - 9:00 am	Keynote Address	Dr. Sam Steen - George Mason University NGE Room 101
9:00 am - 9:50 am	Session I: Education Presentations Roundtable Discussions	<p>Glory Munthali William & Mary NGE Room 106</p> <p>Austin T. LaBrot Virginia Commonwealth University NGE Room 107</p> <p>Jennifer L. Cossman Marshall University NGE Room 108</p> <p>Jayla N. Gillis Virginia Commonwealth University NGE Room 109</p> <p>Courtney A. Nishnick and Ajayla S. Evins Old Dominion University NGE Room 118</p> <p>Gregory Young Norfolk State University NGE Room 119</p>

10:00 am - 10:50 am	Session II: Education Presentations Roundtable Discussions	<p>Janita W. Daggy Liberty University NGE Room 106</p> <p>Kim C. Hughes, Spencer Allison, and Corde Miles William & Mary NGE Room 107</p> <p>Catalina R. Kraft Jill Kivikoski, and Destiny A. Hodgson Old Dominion University NGE Room 108</p> <p>Tyler P. Virgilio and Alex Kempton Liberty University NGE Room 109</p> <p>Chukwuebuka Onyia and Tierra W. Ruffin Old Dominion University NGE Room 118</p> <p>Brittney V. Eichie Old Dominion University NGE Room 119</p>
11:00 am - 11:50 am	Session III: Education Presentations Roundtable Discussions	<p>Margaret M. Poandl Virginia Commonwealth University NGE Room 106</p> <p>Tierra W. Ruffin Old Dominion University NGE Room 107</p> <p>Heejin Weisbrod Norfolk State University NGE Room 108</p> <p>Eden J. Latkin Virginia Commonwealth University NGE Room 109</p> <p>Brianna L. Oglesby-Hart Virginia Commonwealth University NGE Room 118</p> <p>Caleb Best James Madison University NGE Room 119</p>
12:00 pm - 12:30 pm	Lunch	NGE Second Floor Atriums
12:30 pm - 1:00 pm	Session IV: Poster Presentations	NGE Second Floor Atriums

1:00 pm - 1:50 pm	Session V: Education Presentations Roundtable Discussions	<p>Glory Munthali William & Mary NGE Room 106</p> <p>Christine Marie, Q., Turner Old Dominion University NGE Room 107</p> <p>Stephanie E. Hutchison James Madison University NGE Room 108</p> <p>Jennifer L. Cossman Marshall University NGE Room 109</p> <p>Alysha A. Scott Liberty University NGE Room 118</p> <p>Sheevah A. Amen South University Richmond NGE Room 119</p>
2:00 pm - 2:50 pm	Session VI: Education Presentations Roundtable Discussions	<p>Sirena M. Pangelinan Capella University NGE Room 106</p> <p>Courtney A. Nishnick, Catalina R. Kraft, and Kayla M. Kelly Old Dominion University NGE Room 107</p> <p>Phylcia R. Littleton and Ashlee E. Davis Regent University NGE Room 108</p> <p>Blake C. Neal University of Lynchburg NGE Room 109</p> <p>Brenda Gonzalez, Maribel Tohara Nakamatsu, Alejandra Salazar Salame, and Jennifer Aguilar George Mason University NGE Room 117</p> <p>Kristen Tuxbury Virginia Commonwealth University NGE Room 118</p>

3:00 pm - 3:50 pm	Session VII: Education Presentations Roundtable Discussions	<p>Janita W. Daggy Liberty University NGE Room 106</p> <p>Tierra W. Ruffin Old Dominion University NGE Room 107</p> <p>Taylor K. Cheski Virginia Commonwealth University NGE Room 108</p> <p>Tarsha T. White Liberty University NGE Room 109</p> <p>Tammy K Griffin Crown College NGE Room 117</p> <p>Kim C. Hughes, Spencer Allison, and Corde Miles William & Mary NGE Room 119</p>
4:00 pm	Closing Ceremony and Announcement of 2025 Grant Recipients	<p>VACES Grant Committee Dr. Angelia D. Dickens, VACES Treasurer Dr. Sonja Lund, VACES Secretary Dr. Jeri L. Ellis, VACES Secretary-Elect</p>

Conference Presentations

Saturday, March 8, 2025

NBCC Qualifiable Presentations (Confirmed Soon)

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

8:15 am – 9:00 am

NGE Room 101

Session Title:

We Will Win

Keynote Speaker:

Sam Steen, Ph.D.

George Mason University

Session Description:

Professor Steen will delve into his educational background and share personal anecdotes that have shaped his professional path, which remains dynamic and ever evolving. The session will include a focus on strategies employed to overcome challenges. Through reflective storytelling, Professor Steen will provide valuable insights into resilience, perseverance, and growth.

In the final segment of the session, Professor Steen will engage the audience in a thought-provoking activity, encouraging them to design a personal vision that can inspire and guide their thoughts, emotions, and actions over the upcoming semester. Attendees will be invited to reflect on their own journeys, evaluate their experiences, and articulate a set of tangible goals to strive toward, fostering a proactive and purpose-driven approach to their academic and professional endeavors.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Explore one's own professional identity across a spectrum.
- Reflect on a challenging time in one's academic/professional journey.
- Create a set of tangible guidelines to live by over the next semester.

Speaker Bio:

Dr. Sam Steen holds a bachelors in Psychology, a Master's Degree in School Counseling, and a Ph.D. in Education with a specialty in preparing school counselors and mental health professionals. He holds the rank of Professor and is a licensed Professional School Counselor; the Director of the Diversity Research Action Consortium; and the Director of the Child, Family, Community Engagement Division at George Mason University. Dr. Steen specializes in school counseling, group counseling, and cultivating Black students' academic identity development.

Dr. Steen was a school counselor for 10 years, and this experience shapes his research agenda, approach to teaching, and service. Further, Dr. Steen is a Fellow for the Association for Specialists in Group Work (ASGW) and is the recipient of the Al Dye Research Award and the Professional Advancement Award, both from ASGW. He received the Counselors for Social Justice (CSJ) Advocacy of the Year Award, has written over 80 articles and book chapters, and is the co-author of the following four books:

- *Group Counseling Leadership Skills for School Counselors: Stretching Beyond Interventions* (2021),
- *Anti-Black Racism in Contemporary Society* (2022),
- *Introduction to Group Counseling: A Culturally Sustaining and Inclusive Framework* (2023), and
- *Advancing Equity-Focused School Counseling for All Students* (2024).

In addition, Dr. Steen has three additional books under contract. Dr. Steen's research has been funded by the National Science Foundation which aims to advance programs, knowledge, and skills targeting Black male middle school students for better accessibility, and higher likelihood for success, in Algebra 1 and future STEM related careers and most recently by the Department of Education which provides funding to prepare the next vanguard of school based mental health practitioners from underrepresented backgrounds to work in under resourced school communities.

CONCURRENT SESSION I

9:00 am - 9:50 am

NGE Room 106

Session Title:

Fostering Healing through Cultural Competence: A Trauma-Informed Strategy for Addiction Groups

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Glory Munthali, M.A., M.S., NCC, CSAC-Supervisee, Resident in Counseling
William & Mary

Session Format:

50-Minute Education Session

Session Description:

This session explores the integration of trauma-informed care with socio-cultural perspectives in addiction group counseling. Recognizing the unique cultural backgrounds and experiences of individuals, we will discuss how trauma and substance use intersect with issues of identity, race, and community. Participants will learn strategies for fostering a culturally sensitive, trauma-informed environment that promotes healing, resilience, and connection. This approach aims to empower counselors to address both the emotional and socio-cultural dimensions of trauma, creating more inclusive and effective group counseling sessions.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Analyze the impact of cultural factors on addiction experiences and recovery processes in a group counseling context, demonstrating comprehension of trauma-informed principles.
- Apply culturally responsive strategies in addiction group counseling sessions and evaluate their effectiveness in promoting healing and resilience among diverse clients.
- Create a culturally informed group counseling plan that incorporates trauma-informed practices, synthesizing knowledge from various cultural perspectives to enhance the therapeutic process."

Presenter Bio(s):

Glory Munthali is a passionate and dedicated counselor, educator, and researcher with extensive experience in trauma-informed practices and addiction recovery. Glory holds a Master of Science in Community and Trauma Counseling with a specialization in Addiction and Recovery from Thomas Jefferson University, and a Master of Arts in Organizational Leadership. She is a National Certified Counselor (NCC), CSAC-Supervisee, Resident in Counseling, and currently a second-year doctoral student in Counselor Education and Supervision at the William & Mary School of Education. Outside of academic and professional work, enjoys engaging in self-care activities like working out, trying new restaurants, and reading.

CONCURRENT SESSION I

9:00 am - 9:50 am

NGE Room 107

Session Title:

Maybe Freud was like 11% Right: What Your Theories Class Won't Teach You About Modern-Day Psychodynamic Counseling Practices

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Austin T. LaBrot, M.S., P-LPC (Mississippi), NCC
Virginia Commonwealth University

Session Format:

50-Minute Education Session

Session Description:

You might be unconsciously engaging in psychodynamic counseling practices—let's talk about it! Despite some outlandish claims he published, maybe Freud wasn't entirely incorrect. Today's psychodynamic theory combines these ingredients to provide an efficacious, theoretical counseling framework: Attachment, ACEs, Self Psychology, and how the past influences you right now.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Critique psychodynamic counseling practices detached from their originator when implementing this theoretical orientation during counseling sessions.
- Describe and apply examples of psychodynamic therapy interventions when completing practicum and internship courses (and beyond).
- Compare psychodynamic efficacy measures against popular behavioral counseling interventions.

Presenter Bio(s):

Austin LaBrot is a full-time doctoral student and Teaching Assistant at Virginia Commonwealth University studying Counselor Education and Supervision. His clinical experiences include substance use rehabilitation and chaplaincy. When not writing manuscripts, he enjoys playing tennis, watching all the rom-coms he can, and playing frisbee with his labradoodle, Gracie Lou.

CONCURRENT SESSION I

9:00 am - 9:50 am

NGE Room 108

Session Title:

Draw Me In: The Value of Expressive Arts Interventions in Counseling

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Jennifer L. Cossman, MT-BC, FAMI
Marshall University

Session Format:

50-Minute Education Session

Session Description:

This presentation will demystify the use of visual and performing arts in counseling, highlighting research and practical applications. Attendees will learn how to incorporate various art forms, understand their significance in client progress, and differentiate between expressive arts in counseling and expressive arts therapists, with opportunities for hands-on participation.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Discuss the current research into the use of expressive arts interventions in counseling and their impact on client outcomes.
- Implement expressive art interventions with their client, including discussions of meaning, emotional content, and relation to client goals.
- Recognize how clients may feel when asked to create art during a counseling session.
- Identify the potential risks of expressive arts interventions.
- Describe the difference between counselors who incorporate expressive arts in sessions and Expressive Arts Therapists.

