

Kari M. Mika-Lude, PhD

LPC, AADC-S, ALPS, NCC, CCTP, MAC, ACS

Marshall University College of Education and Professional Development

Counseling Department

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EDUCATION

NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY (CACREP-ACCREDITED)

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY, COUNSELOR EDUCATION AND SUPERVISION (2014-2016; 2020-2022)

- **Dissertation:** Merely mortal: A quantitative examination of the dehumanization of first responders
- **Honors and Scholarships:** Wesley I. Schmidt scholarship recipient (2022); Kappa Delta Pi Honor Society for Teaching Excellence (2022); the Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi (2021); Chi Sigma Iota, the Counseling Academic and Professional Honor Society International (2015)

OAKTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE

CERTIFICATE, ADVANCED SUBSTANCE ABUSE COUNSELING (2013-2014)

- **Internship:** Alexian Brothers Behavioral Health Hospital Center for Addiction Medicine (Hoffman Estates, IL)
- **Honors and Scholarships:** Golden Key International Honour Society (2014), Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society (2014)

ADLER UNIVERSITY (FORMERLY THE ADLER SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL PSYCHOLOGY)

MASTER OF ARTS, COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGY - 60 CREDIT HOURS (2009-2012)

- **Internship:** Alexian Brothers Behavioral Health Interfaith Counseling Services (Schaumburg, IL) and Parochial School Support Services (Wheeling, IL)
- **Honors and Scholarships:** Psi Chi, the International Honor Society in Psychology (2010)

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO (UIC)

BACHELOR OF ARTS, APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY

- **Internship:** Child/Teen Life program, Advocate Lutheran General Hospital (Park Ridge, IL)
- **Honors and Scholarships:** Psi Chi, the International Honor Society in Psychology (2008)

CORNELL UNIVERSITY

CERTIFICATE, PSYCHOLOGY OF LEADERSHIP (IN PROGRESS)

COUNSELOR EDUCATION EXPERIENCE

MARSHALL UNIVERSITY

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR (TENURE-TRACK), COUNSELING DEPARTMENT (AUG. 2024-PRESENT)

- COUN 555: Crisis Counseling (Course Lead, effective Fall 2025)
- COUN 574: Social and Cultural Foundations
- COUN 604: Group Counseling (Course Lead, effective Fall 2024)
 - Rebuilt course in Fall 2024

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

AFFILIATE FACULTY/UNIVERSITY SUPERVISOR (VIRTUAL), COUNSELING@NORTHWESTERN (2016-PRESENT)

- Counseling Methods 1: Introductory Counseling Skills
- Counseling Methods 2: Strategies for Counseling and Psychotherapy
- Counseling Methods 3: Skills for Social Justice Advocacy, Outreach, and Prevention
 - Assisted with the course rebuild in spring 2021
- Theory and Technique of Addiction Counseling
- Supervised Practicum in Counseling I/II/III

NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANT (2014-2015)

- Professional Identity and Ethics (co-instructor with Dr. Jane Rheineck)
- Diagnosis of Mental Health Issues in Counseling (instructor)
- Practicum in Counseling (supervisor/co-instructor with Dr. Scott Wickman; supervisor/instructor)
- Substance Abuse Issues in Counseling (instructor)
- Exploration in the Counseling Profession (undergraduate course; instructor)
- Basic Counseling Skills (co-instructor with Dr. Toni Tollerud)

LICENSES, CERTIFICATIONS, AND SPECIALIZED TRAINING

- Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) and Approved Licensed Professional Supervisor (ALPS), West Virginia Board of Examiners in Counseling (#2276).
- Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (LCPC), Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (#180.009652).
- Advanced Alcohol and Drug Counselor/Clinical Supervisor (AADC-S), West Virginia Certification Board for Addiction and Prevention Professionals (#16-323/#16-323S).

- Certified Advanced Alcohol and Drug Counselor (CAADC), Illinois Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Professional Certification Association (#32778).
- National Certified Counselor (NCC), National Board for Certified Counselors (#323911).
- Certified Clinical Trauma Professional (CCTP), International Association of Trauma Professionals (#228911).
- Approved Clinical Supervisor (ACS), Center for Credentialing and Education (#ACS01983).
- Nationally Registered Emergency Medical Technician (NREMT), National Registry (#E3540195).
- EMDR-trained (EMDRIA-approved).
- 40-hour Domestic Violence Crisis Intervention and Advocacy training.
- 40-hour Sexual Assault Crisis Intervention and Advocacy training.

CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH/ADDICTION COUNSELING EXPERIENCE

- Aspire to Inspire Behavioral Health and Addiction Services, LLC (2018-present)
- Pretera Center for Mental Health, PARC East (2017-2018)
- Northwestern Medicine Ben Gordon Center (2015-2017)
- Alexian Brothers Behavioral Health (2011-2015)

SUPERVISORY EXPERIENCE

ASPIRE TO INSPIRE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES, LLC *FOUNDER/CEO, CLINICAL SUPERVISOR, AND CONSULTANT (2018-PRESENT)*

- Provide clinical supervision to professional counselors, provisionally licensed counselors, and clinicians seeking addiction certification in West Virginia and Illinois.
- Render professional consultation on a variety of topics upon request.

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

AFFILIATE FACULTY/UNIVERSITY SUPERVISOR (VIRTUAL), COUNSELING@NORTHWESTERN (2016-PRESENT)

- Teach the Counseling Methods series, which involves providing instruction on/modeling counseling skills, observing students' use of skills in class and providing feedback, reviewing and providing detailed feedback on recorded sessions, and encouraging reflective practice.
- Taught Supervised Practicum in Counseling I/II/III.
- Provided clinical supervision during the Winter 2017 Group Dynamics immersion weekend (in-person).

PRESTERA CENTER FOR MENTAL HEALTH

INTERIM SUPERVISOR, BOONE COUNTY MAT PROGRAM (2017-2018)

- Monitored clinical documentation to ensure quality and compliance.
- Observed program clinicians facilitating groups and offered suggestions.

NORTHWESTERN MEDICINE BEN GORDON CENTER

DIRECTOR/CLINICAL SUPERVISOR, ADDICTIONS TREATMENT SERVICES (2015-2017)

- Provided clinical and administrative supervision to clinicians and interns, including clinicians seeking clinical licensure and/or addiction certification.
- Reviewed supervisees' clinical documentation for quality and compliance.

NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANT (2014-2015)

- Supervisor/instructor in Practicum in Counseling
- Supervisor/co-instructor in Basic Counseling Skills

PUBLICATIONS

REFEREED JOURNAL ARTICLES

- Mika-Lude, K. M., Degges-White, S., & Isawi, D. (2023). Under fire: Meta-dehumanization and burnout among first responders. *Journal of Employment Counseling*, 60(3), 144-158.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/joec.12208>

BOOK CHAPTERS

- Mika-Lude, K. M., & Wesley, J. (in press). Treatment planning: Focus on women. In M. Sprong, H. Hollender, L. Parker-Barnes, & Z. Sneed (Eds.), *The substance-related disorder: Treatment and rehabilitation with specialized populations* [Publication pending]. Kendall Hunt Publishing Company.
- Rodriguez, A., & Mika-Lude, K. M. (in press). Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR) for the treatment of addictions. In M. Sprong, H. Hollender, L. Parker-Barnes, & Z. Sneed (Eds.), *The substance-related disorder: Treatment and rehabilitation* [Publication pending]. Kendall Hunt Publishing Company.

MANUSCRIPTS IN PREPARATION

- Title TBD: Meta-dehumanization and suicidality among first responders
- Title TBD: Meta-dehumanization and diminished self-efficacy among first responders
- Title TBD: Heroes or humans? The dehumanization of healthcare workers

OTHER

- Mika-Lude, K. M. (2022a). *Merely mortal: A quantitative examination of the dehumanization of first responders* (Publication No. 29396412) [Doctoral dissertation, Northern Illinois University]. ProQuest.
- Mika-Lude, K. M. (2022b). *Merely mortal: A quantitative examination of the dehumanization of first responders* (Doctoral dissertation). *Graduate Research Theses and Dissertations*, 7441.
<https://huskiecommons.lib.niu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=8440&context=allgraduate-thesesdissertations>

PRESENTATIONS (*DENOTES INVITED)

NATIONAL

- **Mika-Lude, K. M.**, & Lude, P. A. (Mar. 2025). *Re-humanizing the heroes: Recognizing and confronting the dehumanization of first responders*. American Counseling Association (ACA) conference: Orlando, FL.
- **Mika-Lude, K. M.**, Wesley, J., & Lent, J. (Mar. 2025). *Champions for change: Leveraging research for advocacy in professional counseling*. American Counseling Association (ACA) conference: Orlando, FL.
- **Mika, K. M.**, Cox, S. A., Wise, S. M., Parker, L. C., McMillion, P. L. R., Hart, K. A., & Rheineck, J. A. (Oct. 2015). *Accepted: Innovating the graduate admissions process for counseling programs*. Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) conference: Philadelphia, PA.