Presenter Bio(s):

Jennifer Cossman is a board-certified music therapist with 20 years of experience working with diverse populations in both medical and mental health settings. Her work primarily focused on end-of-life care, life-limiting illnesses, and the spiritual/religious challenges clients faced during those times. She is currently pursuing a master's degree at Marshall University, specializing in trauma and grief. Jennifer has advanced training in the Bonny Method of Guided Imagery and Music (GIM) and is actively working toward EMDR certification.

CONCURRENT SESSION I

9:00 am - 9:50 am

NGE Room 109

Session Title:

How to Address Imposter Syndrome to Prevent Burnout in Students of Color

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Jayla N. Gillis, B.S.

Virginia Commonwealth University

Session Format:

50-Minute Education Session

Session Description:

This session examines how imposter syndrome uniquely impacts students of color, contributing to stress and burnout. Participants will explore strategies to foster self-confidence, build supportive networks, and promote resilience. The discussion emphasizes culturally responsive approaches to empower students of color to thrive academically and professionally while mitigating burnout risks.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Recall the key psychological, social, and cultural factors that contribute to imposter syndrome in students of color.
- Explain how imposter syndrome influences burnout and academic or professional outcomes for students of color.
- Apply culturally responsive counseling strategies to address imposter syndrome in concrete academic and professional settings.
- Analyze the systemic and interpersonal factors that perpetuate imposter syndrome and identify opportunities for intervention.
- Synthesize: effective mentoring and support frameworks to foster resilience and reduce burnout among students of color in addressing imposter syndrome and promoting academic and personal success.

Presenter Bio(s):

Jayla Gillis is a dedicated graduate student in her final year of Virginia Commonwealth University's Master of Education program, specializing in the Family and Marriage Counseling track. With a passion for fostering healthy relationships and supporting individuals through life's challenges, she brings a compassionate and creative approach to counseling. Jayla has gained hands-on experience through her internship, working with diverse clients and addressing complex issues. Her academic focus and practical skills reflect her commitment to promoting emotional well-being and resilience in families and couples. Jayla looks forward to making a meaningful impact in the counseling field.

CONCURRENT SESSION I

9:00 am - 9:50 am

NGE Room 118

Session Title:

Beyond Words: Counseling Strategies to Empower and Support Clients After Miscarriage, Stillbirth, and Infant Loss

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Courtney A. Nishnick, M.S.Ed., CSAC, Resident in Counseling
Old Dominion University

Ajayla S. Evins, M.S., CRC, NCC
Old Dominion University

Session Format:

50-Minute Roundtable Discussion

Session Description:

This roundtable discussion addresses the prevalence and impact of miscarriage, stillbirth, and infant loss, as well as increases awareness of considerations for counseling populations grieving the loss of baby. It highlights the need for tailored counseling spaces and enhanced trainings for professionals to improve the counseling experiences of this population.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Identify the nuanced emotional and psychological challenges faced by individuals grieving a baby due to miscarriage, stillbirth, and infant loss.
- Demonstrate the ethical and advocacy dimensions of counseling practice in addressing the needs of people who have lost a baby, including the role of counseling professionals in advocating for improved resources and support networks within their communities.
- Examine unique counseling needs of people who have lost a baby, including strategies for providing sensitive and effective support in therapeutic settings.
- Prepare practical interventions and therapeutic approaches tailored to the unique needs of people who have lost a baby, including methods for fostering resilience, coping with grief, and navigating complex emotions associated with baby loss.
- Evaluate potential gaps in existing counseling competencies and resources for supporting individuals who have experienced baby loss and develop strategies for addressing these gaps within both academic curricula and clinical practice.

Presenter Bio(s):

Courtney A. Nishnick is a Resident in Counseling and Certified Substance Abuse Counselor in the Commonwealth of Virginia. She graduated with a master's in counseling in 2020 and has since completed numerous trainings centered on supporting people who have experienced perinatal loss. From 2021-2023, she founded a local support group for overcoming miscarriage, infant loss, and stillbirth before making the decision to expand her education by pursuing a Ph.D. in Counselor Education & Supervision at Old Dominion University. She has continued to serve this population by specializing in perinatal mental health and committing to ongoing advocacy efforts.

Ajayla Evins is a second-year doctoral student in counseling at Old Dominion University, specializing in grief, loss, and trauma-informed care. With a focus on empowering marginalized communities through culturally responsive counseling practices, she brings both research and clinical experience to her work in supporting individuals through complex bereavement, including miscarriage, stillbirth, and infant loss. Deeply committed to multiculturalism and advocacy, Ajayla seeks to expand representation and equity within the mental health field. Her academic and clinical pursuits are driven by a dedication to mentoring and advocating for clients and students navigating systemic barriers in mental health and higher education.

CONCURRENT SESSION I

9:00 am - 9:50 am

NGE Room 119

Session Title:

Demystifying Ethical and Legal Accountability: Exploring the Adjudication Process for Counselor Violations

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Gregory Young, B.S., QMHP, CSAC-S
Norfolk State University

Session Format:

50-Minute Roundtable Discussion

Session Description:

This session offers a transparent discussion on the adjudication process for counselor ethical and legal violations. Led by Mr. Gregory Young, with a panel including Dr. Sophia Sills-Taylor, Dr. Suzan K. Thompson, and a Virginia Board of Counseling member, participants will explore board roles, support for impaired professionals, and strategies to navigate ethical challenges in the counseling profession.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Identify the key steps in the adjudication process, from complaint submission to final determination, and understand the role of the Board of Counseling.
- Recognize the role and decision-making responsibilities of board members in adjudicating ethical violations and their duty to uphold the integrity of the counseling profession.
- Describe the Health Practitioners' Monitoring Program (HPMP) and its role in supporting counselors who may be struggling with mental health, substance use, or professional competence.
- Use knowledge of the adjudication process to strengthen personal ethical practice, understand how to avoid ethical missteps, and know where to turn for support when facing ethical dilemmas.

Presenter Bio(s):

Gregory Young is a Qualified Mental Health Professional (QMHP) and Certified Substance Abuse Counselor-Supervisee (CSAC-S) dedicated to promoting wellness and recovery. He is currently pursuing a master's degree in Mental Health Counseling at Norfolk State University, where he continues to develop his expertise in ethical practice and client-centered care. As the owner of Elevated Heights, LLC, he provides mental health and substance use support services with a focus on advocacy, accountability, and personal growth. Through mentorship and community impact, Mr. Young aims to create inclusive spaces where individuals feel seen, supported, and empowered to reach their full potential.

CONCURRENT SESSION II
10:00 am - 10:50 am
NGE Room 106

Session Title:

Emergency Medical Technicians: The Battle for Mental Health

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Janita W. Daggy, M.A., LPC-S
Liberty University

Session Format:

50-Minute Education Session

Session Description:

EMS providers experience psychological changes from encountering traumatic events regularly, often developing or exasperating mental health disorders. Increasing access to counseling resources for this population is important and must begin through raising awareness with mental health professionals. The session seeks to contribute to the discussion of barriers that Emergency Medical Technicians face.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Explain and understand the difficulties of occupational stressors in prehospital care, recognizing the impact that daily interactions have on EMT's mental health.
- Analyze psychosocial risks related to prehospital care while being able to critique barriers to addressing positive mental health.
- Demonstrate insights, strategies, and application having the ability to connect knowledge and application when working with an EMT involved in a prehospital occupation.

Presenter Bio(s):

Janita W. Daggy is a doctoral student in Counselor Education and Supervision at Liberty University. She holds an LPC-S license in the state of Virginia. She has an active client load and supervises counselors in residency seeking full licensure. Janita has an active research and scholarship agenda and has presented at the local, state, and national level on counseling related topics.

CONCURRENT SESSION II

10:00 am - 10:50 am

NGE Room 107

Session Title:

De-tangling Body Dissatisfaction: Practical Application of a Novel Humanistic Framework

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Kim C. Hughes, M.A., Ed.S., Resident in Counseling
William & Mary

Spencer Allison, Ed.S., NCC
William & Mary

Corde Miles, M.Ed., Resident in Counseling
William & Mary

Session Format:

50-Minute Education Session

Session Description:

Body dissatisfaction is pervasive and associated with adverse health outcomes, yet rarely addressed directly as the focus of counseling. The prevalence of body dissatisfaction that it's a "normal" part of the human experience. This session will offer psychoeducation and introduce a multi-dimensional framework and associated interventions for addressing body dissatisfaction.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Define body dissatisfaction as an isolated construct, and illustrate how historical research has overshadowed its pervasiveness across cultures and identities.
- Describe how narrative therapy and liberation psychology are relevant in addressing body dissatisfaction.
- Apply current interventions using the liberation through narration framework to a case study addressing body dissatisfaction with a client.

Presenter Bio(s):

Kim C. Hughes is a current doctoral student in the Counselor Education Ph.D. program at William & Mary and resident-in-counseling. Kim obtained her M.A. and Ed.S. degrees from James Madison University. Kim has provided counseling services at both a college counseling center and community mental health agency and has supported children, adolescents, adults and family systems. Kim's research and clinical interests include LGBTQIA+, sexual pleasure and temperament, anti-fat bias, and emerging therapies (i.e., psychedelics). She has presented at the state, national, and international levels on anti-fat bias, sexual desire and temperament, body presentation and disordered eating, psychedelics, and race-based trauma.

Spencer Allison (he/him) is a current doctoral student at the College of William & Mary pursuing his Ph.D. in Counselor Education. Spencer's research interests relate to school counselor education, equitable school counseling practices, supporting LGBTQ+ students, and counselor attrition/retention.

Corde Miles (she/her) is a current doctoral student at the College of William & Mary pursuing her Ph.D. in Counselor Education. Corde's research interests relate to the military/veteran population, child centered play therapy, religion and spirituality, and the experience of Gen-Z clinicians.

CONCURRENT SESSION II

10:00 am - 10:50 am

NGE Room 108

Session Title:

The Justice Shelf: Creation and Implementation of the ODU-CSJ Diversity Book Club

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Catalina R. Kraft, M.A., NCC, Resident in Counseling
Old Dominion University

Jill Kivikoski, M.S.Ed.
Old Dominion University

Destiny A. Hodgson, M.S.Ed.
Old Dominion University

Session Format:

50-Minute Education Session

Session Description:

In this session, presenters will discuss how to design and implement a diversity-based book club for counseling graduate students to increase discussion around social and cultural foundations in a natural and equalized setting.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Design a diversity-based book club for counseling graduate students.
- Implement a diversity-based book club for counseling graduate students.
- Evaluate the strengths and areas of growth of implementing a diversity-based book club for counseling graduate students.
- Implement a book club at their own university based on the needs of their students.

Presenter Bio(s):

Catalina Kraft is a second-year doctoral student at Old Dominion University where she studies Education with a Counseling concentration. She is also a Resident in Counseling. She has experience co-facilitating group counseling, providing mental health urgent care services, and conducting individual therapy. Her research interests include professional counselor identity development, counselor education, and social justice.

Jill Kivikoski is a second-year doctoral learner in a CACREP-accredited counselor education and supervision program and has completed her M.S.Ed. in clinical mental health counseling. She has presented at state-wide conferences on the use of virtual reality in counseling practice based on her experiences during practicum and internship and best practices utilizing and supervising the use of mental health technologies in counseling.

Destiny Hodgson is a Counseling Master's graduate from Old Dominion University. She has experience in co-facilitating substance use groups and providing individual counseling.

CONCURRENT SESSION II

10:00 am - 10:50 am

NGE Room 109

Session Title:

Shaping Identities Online: The Double-Edged Sword of Social Media for Adolescents

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Tyler P. Virgilio, B.A.

Liberty University

Alex Kempton, B.A.

Liberty University

Session Format:

50-Minute Education Session

Session Description:

Return to your high school days with Tyler and Alex and join us in a mock after-school extra-credit workshop to educate yourself on the ways that social media changes your identity. This session sheds light on how to talk with teens about the controversial issue of screens in an informative and age-targeted presentation.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Discuss the impact social media has on adolescents.
- Evaluate whether someone is addicted to social media.
- Develop a treatment plan for social media addiction.

Presenter Bio(s):

Tyler Virgilio is a Master's student in Clinical Mental Health Counseling at Liberty University. His research investigates the effects of social media usage on adolescents and how to provide effective counseling to adolescents who are addicted. Tyler received his B.A. in Psychology from the University of Binghamton and has presented his research findings to other graduate students and professors. He aims to work with Counselors Without Borders to provide mental health support to emergency relief areas.

Alex Kempton is a Master's student of Clinical Mental Health Counseling at Liberty University. His interests in human performance optimization led him into research related to what causes young people to fail upon entering adulthood. He believes that the digital age and issues related to screen use play a substantial negative role in adolescent development. His research further investigates the impact of this relatively new technology. Alex received a B.S. in Biology (Emph. Biotechnology) from BYU-Idaho. After careful reconsideration, he decided that working with youth and parents of youth would be more productive than staring through a microscope.

CONCURRENT SESSION II

10:00 am - 10:50 am

NGE Room 118

Session Title:

Experiential Learning Through the Lens of Virtual Reality

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Chukwuebuka Onyia, B.Ed., M.S.Ed.
Old Dominion University

Tierra W. Ruffin, LPC
Old Dominion University

Session Format:

50-Minute Roundtable Discussion

Session Description:

This literature review will examine the transformative potential of virtual reality (VR) in facilitating experiential learning in counsellor education. It will also examine scholarly opinions and studies about VR's potential to enhance experiential learning in counsellor education. I will discuss insights, difficulties, and methods for incorporating virtual reality into learning and promoting experiential learning in counsellor education.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Analyze the potential of virtual reality as a tool to enhance experiential learning in counsellor education by identifying its benefits and challenges.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of virtual reality in promoting empathy and cultural competence in counselling students through immersive and interactive experiences.
- Create strategies for implementing virtual reality -based teaching methods tailored to diverse learning environments and student needs.

Presenter Bio(s):

Chukwuebuka Onyia is a first-year doctoral student in the ODU counselor education and supervision Ph.D. program. He is from Nigeria and earned both his B.A. and M.A. in guidance and counseling from Nigeria. With years of professional experience as an international school counselor, his research surrounds technology and its effect on counselors' mental health.

Tierra Ruffin has been a LPC for 7 years, focusing on Substance Abuse and recovery. She is also in the counselor education and supervision doctoral program at Old Dominion University. Mainly, she works at the Hampton Newport News CSB within the substance abuse and recovery department. She is also an author of the book, "I Need to Talk, but NOT to a Therapist." This book acts as a guide to demystify counseling, breaking down barriers in an effort to assist individuals to experience a growth mindset. When not providing therapy, she enjoys making memories with her family.

CONCURRENT SESSION II

10:00 am - 10:50 am

NGE Room 119

Session Title:

Expanding Relationship Paradigms in Counseling: Effective Theories for Nonnormative Relational Styles

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Brittney V. Eichie, B.S.
Old Dominion University

Session Format:

50-Minute Roundtable Discussion

Session Description:

This roundtable explores the evolution of relationship counseling beyond traditional couples and marriages to include “throuples”, open marriages, and polyamory. Attendees will examine themes from literature on counseling approaches for nonnormative relationships and discuss the perspectives and experiences of counselors adapting to these diverse relational styles.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Identify key themes from literature on effective counseling approaches for throuples, open marriages, and polyamorous relationships.
- Compare traditional therapeutic models with adaptations used in counseling non-normative relationship styles.
- Analyze the ethical and practical implications of working with diverse relational paradigms.
- Evaluate counselor experiences and perspectives in adapting to nonnormative relationships.
- Propose strategies for integrating inclusive practices into counselor education and supervision.

Presenter Bio(s):

Brittney Eichie is a graduate student at Old Dominion University, pursuing a master’s degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling, with expected graduation in December 2026. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Human Services with a minor in Psychology. Brittney has extensive experience in counseling, program coordination, and community engagement, having served roles that support underserved populations and promote individual well-being. As a former president of the Human Services Association, she has demonstrated leadership and a commitment to volunteerism. Her dedication to mental health and human services reflects a passion for fostering resilience and positive change.

CONCURRENT SESSION III

11:00 am - 11:50 am

NGE Room 106

Session Title:

Exploring Posttraumatic Growth Experiences Following Interpersonal Trauma

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Margaret M. Poandl, M.A., LPC
Virginia Commonwealth University

Session Format:

50-Minute Education Session

Session Description:

This presentation will report results from a qualitative study that explored professional counselors' experience working with interpersonal trauma experiencers in order to better understand their posttraumatic growth process. By understanding posttraumatic growth concepts, counselors will be better poised to incorporate growth into trauma-informed treatment.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Identify the basic tenets of PTG among interpersonal trauma experiencers.
- Describe qualitative research study results of counselors' observations of interpersonal trauma experiencers' PTG process.
- Describe implications for counselors in incorporating PTG concepts in their practice.
- Discuss implications for counselor educators and supervisors to help counselors-in-training incorporate PTG concepts into their practice."

Presenter Bio(s):

Margaret Poandl is a Counselor Education and Supervision doctoral student at Virginia Commonwealth University and a Licensed Professional Counselor. Since 2012, she has practiced clinical mental health counseling in inpatient, community, and outpatient settings, and is trained in EMDR. Her research focus is posttraumatic growth in therapeutic settings and interpersonal trauma. She earned a M.A. in Counseling from Wake Forest University and a B.A. in Psychology and Sociology from the University of Virginia.

CONCURRENT SESSION III

11:00 am - 11:50 am

NGE Room 107

Session Title:

Good Times or Hard Times? Unpacking Systemic Barriers and Equipping Therapists with Strategies to Support African American Clients

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Tierra W. Ruffin, LPC
Old Dominion University

Session Format:

50-Minute Education Session

Session Description:

This interactive workshop explores the impact of systemic barriers and generational trauma on African American mental health, highlighting policies like redlining and the War on Drugs. Attendees will learn culturally responsive counseling strategies, integrate historical context into therapy, and apply critical race theory to foster resilience, empowerment, and advocacy in therapeutic practice.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Understand Historical Context: Participants will examine how historical policies such as redlining, the War on Drugs, and the inequitable distribution of GI Bill benefits have perpetuated systemic barriers for African Americans, influencing present-day mental health outcomes.
- Develop Culturally Responsive Practices: Attendees will learn strategies to validate Black clients' lived experiences, integrate historical context into therapy, and reframe narratives to foster empowerment and resilience.
- Enhance Counselor Education: The session will explore the role of social justice supervision models in addressing implicit biases, increasing cultural competence, and equipping counselors to advocate for systemic change.
- Apply Critical Race Theory in Counseling: Participants will gain insights into using CRT to understand how racism and systemic inequities shape mental health experiences and how to incorporate these perspectives into clinical practice.

Presenter Bio(s):

Tierra Ruffin has been a LPC for 7 years, focusing on Substance Abuse and recovery. She is also in the counselor education and supervision doctoral program at Old Dominion University. Mainly, she works at the Hampton Newport News CSB within the substance abuse and recovery department. She is also an author of the book, "I Need to Talk, but NOT to a Therapist." This book acts as a guide to demystify counseling, breaking down barriers in an effort to assist individuals to experience a growth mindset. When not providing therapy, she enjoys making memories with her family.

CONCURRENT SESSION III

11:00 am - 11:50 am

NGE Room 108

Session Title:

Improving the Outcomes of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Using Musicking

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Heejin Weisbrod, B.A.
Norfolk State University

Session Format:

50-Minute Education Session

Session Description:

This presentation explores how integrating long-term musicking with Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) enhances mental health care for chronic conditions. Musicking improves trauma integration, cognitive function, and relapse prevention. It offers a social component not found in traditional CBT, thereby supporting a more effective, holistic approach to mental health treatment.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Define and differentiate between musicking and music therapy.
- Apply conceptual and procedural knowledge of musicking and cognitive behavior therapy to a variety of client scenarios.
- Identify cognitive and affective domains are connected and utilized simultaneously to enrich client sessions using the proposed integrative method.

Presenter Bio(s):

Heejin Weisbrod, a first-generation graduate student from Oak Park, Illinois, is completing her second year in the Master of Urban Education and Mental Health Counseling program at Norfolk State University. Her research focuses on musicking as a counseling strategy, chronic mental illness prevention, and the effects of trauma and aging on brain plasticity. A professional violinist and educator with degrees from Peabody Conservatory and DePaul University, Heejin has presented at the RISE 2023 Convention and is a member of the Golden Key International Honour Society. She is dedicated to advancing community mental health and pursuing a doctorate in clinical psychology.

CONCURRENT SESSION III

11:00 am - 11:50 am

NGE Room 109

Session Title:

Talking Change: Strengthening Parent-Teen Communication for Adolescents with Chronic Illness

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Eden J. Latkin, B.S.