REGIONAL

- *Mika-Lude, K. M. (Feb. 2023). *Question, persuade, refer (QPR)*. Emergency Services Conference at Pipestem (ESCAPE): Pipestem, WV.
- ***Mika-Lude, K. M.**, & Lude, P. A. (Feb. 2020). *CODE GREY: Finding calm in the chaos*. Emergency Services Conference at Pipestem (ESCAPE): Pipestem, WV.
- Cox, S. A., Hart, K. A., McMillion, P. L. R., **Mika, K. M.** (contributor), Moody, A., Parker, L. C., & Wise, S. M. (Oct. 2016). *Accepted: Innovating the graduate admissions process for counseling programs*. North Central Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (NCACES) conference: Minneapolis, MN.
- Mika, K. M. (Sept. 2016). *"Building" confident counselors: Introducing scaffolding and experiential learning into counseling courses*. Rocky Mountain Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (RMACES) conference: Steamboat Springs, CO.

STATE

- ***Mika-Lude, K. M.**, & Lude, P. A. (Feb. 2025). *Code grey "lite": Finding calm in the chaos*. CIT Summit: Winfield, WV.
- ***Mika-Lude, K. M.** (Jan. 2025). *Code grey "lite": Finding calm in the chaos*. CIT Summit: Weston, WV.
- **Mika-Lude, K. M.**, Wesley, J., & Lent, J. (Nov. 2024). *Champions for change: Leveraging research for advocacy in professional counseling*. West Virginia Counseling Association (WVCA) conference: Daniels, WV.

- Stephey, B., & **Mika-Lude, K. M.** (Nov. 2024). *Best practice: Updates to and application of the ASAM criteria*. West Virginia Counseling Association (WVCA) conference: Daniels, WV.
- **Mika-Lude, K. M.**, Wesley, J., Waggoner, B., Smith, M., Kennedy-Rickman, A., & Phillips, T. (Nov. 2024). *Navigating imposter syndrome: A polyvagal perspective for clinical supervisors*. West Virginia Counseling Association (WVCA) conference: Daniels, WV.
- Kennedy-Rickman, A., & **Mika-Lude, K. M.** (Nov. 2024). *From practice to policy work: How to advocate for change*. West Virginia Counseling Association (WVCA) conference: Daniels, WV.
- ***Mika-Lude, K. M.**, & Lude, P. A. (Sept. 2024). *CODE GREY: Finding calm in the chaos*. AmeriCorps Day of Service: Lewisburg, WV.
 - This project is funded by a AmeriCorps Day of Service grant from Volunteer WV and represents a partnership between the Marshall University Center of Excellence for Recovery, the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine (WVSOM), and the WVSOM Center for Rural and Community Health.
- **Mika-Lude, K. M.**, & Lude, P. A. (Feb. 2024). *Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) 101: Strengthening our crisis response*. West Virginia Behavioral Health Workforce and Health Equity Training Center Continuing Education Series 2024: Virtual.
- *Mika-Lude, K. M. (Feb. 2024). *From trauma-informed to healing-centered: A social justice approach to child advocacy*. West Virginia Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children in-service training for staff and volunteers: Virtual.
- Phillips, T., Waggoner, B., & **Mika-Lude, K. M.** (Nov. 2023). *Save the drama: Ethical decision-making in clinical supervision*. West Virginia Counseling Association Fall Conference: Flatwoods, WV.
- Mika-Lude, K. M. (Mar. 2023). *Psychological disaster preparedness for first responders and military: An existential perspective*. West Virginia Counseling Association (WVCA) Spring Conference: Virtual.
- Mika-Lude, K. M. (Mar. 2023). *Kryptonite: The impact of dehumanization on first responders*. West Virginia Counseling Association (WVCA) Spring Conference: Virtual.
- *Mika-Lude, K. M. (Mar. 2023). *The impact of dehumanization on the first responder workforce and its implications for the healthcare workforce*. West Virginia Hospital Association Human Resources Leadership Meeting: Charleston, WV.
- *Mika-Lude, K. M. (Sept. 2022). *Question, persuade, refer (QPR)*. Legal Aid of West Virginia conference: Daniels, WV.
- Mika-Lude, K. M. (May 2022). *Deconstructing trauma: Understanding and providing trauma-informed care*. West Virginia Behavioral Health Workforce and Health Equity Training Center Summer Continuing Education Series 2022: Virtual.
- *Gage, G., Cade, S., **Mika-Lude, K. M.**, & Renquist, R. (April 2022). *Developing and growing your ideal private practice: What we learned along the way*. West Virginia Licensed Professional Counselors Association (WVLPCA) conference: Morgantown, WV.
- ***Mika-Lude, K. M.**, & Lude, P. A. (Jan. 2020). *CODE GREY: Finding calm in the chaos*. Wood County Fire School: Parkersburg, WV.
- *Mika-Lude, K. M. (April 2018). *Sexual violence and addiction*. 18th Annual Sexual Assault and Stalking Symposium: Roanoke, WV.