Virginia Commonwealth University

Session Format:

50-Minute Education Session

Session Description:

This session will teach supervisors, counselors, and educators to guide families with an adolescent managing a chronic illness using Motivational Interviewing principles. Focusing on OARS, the session aims to enhance parent-teen communication, affirm the adolescent's experience, encourage healthy behaviors, and prevent long-term consequences of poorly managed treatment.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Learn the core principles of MI as applied to working with families of adolescents diagnosed with a chronic illness to share this knowledge with students, supervisees, or for use in their personal practice.
- Learn how to use OARS techniques to facilitate parent-teen communication through roleplay.
- Analyze the role of supervisors in training and support of counselors by incorporating the MSJCC framework to address the systemic and cultural factors that may impact various families affected by adolescent chronic illness.
- Apply the MSJCC principles and cultural responsiveness to critically analyze parent training strategies, gaining deeper insight into opportunities and barriers parents face when learning MI.

Presenter Bio(s):

Eden J. Latkin is a first-year student studying Couples and Family Counseling. Eden's personal experience with Type 1 diabetes inspired interest in the counseling field, especially within family dynamics. As a Graduate Academic Coach at VCU, Eden's learned the importance of rapport-building and a person-centered approach, skills that have been further shaped by personal mentoring experience in elementary and high schools. These experiences have shaped Eden's counseling identity and drawn the presenter to Motivational Interviewing, Person-Centered, and Narrative Therapy, which align with Eden's values of empowering individuals and families. As Eden anticipates graduation in 2026, Eden eager to advocate for individuals with disabilities and focus on fostering family resilience.

CONCURRENT SESSION III

11:00 am - 11:50 am

NGE Room 118

Session Title:

Supporting LGBTQ+ Parents and Children: Understanding Family Dynamics & Challenges

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Brianna L. Oglesby-Hart, B.A.

Virginia Commonwealth University

Session Format:

50-Minute Roundtable Discussion

Session Description:

This session explores the unique challenges faced by LGBTQ+ parents and children, examining how these experiences impact family systems. Attendees will gain insight into key statistics, world circumstances, and how these challenges translate into the therapeutic space. Also providing guidance for counselors treating queer families & individuals, and group discussion.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Identify the specific needs of LGBTQ+ parents & children in coping with external discrimination and foster resilience.
- Develop practical strategies and implementations of theory for treating LGBTQ+ families that promote cohesion and communication.
- Apply evidenced based approaches to address the mental health and relational challenges faces by LGBTQ+ parents and children.
- Understand the impact of societal stigma and family rejection on the mental health and well-being of LGBTQ+ parents and children.
- Remember key statistics and real-world circumstances that affect LGBTQ+ families in therapeutic settings.

Presenter Bio(s):

Brianna Oglesby-Hart is a 23-year-old woman from Baltimore, Maryland, who earned her Bachelor of Arts from Virginia Commonwealth University in the spring of 2023. She is currently pursuing her Master's in Counseling at VCU, specializing in the Couples and Family track, and plans to graduate in the summer of 2026. Bri is deeply passionate about working with individuals, as well as supporting queer communities and other marginalized groups. Post graduation she hopes to obtain her LPC & one day run her own private practice, where she can nurture minds, create affirming spaces for people to heal their trauma, and empower people to build healthier, more fulfilling lives and relationships.

CONCURRENT SESSION III

11:00 am - 11:50 am

NGE Room 119

Session Title:

Neurocounseling

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Caleb Best, B.A.

James Madison University

Session Format:

50-Minute Roundtable Discussion

Session Description:

Neurocounseling is a new and innovative approach to mental health that focuses on helping a client understand the complexities of the brain, and the myriad of ways that these systems can affect a person's feelings, thoughts, and behaviors. This presentation will discuss the positives, negatives, and recent research on what neurocounseling could mean for future generations of counselors, and the ways in which as counselors, we can make sure we are paying attention to the biological aspects of our clients that are sometimes overlooked.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Describe neurocounseling.
- Discuss the positives, negatives, and recent research on what neurocounseling.
- Analyze the implications of what neurocounseling means for the field.

Presenter Bio(s):

Caleb Best is a first-year graduate student at James Madison University, currently enrolled in the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program. Caleb previously interned at the George Mason Center for Community Mental Health and now serves as a graduate assistant at the counseling center. Caleb always strives to give his best in every endeavor he undertakes.

SESSION IV: POSTER PRESENTATION

12:30 pm - 1:00 pm

NGE Second Floor Atriums

Presentation Title:

The Needs of Tornado Victims

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Jackson C. Crowe, B.S.

University of Lynchburg

Presentation Description:

Tornadoes are powerful storms that regularly occur in the U.S. While relief efforts are well-documented, the long-lasting effects go unnoticed. In this session, long-term mental health effects of those who experienced the devastating 2011 tornado in Joplin, Missouri are explored.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Define tornado survivors as a potentially underserved population in need of clinical care.
- Describe some of the negative mental health effects of those who experienced the Joplin tornado, and discuss how many more survivors experience these same symptoms.
- Discuss the need for further research, further resources, and accessible ways to provide critical care for this population.

Presenter Bio(s):

Jackson Crowe is a current Clinical Mental Health Counseling graduate student at the University of Lynchburg. He is also a graduate assistant coach for the men's and women's tennis programs. Jackson strives for authenticity, curiosity, and inclusivity in all spheres of his life. Outside of his studies and coaching, he can be found with his puppy, staying updated with weather trends, playing piano, and going on adventures with friends.

SESSION IV: POSTER PRESENTATION

12:30 pm - 1:00 pm

NGE Second Floor Atriums

Presentation Title:

The Long-term Impacts of Institutional Betrayal in the Workplace

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Sue Lunt, B.A., M.A.

University of Lynchburg

Presentation Description:

Institutional betrayal in the workplace can trigger trauma responses including anxiety, depression, and sleep disorders. As mental healthcare providers it is important to have an awareness of what institutional betrayal looks like, how it could manifest itself in our client's bodies, and the ways it may present differently depending on a client's background.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Identify what Institutional Betrayal is
- Explain why Institutional Betrayal is important to acknowledge this type of trauma
- Describe can be done to create more awareness"

Presenter Bio(s):

Sue Lunt is a student in the CMHC program at the University of Lynchburg. She received her master's in Social Justice and Human Rights from Arizona State University in 2021. Her research primarily focuses on the ways in which institutional trauma goes unrecognized in a variety of settings.

SESSION IV: POSTER PRESENTATION

12:30 pm - 1:00 pm

NGE Second Floor Atriums

Presentation Title:

Elite Mormon Athletes

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Kelly N. Furr, M.S., LMFT

Virginia Commonwealth University

Presentation Description:

This poster presentation will share results from a study on elite Mormon athletes and will describe the qualitative findings of some cultural experiences unique to Mormon athletes including observing the Word of Wisdom health code, ethical dilemmas of competing on Sundays, and how missionary service disrupts athletic careers.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Describe the conceptual framework and methodology used by the researcher.
- Identify ways that elite Mormon athletes' observation of the Word of Wisdom affects their athletic identity.
- Discuss ways that elite Mormon athletes' religious identity creates a moral dilemma for whether or not to compete on Sundays.

Presenter Bio(s):

Kelly N. Furr is a doctoral candidate at Virginia Commonwealth University in Counseling Education and Supervision. She is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and owns a telehealth private practice where she specializes in working with Mormon clients and athletes. Currently, she serves as the president of an international association that supports clinical best practices in Mormon mental health. Her research interests focus on how counselors can be culturally competent to serve Mormon and athlete populations.

SESSION IV: POSTER PRESENTATION

12:30 pm - 1:00 pm

NGE Second Floor Atriums

Presentation Title:

GAPS: Examining Sense of Belonging in Black Males in CACREP Accredited Doctoral CES Programs

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Clarence K. Bumpas, M.A., NCC, LPC
Old Dominion University

Presentation Description:

This presentation explores the sense of "belongingness" among Black males in CACREP-accredited Counseling Education & Supervision doctoral programs. Highlighting systemic challenges, cultural influences, and the impact of mentoring and community. Attendees will gain insights fostering inclusive environments that support retention, success, and empowerment for Black male doctoral students.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Identify current systemic and personal barriers as well as protective factors and current best practices aimed at the retention of Black males in CACREP -accredited CES programs, especially PWIs.
- Explore current and past literature to increase not only the representation of Black males in tenured faculty and leadership positions, reduce attrition, and enhance recruiting efforts in doctoral programs.

Presenter Bio(s):

Clarence K. Bumpas is a first-year PhD student in Counseling Education & Supervision and a first-generation degree holder at all levels. He earned a dual BA in Communications and Human Services, with a minor in Sociology, from the University of Northern Colorado, followed by an MA in Clinical Mental Health Counseling from Colorado Christian University. With over five years of clinical experience, he is a licensed, nationally certified counselor. In 2025, he became an inaugural AACTE HOLMES Scholar. A former Division I and professional football player, Clarence is also an avid philanthropist and social justice advocate, committed to empowering underserved communities.

SESSION IV: POSTER PRESENTATION

12:30 pm - 1:00 pm

NGE Second Floor Atriums

Presentation Title:

Bridging Counselor Education and Integrated Behavioral Healthcare: Addressing Disparities through Interdisciplinary Training

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Monica M. Miller, B.A.
Old Dominion University

Bre R. Williams, B.S.
Old Dominion University

Samantha J. Ewing, B.S.
Old Dominion University

Cearra Lawren Arnold, B.S.
Old Dominion University

Presentation Description:

This session explores strategies for integrating Integrated Behavioral Healthcare (IBH) into counselor education curricula. Learn how counselor educators address barriers, foster interdisciplinary collaboration, and promote social justice in healthcare. Attendees will gain insights into effective teaching methods, curriculum design, and experiential learning to prepare students for IBH roles.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Analyze the challenges counselor educators face in integrating IBH and social justice into their curricula.
- Evaluate effective teaching techniques for preparing students for IBH roles, including experiential learning and interdisciplinary collaboration strategies.
- Design curricula that incorporate IBH principles and address healthcare disparities through equity-focused teaching practices.
- Implement strategies for fostering interdisciplinary communication and team-based problem-solving in IBH training.
- Advocate for institutional support and resource development to enhance IBH education within counselor training programs.

Presenter Bio(s):

Monica Miller is a Master's student in Clinical Mental Health Counseling at Old Dominion University. With expertise in acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) and cognitive-behavioral approaches, Monica has engaged in a year of practicum and internship experience, developed group interventions, and conducted research on diverse populations. Passionate about empowering individuals and promoting well-being, Monica is committed to making a meaningful impact in mental health.

Bre Williams is a graduate student pursuing a master's degree in School Counseling at Old Dominion University. She is currently gaining hands-on experience as a School Counseling Intern, working with K-5 students to support their academic, social, and emotional development. With a strong passion for fostering student success, Bre aspires to become a high school counselor specializing in college and career readiness. As an engaged member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., Bre demonstrates a deep commitment to community service and creating meaningful, positive change.

Samantha Ewing is a graduate student pursuing a master's degree from Old Dominion University in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. She is currently working as an Education Support Specialist with middle school and high school students. She facilitates psychoeducational groups for young women, as well as groups for women who are mothering older adolescents and adult children. With a passion for encouraging women to realize their greatest potential, Samantha seeks to work with women from various demographics holistically with an eclectic mix of therapeutic modalities including Solution Focused Brief Therapy, CBT, and Mindfulness, with an emphasis on health, nutrition, and physical wellness. Samantha is an active member of Phi Kappa Phi and serves as the membership chair for the Delta chapter of Chi Sigma Iota.

Cearra L. Arnold is a graduate student pursuing a master's degree in School Counseling at Old Dominion University. She is currently gaining hands-on experience as a School Counseling Intern at Strawbridge Elementary School, as she is working with K-5 students to support their academic, social, and emotional development. With a strong passion for student success, Cearra aspires to become a middle school counselor specializing in transitions to High School, Social Emotional Regulation, and being culturally accepting to others. Cearra is an engaged member and proud member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., and a proud Cheerleading Coach at Kellam High School in Virginia Beach. She is most excited to become a School Counselor to be a student's number one fan, and support her through those hard and tough life decisions.

SESSION IV: POSTER PRESENTATION

12:30 pm - 1:00 pm

NGE Second Floor Atriums

Presentation Title:

Personal Theory

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Jordyn R. Gunter, B.S.
Norfolk State University

Presentation Description:

A personal theory is one's beliefs on a certain topic. This theory is based on the presenter's own experiences with resilience and represents the presenter's worldview.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Analyze the presenter's personal theory on resilience by identifying the key experiences that have shaped their worldview.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the presenter's personal theory on resilience by comparing it to other theoretical frameworks.
- Create a personal theory on resilience by incorporating one's own experiences and worldview, using the presenter's theory as a foundational guide.

Presenter Bio(s):

Jordyn Gunter graduated a year early from East Carolina University in 2022 with the honor distinction of Magna Cum Laude. There she studied Criminal Justice with a minor in Psychology. Even though Ms. Gunter has earned one degree; she knew that her educational race was not over yet. Her love for children led her to the campus of Norfolk State University. She currently is in her second semester pursuing her Master's in Counseling Education to become a school counselor. During her free time, Ms. Gunter loves spending time with her loved ones, online shopping, and indulging in self-care. If there were three words that could be used to describe Ms. Gunter, one would say, dependable, inquisitive, and caring.

SESSION IV: POSTER PRESENTATION

12:30 pm - 1:00 pm

NGE Second Floor Atriums

Presentation Title:

The All-American Theory

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Winfield J. Edwards, B.S.

Norfolk State University

Presentation Description:

This session will highlight a counseling theory called "The All-American Theory." This theory will be presented in slideshow format, detailing an in-depth look at my views of the meaning of life, one's purpose in life, one's potential to make personal changes, the theory itself, the goals of therapy, the role of the counselor, the methods/techniques of the theory, and its impact. Attendees will leave with a thorough understanding of the thought process behind the theory and potential benefits that can be attained from use of the theory.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Identify potential benefits of The All-American Theory.
- Critique aspects of The All-American Theory.
- Summarize The All-American Theory.

Presenter Bio(s):

Winfield James Edwards holds a Bachelor's of Psychology from Virginia State University and is currently working towards a Master's in School Counseling from Norfolk State University. Winfield has been a health and physical education teacher for the past decade with Chesapeake Public Schools. He is also an accomplished track and field coach, holding championships on the middle and high school level. Winfield is a proud member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Incorporated and was initiated in Spring of 2011. He is currently the scholarship chair for the Chesapeake graduate chapter and has overseen the awarding of over \$30,000 worth of scholarships to high school seniors. Upon completion of his Master's degree, Winfield hopes to use his skills as either a school counselor or towards licensure as a clinical therapist.

SESSION IV: POSTER PRESENTATION

12:30 pm - 1:00 pm

NGE Second Floor Atriums

Presentation Title:

Cultural Competency in Rehabilitation Counseling

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Adam D. Adelugba, B.S., QMHP-T
Norfolk State University

Presentation Description:

This session explores how cultural values and historical experiences shape rehabilitation counseling practices, focusing on South Africa. By examining the integration of cultural traditions into counseling strategies, this study highlights global insights into fostering effective, inclusive rehabilitation approaches that address socio-economic and systemic disparities.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Analyze the impact of cultural, historical, and socio-economic contexts on rehabilitation counseling practices in South Africa.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of community-based rehabilitation (CBR) models in addressing the healthcare needs of marginalized communities in South Africa.
- Create a culturally competent rehabilitation counseling plan by incorporating insights from South Africa's culturally sensitive approaches and the principles of continuous learning and adaptation.

Presenter Bio(s):

Adam D. Adelugba is a dedicated and inspiring mental health counselor passionate about fostering growth and positive change in individuals. Recognized for his creative thinking and problem-solving skills, Adam excels in delivering constructive feedback and guiding skill development. With a focus on both professional and personal enrichment, Adam strives to deepen his understanding of mental health practices and broaden knowledge of oneself and the world. Known for a detail-oriented approach, Adam is committed to providing compassionate care that empowers individuals to overcome challenges and thrive in diverse environments. Adam is enthusiastic about creating meaningful, lasting impacts in the field.

SESSION IV: POSTER PRESENTATION

12:30 pm - 1:00 pm

NGE Second Floor Atriums

Presentation Title:

Empowering Supervisees: Overcoming Perfectionism through Collaborative and Experiential Supervision Strategies

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Nargiza Amirova, M.S. NCC, NCSC, Resident in Counseling
Old Dominion University

Melanie B. Agustin, M.S.Ed, LPC, NCC
Old Dominion University

Presentation Description:

This session examines how supervisors can support supervisees struggling with perfectionism, low self-esteem, and nervousness during practicum and internships. Utilizing the Experiential Supervision Model, it highlights strategies like self-compassion, modeling, and positive reinforcement to foster a supportive, growth-oriented environment that enhances professional development and well-being.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Identify and understand the challenges supervisees face with perfectionism, low self-esteem, and nervousness during practicum and internships.
- Discuss the impact of these challenges on supervisees' professional growth and development, recognizing how they influence learning and adaptation.
- Explore effective strategies within the Experiential Supervision Model to create a supportive and growth-oriented environment.
- Outline practical methods for incorporating self-compassion, modeling, and positive reinforcement in supervision.
- Develop an understanding of comprehensive plans for fostering resilience and confidence in supervisees, enhancing their professional development and well-being.

Presenter Bio(s):

Nargiza Amirova is a Counselor Educator at Old Dominion University, pursuing a Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision (expected May 2025). She holds master's degrees in Clinical Mental Health Counseling and School Counseling, and a bachelor's in English Literature and Women's and Gender Studies. A National Certified Counselor and licensed Professional School Counselor, she has extensive experience as a counselor and instructor. Specializing in Social Learning Theory and Experiential Teaching Theory, she employs culturally competent approaches to support clients and students. Multilingual and adventurous, she connects with diverse populations, focuses on cultural adaptation and mental health, and advocates for social justice and equality.

Melanie B. Agustin is a Licensed Professional Counselor and National Certified Counselor pursuing a Ph.D. in Education, Counseling Education and Supervision at Old Dominion University. She holds a master's degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling and a bachelor's in Interdisciplinary Studies from the University of Virginia. With experience as a Mental Health Therapist at the Children's Hospital of the

King's Daughters, she specializes in integrated behavioral health services. Recognized as an Emerging Leader by the Association for Child and Adolescent Counseling, she is dedicated to improving mental health services for minority populations. Melanie actively mentors and volunteers, advocating for underserved communities.

SESSION IV: POSTER PRESENTATION

12:30 pm - 1:00 pm

NGE Second Floor Atriums

Presentation Title:

Navigating Identity Challenges in Counseling Education and Professional Settings: Addressing Systemic Inequalities, Stereotypes, and Microaggressions

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Nargiza Amirova, M.S. NCC, NCSC, Resident in Counseling
Old Dominion University

Ajayla S. Evins, M.S., CRC, NCC
Old Dominion University

Presentation Description:

This session explores the profound impact of stereotypes and microaggressions on Black individuals in professional and educational settings. Highlighting systemic inequalities and identity loss, it provides actionable strategies for fostering inclusive environments, promoting resilience, and addressing inequities through advocacy, mentorship, and culturally sustaining mental health resources.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Analyze the systemic factors that perpetuate racial stereotypes, microaggressions, and identity loss in professional and educational settings, and their impact on mental health and career progression.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives in addressing systemic inequalities and fostering equitable environments for Black individuals.
- Apply culturally sustaining strategies, such as mentorship, advocacy, and mental health resources, to support Black individuals experiencing identity loss and systemic discrimination.
- Create actionable plans to promote allyship, advocate for equitable policies, and build inclusive environments in workplaces and academic institutions.
- Discuss the psychological and emotional effects of identity loss and microaggressions on Black individuals, utilizing real-life case studies to foster empathy and understanding among participants.

Presenter Bio(s):

Nargiza Amirova is a Counselor Educator at Old Dominion University, pursuing a Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision (expected May 2025). She holds master's degrees in Clinical Mental Health Counseling and School Counseling, and a bachelor's in English Literature and Women's and Gender Studies. A National Certified Counselor and licensed Professional School Counselor, she has extensive experience as a counselor and instructor. Specializing in Social Learning Theory and Experiential Teaching Theory, she employs culturally competent approaches to support clients and students. Multilingual and adventurous, she connects with diverse populations, focuses on cultural adaptation and mental health, and advocates for social justice and equality.

Ajayla Evins is a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) and Nationally Certified Counselor (NCC) dedicated to advocacy for the Black community. She contributes to initiatives addressing disparities and promoting equity for marginalized groups. With expertise in social justice and advocacy, Ajayla supports individuals and families navigating trauma and systemic oppression. Her work prioritizes culturally

responsive care and elevates often-overlooked voices. Ajayla's academic focus explores multiculturalism, the intersection of race and disability, and the impact of racial trauma, reflecting her commitment to creating meaningful change and fostering equity in counseling and rehabilitation.

SESSION IV: POSTER PRESENTATION

12:30 pm - 1:00 pm

NGE Second Floor Atriums

Presentation Title:

Training for the Future: CITs' Experiences with Technology in Practicum

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Jill Kivikoski, M.S.Ed.

Old Dominion University

Ajayla S. Evins, M.S., CRC, NCC

Old Dominion University

Hank Crofford, M.A., LMHC(IN) LPC(VA), NCC, CCTP, CGP

Old Dominion University

Presentation Description:

The purpose of this poster presentation is to detail a VACES grant-funded study that examined counselor-in-training perceptions of readiness for mental health technology in clinical practice. Discussion will include transcendental phenomenological data analysis processes and showcasing preliminary findings aimed to enhance ethical, competent training approaches and promote effective technology integration in counselor education programs.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Explain the process of triangulating data analysis across multiple researchers to ensure trustworthiness in qualitative phenomenological research on counselor-in-training (CIT) experiences.
- Apply techniques such as transcription, horizontalization, and thematic coding to systematically analyze qualitative data related to CITs' use of mental health technologies.
- Demonstrate how to create a composite summary and general description from CIT interview data to capture the essence of their lived experiences in using mental health technologies during practicum.
- Analyze the lived experiences of CIT participants to identify key themes related to their perceptions of preparation, competence, and readiness to integrate mental health technologies in clinical settings.

Presenter Bio(s):

Jill Kivikoski is a second-year doctoral learner in a CACREP-accredited counselor education and supervision program and has completed her M.S.Ed. in clinical mental health counseling. She has presented at state-wide conferences on the use of virtual reality in counseling practice based on her experiences during practicum and internship and best practices utilizing and supervising the use of mental health technologies in counseling.

Ajayla Evins is a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor and a Nationally Certified Counselor. She has several years of experience working in crisis stabilization and inpatient behavioral health hospital settings in Atlanta, GA. Her clinical interests are in supervision and alleviating the barriers to equitable mental health services for minority populations. She is ardent about social justice, advocacy, multiculturalism, and counseling experiences in underserved, unserved, & marginalized communities. Presently, Ajayla Evins is

a full-time doctoral student studying Counselor Education and Supervision at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, VA.

Hank Crofford is a doctoral student at Old Dominion University whose research interests include best practices for counseling and supervision, the role of AI in the counseling field, and advocacy needs for the counseling profession.

SESSION IV: POSTER PRESENTATION

12:30 pm - 1:00 pm

NGE Second Floor Atriums

Presentation Title:

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support Through a Relational Cultural Theoretical Lens

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Spencer E. Allison, Ed.S., NCC

William & Mary

Kim C. Hughes, M.A., Ed.S., Resident in Counseling

William & Mary

Corde Miles, M.Ed., Resident in Counseling

William & Mary

Presentation Description:

This session focuses on relational-cultural theory (RCT), a theory that contextualizes people within the context of relationships, as a viable framework for school counselors to utilize in alignment with multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS). RCT focused tiered supports and implications for school counselors and counselor educators will be presented.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Describe how relational-cultural theory can be utilized by school counselors as a framework for multi-tiered systems of support.
- Implement practical interventions and/or preventative practices related to RCT aligned with MTSS.
- Investigate how they might be able to integrate theory into MTSS practices themselves or educate future school counselors on integrating theory.

Presenter Bio(s):

Spencer Allison (he/him) is currently a first-year student in the counselor education doctoral program at the College of William & Mary, as well as a part-time school counselor at Poquoson High School. His research interests include equitable school counseling practices, school counselor education, supporting LGBTQ+ students, and school counselor retention and satisfaction.

Kim Hughes (she/her) is a current doctoral student at William & Mary, pursuing her Ph.D. in Counselor Education. Kim's research and clinical interests center around anti-fat bias and body dissatisfaction, with an emphasis on social justice. Kim has presented at the state and national levels on anti-fat bias, sexual desire and temperament, body presentation and disordered eating, and race-based trauma.

Corde Miles (she/her) is a current doctoral student at the College of William & Mary pursuing her Ph.D. in Counselor Education. Corde's research interests relate to the military/veteran population, child centered play therapy, religion and spirituality, and the experience of Gen-Z clinicians.

CONCURRENT SESSION V

1:00 pm - 1:50 pm

NGE Room 106

Session Title:

Healing Through Connection: Trauma-Informed Approaches in Addiction Group Counseling

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Glory Munthali, M.A., M.S., NCC, CSAC-Supervisee, Resident in Counseling
William & Mary

Session Format:

50-Minute Education Session

Session Description:

In this session, we will explore the integration of trauma-informed practices in addiction group counseling. Recognizing the profound impact trauma can have on individuals struggling with substance use, this approach emphasizes safety, trust, and empowerment in the therapeutic environment. Participants will gain practical strategies for creating supportive group sessions that acknowledge the role of trauma in addiction, promote resilience, and foster healing through connection. Whether you're a counselor, therapist, or educator, this session will provide valuable insights into enhancing group dynamics, improving participant outcomes, and nurturing a trauma-informed culture in addiction recovery settings.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Identify the core principles of trauma-informed care and how they apply to addiction group counseling settings.
- Analyze the relationship between trauma and substance use disorders and differentiate between trauma-informed and traditional approaches in group therapy.
- Demonstrate practical techniques for fostering emotional safety and trust in trauma-informed addiction group sessions.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of trauma-informed interventions in group counseling, considering both participant outcomes and group dynamics.
- Design a trauma-informed group counseling session tailored to individuals with co-occurring trauma and substance use disorders.

Presenter Bio(s):

Glory Munthali is a passionate and dedicated counselor, educator, and researcher with extensive experience in trauma-informed practices and addiction recovery. Glory holds a Master of Science in Community and Trauma Counseling with a specialization in Addiction and Recovery from Thomas Jefferson University, and a Master of Arts in Organizational Leadership. She is a National Certified Counselor (NCC), CSAC-Supervisee, Resident in Counseling, and currently a second-year doctoral student in Counselor Education and Supervision at the William & Mary School of Education. Outside of academic and professional work, enjoys engaging in self-care activities like working out, trying new restaurants, and reading.

CONCURRENT SESSION V

1:00 pm - 1:50 pm

NGE Room 107

Session Title:

Supporting School Counseling Site Supervisors: Lessons from School Psychologists, School Social Workers, and the Social Justice Model of Supervision

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Christine Marie, Q., Turner, M.Ed., NCC
Old Dominion University

Session Format:

50-Minute Education Session

Session Description:

School counseling site supervisors often receive little or no formal training for supervising Master's level practicum and internship students. This education session will explore best practices through the lens of the Social Justice Model of Supervision, as well as comparisons with site supervision in school psychology and school social work.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Recognize comprehensive, collaborative, and interprofessional supports for school counseling site supervisors to enhance supervisor-supervisee relationships.
- Implement and integrate best practices in site supervision from school psychology and school social work.
- Plan and execute best practices in school counseling site supervision utilizing the Social Justice Model of Supervision framework.

Presenter Bio(s):

Christine Marie Q. Turner (she/her/isuna/siya) is a first year doctoral student in Counselor Education and Supervision at Old Dominion University. Previously, she was a school counselor for eight years and a site supervisor for practicum and internship students for five years. She is passionate about social justice, dismantling oppressive systems in education, advocating for positive media portrayals of school counselors, Filipinx and Asian American/Pacific Islander mental health, and empowering school counselors from diverse intersectional identities.

CONCURRENT SESSION V

1:00 pm - 1:50 pm

NGE Room 108

Session Title:

Cultivating Compassionate Connection: The Intersection of Cultural Humility and the Therapeutic Alliance

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Stephanie E. Hutchison, M.A., LPC
James Madison University

Session Format:

50-Minute Education Session

Session Description:

This session seeks to provide knowledge of the intersection of the therapeutic alliance and cultural humility and how these two concepts can facilitate growth in the therapy practice. This session will also provide information on the importance of the therapeutic relationship and cultural humility in repairing ruptures.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Gain insight and understanding into the following terms: therapeutic alliance, cultural humility, and therapeutic ruptures.
- Apply knowledge and skills learned in session to their clinical practice.
- Demonstrate skills learned through experiential activity. "

Presenter Bio(s):

Stephanie Hutchison is a doctoral student attending a CACREP accredited counselor education program. Stephanie is a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) in Virginia and currently works in a group private practice in Virginia Beach. Stephanie's clinical experience includes substance use, anxiety, depression, interpersonal stressors, and trauma. She has research interests in professional identity development, reducing burnout, and improving supervision in new clinicians.

CONCURRENT SESSION V

1:00 pm - 1:50 pm

NGE Room 109

Session Title:

Music & Imagery in Counseling

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Jennifer L. Cossman, MT-BC, FAMI
Marshall University

Session Format:

50-Minute Education Session

Session Description:

Discover the foundational principles of the Bonny Method of Guided Imagery and Music (GIM) and learn how to create practical adaptations for counseling. This session offers techniques to integrate music and imagery into daily practice, enhancing clients' emotional processing, stress management, and self-awareness, while addressing theoretical orientations and ethical considerations.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Describe the foundational principles and therapeutic process of the Bonny Method of Guided Imagery and Music (GIM), including its historical development and clinical applications.
- Differentiate between traditional GIM and music imagery techniques, identifying how modifications can be tailored to specific client needs and therapy goals.
- Analyze ethical considerations and potential risks involved in incorporating music imagery into therapeutic practices, including cultural sensitivity and client readiness.
- Design structured music imagery interventions by selecting appropriate music, developing supportive scripts, and setting achievable therapeutic goals.
- Evaluate the applicability of music imagery techniques within various counseling theoretical orientations, such as CBT, humanistic, and trauma-informed approaches, to address client-specific concerns.

Presenter Bio(s):

Jennifer Cossman is a board-certified music therapist with 20 years of experience working with diverse populations in both medical and mental health settings. Her work primarily focused on end-of-life care, life-limiting illnesses, and the spiritual/religious challenges clients faced during those times. She is currently pursuing a master's degree at Marshall University, specializing in trauma and grief. Jennifer has advanced training in the Bonny Method of Guided Imagery and Music (GIM) and is actively working toward EMDR certification.

CONCURRENT SESSION V

1:00 pm - 1:50 pm

NGE Room 118

Session Title:

Examining How Mental Health Influences Bodily Shame between Black and White Women

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Alysha A. Scott, M.A.
Liberty University

Session Format:

50-Minute Roundtable Discussion

Session Description:

The intersectionality of bodily image/shame can lead to mental health problems closely associated with body image. There is a significant lack of research focusing specifically on the relationship between bodily shame and mental health of Black and White women and their unique experiences. This session will explore these areas in greater depth including the existing literature on this topic.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Analyze the difference in experiences of bodily shame between Black and White women by comparing the influence of mental health factors highlighted in the research.
- Identify culturally sensitive approaches to address bodily shame in clinical and community settings.
- Discuss the role of bodily image perceptions on the mental health of Black and White women.

Presenter Bio(s):

Alysha Scott is originally from Ohio, where she attended Kent State University. She later moved to Virginia to pursue a graduate counseling program at Hampton University. Currently, she is pursuing a doctoral degree in Community Care and Counseling with a concentration in Marriage and Family at Liberty University. Additionally, she is a resident in counseling, working towards her LPC. Alysha has experience as a school counselor at both PreK-12 and high school levels. Presently, she works as a children's outpatient clinician at her local community services board. In her spare time, she enjoys sewing and reading autobiographies.

CONCURRENT SESSION V

1:00 pm - 1:50 pm

NGE Room 119

Session Title:

Counseling in Communities: How Can We Make Mental Health Services More Accessible to BIPOC Communities?

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Sheevah A. Amen, B.S.

South University Richmond

Session Format:

50-Minute Roundtable Discussion

Session Description:

This session will focus on a presentation of extant literature regarding the discrepancy in accessibility of mental health services between non-marginalized and marginalized communities. Specifically, methods for ensuring accessibility in BIPOC communities will be explored.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Examine the current availability of accessible mental health resources within your community.
- Understand the importance of accessibility and support future efforts towards improving accessibility.
- Investigate the accessibility of the services you provide and how you can work to make mental health services more accessible to all.

Presenter Bio(s):

Sheevah Amen is a graduate student at South University. She is a Las Vegas native who found her way to Richmond by way of Virginia State University. At VSU, she received in Undergraduate Degree in Biology, with a minor in Chemistry and Philosophy. Through her experiences as a Pre-Medicine student, she realized that she preferred taking the time to explore patients' emotions over performing medical interventions. This realization led her to working towards a Master's Degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling at South University.

CONCURRENT SESSION VI

2:00 pm - 2:50 pm

NGE Room 106

Session Title:

Impacts of Attachment Theory on the Supervisory Relationship: From the Supervisor's Perspective

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Sirena M. Pangelinan, M.S., Resident in Counseling
Capella University

Session Format:

50-Minute Education Session

Session Description:

This presentation will describe the impacts of attachment in the literature on worldview and orientation to others, indicating a need for supervisor self-awareness. Culture is impactful within the supervisory relationship, and within attachment literature. This overlap will be considered, describing cultural humility within an attachment supervisory model.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Recognize a synthesized viewpoint on the supervisory relationship from an attachment lens.
- Identify elements of the counseling supervisory relationship.
- Identify the impacts of attachment on the supervisee.
- Discuss implications of looking at this relationship from a supervisor's perspective.

Presenter Bio(s):

Sirena M. Pangelinan is an EMDR trauma therapist in Henrico, VA, who strives to support client's ability to not only survive, but thrive. Her specialty areas include complex trauma, intergenerational trauma, substance use disorders, eating disorders, adult attachment disorders, and neurodivergence. She values the role that attachment needs play within the clinical relationship, and utilizes "here-and-now" approaches to help individuals gain insight into how these dynamics impact their life relationships. Sirena believes that mental health symptoms are just the tip of the iceberg, and while she supports individuals in acquiring new skills to face life's challenges, she is also eager to address the core concerns that stand in the way of a sustainable and enduring recovery. In addition to her Gestalt-influenced style, Sirena also values integration of Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT), Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), and Narrative Therapy in her trauma work. She supports clients in widening their window of tolerance to hold stories from the past while staying in the present. In this way, individuals are able to create meaning of their life's experiences, without being swallowed up by their histories. Sirena has received training in parts-work, Polyvagal Theory, and somatically-informed interventions. Sirena earned two bachelor's degrees, her BSW in social work and BS in psychology from Ferrum College in 2018. She gained her master's in clinical mental health counseling and certificate in substance abuse counseling through Capella University in 2023. She is currently working on completing her PhD in counseling, education, and supervision.

CONCURRENT SESSION VI

2:00 pm - 2:50 pm

NGE Room 107

Session Title:

Advocacy in Action: Supporting Graduate Student Mental Health

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Courtney A. Nishnick, M.S.Ed., CSAC, Resident in Counseling
Old Dominion University

Catalina R. Kraft, M.A., NCC, Resident in Counseling
Old Dominion University

Co-Presenter(s):

Kayla M. Kelly, B.S.
Old Dominion University

Session Format:

50-Minute Education Session

Session Description:

The Graduate School at Old Dominion University has engaged in a six-year advocacy initiative centering graduate student mental health. This education session will provide a history of the Let's Talk Grad Life: Helping Graduate Students Master the Balancing Act program, as well as guidance for enhancing wellbeing during graduate school.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Describe graduate student mental health advocacy efforts implemented by the Graduate School at Old Dominion University.
- Demonstrate an awareness of growth areas for managing graduate student life.
- Analyze effective tools for increasing overall wellbeing.
- Formulate a strategy to improve work-life balance.

Presenter Bio(s):

Courtney A. Nishnick is a Resident in Counseling and Certified Substance Abuse Counselor in the Commonwealth of Virginia and currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Counselor Education & Supervision at Old Dominion University. She obtained a M.S.Ed. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling in 2020, completing her internship in a college setting where she aided students with various challenges during their academic journeys. Post-graduation, she has worked in community agencies serving clients with co-occurring disorders and supervising counselors as a clinical director. She has worked with diverse populations of clients throughout Hampton Roads in overcoming varying biopsychosocial factors hindering recovery efforts.

Catalina Kraft is a second-year doctoral student at Old Dominion University where she studies Education with a Counseling concentration. She is also a Resident in Counseling. She has experience co-facilitating group counseling, providing mental health urgent care services, and conducting individual therapy. Her

research interests include professional counselor identity development, counselor education, and social justice.

Kayla M. Kelly is pursuing a master's degree in digital communications and lifespan at Old Dominion University with an expected graduation date of 2026. With a B.S. in Communication and Public Service minor, Kayla have a strong foundation in effective communication strategies. Kayla's experience includes media relations, corporate communication, and social media management. Currently, Kayla is enhancing my skills through an assistantship focused on graduate student engagement, including mental health advocacy efforts. Kayla is passionate about international media relations and aim to leverage my expertise to facilitate effective communication across diverse cultures, fostering connections and understanding among students from around the world.

CONCURRENT SESSION VI

2:00 pm - 2:50 pm

NGE Room 108

Session Title:

“Hey, Black Child”: Developing Black Female Leaders

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Phylicia R. Littleton, M.Ed., NCC
Regent University

Ashlee E. Davis, M.S.
Regent University

Session Format:

50-Minute Education Session

Session Description:

This session will explore the connection between the disciplinary disparities faced by Black girls in schools and the underrepresentation of Black female leaders. In alignment with ASCA standards, attendees will gain insights into various theories and develop targeted counseling interventions to close the opportunity gap for future black female leaders.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Recognize the current climate of the educational system as it relates to the disciplinary disparities that Black girls face in public schools.
- Examine the underrepresentation of Black female leaders in the workforce.
- Explore theoretical models related to race and leadership identity and how it impacts the lives of Black girls.
- Develop and implement lessons and activities in graduate counseling courses that focus on targeted school counseling interventions tailored toward the leadership skills of Black girls that align with the ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success.

Presenter Bio(s):

Phylicia R. Littleton is a doctoral candidate in the Counselor Education & Supervision Program at Regent University. She received her Bachelor of Science in Psychology from Virginia Commonwealth University and a Master of Education in School Counseling from The College of William and Mary. Phylcia has spent over 10 years in the school counseling profession and her research interests include school counseling leadership, school counseling supervision and multicultural and social justice counseling and supervision. She is also an ASCA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Specialist and a National Certified Counselor.

Ashlee Davis is currently a doctoral student in the Counselor Education & Supervision Program at Regent University. Ashlee received her Bachelor of Science in Psychology and Master of Science in Counselor Education from Virginia State University. She has held a school counselor position for 13 years at an elementary public charter school in Richmond, Virginia. Prior to her working as a school counselor, Ashlee was a college access coordinator for first-generation students. In addition, Ashlee has mentored

young ladies through several community-based programs and served as a decision-maker for committees in the metro Richmond area.

CONCURRENT SESSION VI

2:00 pm - 2:50 pm

NGE Room 109

Session Title:

A Tent Is Not a Home: Looking at the Good, the Bad, and the Forgotten in Wilderness Therapy for Teens.

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Blake C. Neal, B.S.

University of Lynchburg

Session Format:

50-Minute Education Session

Session Description:

Explore the realities of wilderness therapy for teens in residential placement by examining the good, the bad, and the many forgotten. This session highlights the implications of outdoor living on an adolescent's development and sense of safety, while also exploring how wilderness placements could bring some healing if done in a trauma informed way.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Identify the benefits of working with teenagers in the wilderness.
- Identify the harmful impact of living in such harsh conditions.
- Apply appropriate techniques when working with teens in wilderness settings.

Presenter Bio(s):

Blake C. Neal is a current Graduate Candidate at the University of Lynchburg studying School Counseling. Blake currently works as a middle school mental health associate at an alternative education school for children with emotional disabilities and has notably worked with children in other settings including wilderness therapy, group homes, and other learning environments. Blake has a passion for helping at-risk youth learn tools to cope with their everyday surroundings. She hopes to one day use nature therapy to help children in a gentle and impactful way.

CONCURRENT SESSION VI

2:00 pm - 2:50 pm

NGE Room 117

Session Title:

Empowering Voices: Graduate Students' Journey in Participatory Action Research

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Brenda Gonzalez, B.A.

George Mason University

Maribel Tohara Nakamatsu, M.Ed.

George Mason University

Alejandra Salazar Salame, M.S.Ed.

George Mason University

Jennifer Aguilar, B.S.

George Mason University

Session Format:

50-Minute Education Session

Session Description:

This presentation explores the experience of graduate students involved in Participatory Action Research (PAR) projects. Using a PAR-based parent support group for immigrant mothers, we share findings on how PAR influences students' professional development, personal identity, and community engagement, offering recommendations for integrating students into PAR initiatives effectively, focusing on student empowerment, reciprocity, and community building.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Gain insight into how PAR approaches integrate social justice, liberation, community voice, and collaboration to address community needs through research.
- Learn about the personal and professional experiences of graduate students involved in PAR initiatives, and how factors such as project nature, community partners, and student backgrounds influence these experiences.
- Discuss how engaging in PAR projects can foster growth in students' professional competencies, cultural identity, and sense of community service.
- Explore how centering student voices in collaborative conversations can enhance the PAR process and support community building within diverse cultural contexts.

Presenter Bio(s):

Brenda Gonzalez is a George Mason Alumni pursuing her Master's in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. She obtained her Bachelor of Arts (BA) in psychology with a concentration in clinical psychology and a minor in sociology. During the day she is a teacher at Jackson Child Care, working with various age groups from toddlers to emerging adolescents. She's also the Bilingual Outreach Coordinator at GMU Center Community Mental Health. Ms. Gonzalez has worked at GMU Spanish Emotional Support Line for

some years, supporting the community with mental health resources. She's highly invested in helping others and promoting human welfare.

Maribel Tohara Nakamatsu is a doctoral student at George Mason University and is from Lima, Peru. After teaching English in Pre-K and Kindergarten for almost 10 years, she came to North Carolina to teach Spanish in Second Grade in a Dual Language Immersion Program for 5 years. She has studies in TESOL, Family Counseling and Learning Disabilities and is currently working on her Ph.D. in Multicultural and Multilingual Education.

Alejandra Salazar Salame is a doctoral candidate in George Mason University's College of Education and Human Development, specializing in an interdisciplinary study of Multilingual and Multicultural Education, Education Policy, Teaching, and Teacher Education. Informed by over a decade of experience as a Spanish dual language educator and experiences as an immigrant, multicultural, multilingual student in U.S. public schools, Alejandra's research aims to develop collaborative community-school-university partnerships in creating equitable access to academic programming for socially, culturally, economically, and linguistically diverse students in K-12.

Jennifer Aguilar is a dedicated student at George Mason University, committed to making a positive impact in the mental health and research community. Jennifer serves as the Intake Coordinator at the GMU Center for Community Mental Health. Jennifer is passionate about the work done in the mental health and research sectors, with an emphasis on making a positive impact.

CONCURRENT SESSION VI

2:00 pm - 2:50 pm

NGE Room 118

Session Title:

What is QuantCrit and How It Is Necessary for Meeting ASCA Professional Standards and Competencies

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Kristen Tuxbury, M.S.Ed., NCC
Virginia Commonwealth University

Session Format:

50-Minute Roundtable Discussion

Session Description:

School counselors must use data, but data has historically been used to uphold white supremacy culture in schools. QuantCrit is a method of analyzing quantitative data through the lens of critical race theory. This session will discuss ways QuantCrit can be integrated into school counseling programs to promote social justice.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Identify the principles of QuantCrit and how they can be used by school counselors towards social justice goals.
- Share reflections about how they have witnessed data being used to uphold deficit narratives in school counseling settings.
- Evaluate how these principles currently appear in counseling programs and brainstorm plans for ways they can be further integrated.

Presenter Bio(s):

Kristen Tuxbury is a doctoral candidate at Virginia Commonwealth University. She is a former Virginia high school counselor and returned to pursue her PhD after seven years of service. Her research focuses on the development of multicultural competencies and cultural humility in school counselors and helping school counselors better meet the career counseling needs of Latine students.

CONCURRENT SESSION VII

3:00 pm - 3:50 pm

NGE Room 106

Session Title:

Taking Action

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Janita W. Daggy, M.A., LPC-S
Liberty University

Session Format:

50-Minute Education Session

Session Description:

The face/action is an arts-based activity that provides an outlet, malleable way of visualizing thoughts, feelings, and body sensations while being able to put an action and then practice removing that out of the mind/body.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Describe the importance of the parallel between taking action in the physical environment and taking action when experiencing negative or impulsive thoughts, feelings, and emotions in the internal self.
- Evaluate the emotional self-care benefits of putting a face and an action to negative and intrusive thoughts, feelings, and/or emotion.
- Discuss an activity related to putting a face and an action to negative and intrusive feelings, thoughts, and emotions.
- Create an image of a face and take action to visualize negative and intrusive feelings, thoughts, and emotions leave the internal self.

Presenter Bio(s):

Janita W. Daggy is a doctoral student in Counselor Education and Supervision at Liberty University. She holds an LPC-S license in the state of Virginia. She has an active client load and supervises counselors in residency seeking full licensure. Janita has an active research and scholarship agenda and has presented at the local, state, and national level on counseling related topics.

CONCURRENT SESSION VII

3:00 pm - 3:50 pm

NGE Room 107

Session Title:

Financial Stressors and the Impact on Mental Health: Integrating Financial Literacy and Therapeutic Support in Counseling Practice

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Tierra W. Ruffin, LPC
Old Dominion University

Session Format:

50-Minute Education Session

Session Description:

This interactive workshop addresses the intersection of financial stress and mental health, equipping counselors with essential financial literacy concepts and practical strategies to support clients. Participants will learn to integrate financial counseling into their practice, fostering holistic wellness and empowering clients to manage financial anxieties for improved mental well-being.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Describe the impact of financial stress on mental health and identify common financial stressors that clients face.
- Explain the basics of financial literacy (budgeting, debt management, emergency savings) as they relate to mental well-being.
- Describe how to incorporate practical financial counseling strategies into traditional counseling sessions to support clients in reducing financial anxiety.
- Identify interdisciplinary resources and collaborate with financial professionals to address clients' financial concerns effectively.

Presenter Bio(s):

Tierra Ruffin has been a LPC for 7 years, focusing on Substance Abuse and recovery. She is also in the counselor education and supervision doctoral program at Old Dominion University. Mainly, she works at the Hampton Newport News CSB within the substance abuse and recovery department. She is also an author of the book, "I Need to Talk, but NOT to a Therapist." This book acts as a guide to demystify counseling, breaking down barriers in an effort to assist individuals to experience a growth mindset. When not providing therapy, she enjoys making memories with my family.

CONCURRENT SESSION VII

3:00 pm - 3:50 pm

NGE Room 108

Session Title:

Trauma-Informed Career Counseling: Integrating Clinical Theory into Career Concerns within the “Anxious Generation”

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Taylor K. Cheski, B.A.

Virginia Commonwealth University

Session Format:

50-Minute Education Session

Session Description:

What happened in the past few decades to make these kids so anxious? Multiple factors have contributed to anxiety among early career professionals. This session describes a new approach to career services, focusing on trauma-informed, soft-skills-based programming. Bridging mental health support with career development is crucial for modern career counseling.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Describe the unique mental health concerns of the “anxious generation” as it applies to career counseling.
- Implement tangible trauma-informed approaches in career programming in a variety of accessible settings for university students.
- Evaluate the current state of career counseling in order to increase holistic student support related to career development.
- Create potential programming options based on individualized university settings.

Presenter Bio(s):

Taylor K. Cheski has over 100 hours of clinical counseling experience and a year of programming in a student affairs office. She is a member of Chi Sigma Iota, the counseling honor society, and the Student Advisory Council representing the master’s students in the department of Counselor Education. Currently, she is in her final year as a Master’s of Education student and involved in her internship role. She holds dual positions in a college counseling center and a student affairs space. Her research experience includes prior conference presentations and work on qualitative studies.

CONCURRENT SESSION VII

3:00 pm - 3:50 pm

NGE Room 109

Session Title:

Hidden Shame: Counseling Women with Pornography Addiction

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Tarsha T. White, NCC

Liberty University

Session Format:

50-Minute Education Session

Session Description:

This presentation will overview women who struggle with pornography addiction. Women may suffer in silence because of embarrassment, shame, and guilt which can lead to loneliness and increased depression. Counselors today must recognize and prepare to counsel women with pornography addiction.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Increase knowledge and awareness of women, religious and non-religious, struggling with pornography addiction.
- Analyze the impact of pornography addiction in women.
- Recognize the need for additional research.
- Consider and apply evidenced-based approaches for practitioners to help women.

Presenter Bio(s):

Tarsha White is a master's student in Liberty University's Clinical Mental Health Counseling program. She has earned her National Certified Counseling (NCC) credential and is currently an intern at Diversified Counseling Services. Additionally, she is a member of the American Counseling Association, American Association of Christian Counseling, and the American Psychological Association. Tarsha holds a bachelor's degree in Religion: Christian Counseling from Liberty University's School of Divinity. She also serves as a Lay Helper and, along with her husband of 34 years, provides marriage mentorship. Comforting and caring for others is her calling.

CONCURRENT SESSION VII

3:00 pm - 3:50 pm

NGE Room 117

Session Title:

Implications of Fear/Power, Shame/Honor, and Guilt/Innocence on Counseling Individuals from These Cultures

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Tammy K Griffin, B.A.
Crown College

Session Format:

50-Minute Education Session

Session Description:

This session will delve into the implications of honor/shame, guilt/innocence, and fear/power cultures on the counseling relationship.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Identify and describe the three different cultural frameworks.
- Analyze how each framework impacts the counseling relationship.
- Tailor culturally sensitive interventions to each framework."

Presenter Bio(s):

Currently serving as an intern at Kairos Counseling in Virginia, Tammy K. Griffin brings a unique perspective shaped by nearly a decade of living and working in the Dominican Republic. During this period, Tammy actively engaged with individuals to explore cultural dynamics and fully immersed in the local culture, gaining valuable cross-cultural insights. Tammy's passion lies in fostering a deep understanding of cultural implications, and Tammy is dedicated to helping others appreciate the importance of culture.

CONCURRENT SESSION VII

3:00 pm - 3:50 pm

NGE Room 119

Session Title:

Psychedelics and Counseling: An Inevitable Overlap?

Graduate Student Presenter(s):

Kim C. Hughes, M.A., Ed.S., Resident in Counseling
William & Mary

Spencer Allison, Ed.S., NCC
William & Mary

Corde Miles, M.Ed., Resident in Counseling
William & Mary

Session Format:

50-Minute Roundtable Discussion

Session Description:

This roundtable reviews how the uptick in interest, acceptability, and use of psychedelics means encountering these compounds in the counseling room is not a question of if but when. The facilitator will guide discussion about the history and biological impact of psychedelics, and review ethical implications in counseling.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Define what attributes constitute a psychedelic compound.
- List common themes of a psychedelic experience.
- Describe the biological and neurological effects of psychedelics.
- Apply the ACA Code of Ethics / Ethical Decision-Making Model to instances of psychedelics in the context of counseling.

Presenter Bio(s):

Kim C. Hughes is a current doctoral student in the Counselor Education Ph.D. program at William & Mary and resident-in-counseling. Kim obtained her M.A. and Ed.S. degrees from James Madison University. Kim has provided counseling services at both a college counseling center and community mental health agency and has supported children, adolescents, adults and family systems. Kim's research and clinical interests include LGBTQIA+, sexual pleasure and temperament, anti-fat bias, and emerging therapies (i.e., psychedelics). She has presented at the state, national, and international levels on anti-fat bias, sexual desire and temperament, body presentation and disordered eating, psychedelics, and race-based trauma.

Spencer Allison (he/him) is a current doctoral student at the College of William & Mary pursuing his Ph.D. in Counselor Education. Spencer's research interests relate to school counselor education, equitable school counseling practices, supporting LGBTQ+ students, and counselor attrition/retention.

Corde Miles (she/her) is a current doctoral student at the College of William & Mary pursuing her Ph.D. in Counselor Education. Corde's research interests relate to the military/veteran population, child centered play therapy, religion and spirituality, and the experience of Gen-Z clinicians.