- *Mika-Lude, K. M. (April, 2018). *Toward a trauma-informed TSA workforce*. Transportation Security Administration Leadership Summit: Charleston, WV.
- *Mika-Lude, K. M. (Mar. 2018). *Toward a trauma-informed TSA workforce*. Transportation Security Administration Supervisory Summit: Charleston, WV.

LOCAL

- ***Mika-Lude, K. M.**, & Lude, P. A. (July 2020). *CODE GREY: Finding calm in the chaos*. City of St. Albans and City of Nitro first responder in-service training: Nitro, WV.
- ***Mika-Lude, K. M.**, & Lude, P. A. (Mar. 2019). *CODE GREY: Finding calm in the chaos*. Cabell County in-service training: Huntington, WV.
- ***Mika-Lude, K. M.**, & Lude, P. A. (Jan. 2019). *CODE GREY: Finding calm in the chaos*. Dunbar Fire Department in-service training: Dunbar, WV.
- ***Mika-Lude, K. M.**, & Lude, P. A. (Dec. 2018). *CODE GREY: Finding calm in the chaos*. Kenova Police Department in-service training for officers and supervisors: Kenova, WV.

PRESS AND MEDIA MENTIONS

- Marshall University News (2024, November 12). *Two Marshall University faculty members receive awards at state conference*. <https://www.marshall.edu/news/2024/11/two-marshall-university-faculty-members-receive-awards-at-state-conference/#:~:text=Jerica%20Wesley%20and%20Dr.,the%20counseling%20profession%20through%20scholarship>.
- American Counseling Association (2023, September 5). *First responders are people, too: Study shows how dehumanization leads to burnout*. <https://www.counseling.org/publications/media-center/article/2023/09/05/first-responders-are-people-too-study-shows-how-dehumanization-leads-to-burnout>
- Chicago Tribune (2018, September 19). *Shout out: Kari Mika-Lude, heading into the Ridgewood High School Alumni Hall of Fame*. <https://www.chicagotribune.com/2018/09/19/shout-out-kari-mika-lude-heading-into-the-ridgewood-high-school-alumni-hall-of-fame/>
- Douglas, E. (2023, May 8). *Mental health awareness key for first responders*. WV Public Broadcasting. <https://wvpublic.org/mental-health-awareness-key-for-first-responders/>
- Putman, J. (2023, September 6). *New study shows 'superhero stereotypes' contribute to first responder burnout*. POLICE1. <https://www.police1.com/mental-health-outreach/articles/new-study-shows-superhero-stereotypes-contributes-to-first-responder-burnout-SD8TV4kIbLWAtRY/>
- Richardson, J. (2023, May 18). *Mental health expert discusses research on first responders with lawmakers*. The Herald Dispatch. https://www.herald-dispatch.com/news/mental-health-expert-discusses-research-on-first-responders-with-lawmakers/article_0140c9d9-dce4-5480-a05b-68c73563b6ff.html
- Thomas, C. (2019, January 23). *Hurricane husband and wife operate mental health, addiction recovery services practice*. Charleston Gazette. <https://www.wvgazettemail.com/putnamreview/hurricane->

[husband-and-wife-operate-mental-health-addiction-recovery-services-practice/article 068b07f5-810e-53de-b66a-58dccc3873af.html](https://www.morganmessenger.com/2023/05/08/wv-legislative-interims-fire-ems-discuss-suicide-prevention-more-funding-for-first-responders/)

- Young, M. (2023, May 8). *WV legislative interims: Fire, EMS discuss suicide prevention, more funding for first responders*. The Morgan Messenger. <https://www.morganmessenger.com/2023/05/08/wv-legislative-interims-fire-ems-discuss-suicide-prevention-more-funding-for-first-responders/>

LEADERSHIP, ADVOCACY, AND SERVICE

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR RESILIENCE AND TRAUMA COUNSELORS *TRUSTEE (2025-PRESENT)*

- **Committee(s):** Marketing and Communications, Professional Development

MARSHALL UNIVERSITY

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR (TENURE-TRACK), COUNSELING DEPARTMENT

- Faculty Advisor, Mu Upsilon Chapter of Chi Sigma Iota, Counseling Academic and Professional Honor Society International
- Violence, Loss, and Trauma (VoLT) graduate certificate Innovation Catalyst Team
- **Committees:** Marshall University Top Scholars Selection Committee, Rural Behavioral Health Scholars Program, College of Education and Professional Development (COEPD) Diversity & Social Justice Committee, Counseling Department Admissions Committee

UNTITLED RESEARCH PROJECT IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE WEST VIRGINIA OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES (WVOEMS) *SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT (AUG. 2024-PRESENT)*

- Examine early indicators of burnout and suicidality among EMS professionals, including those that may be able to be extrapolated from EMS documentation, response times, etc.
- Identify interventions that are evidence-based as well as practical, accessible, and culturally sensitive to the unique needs of EMS professionals.
- Develop and/or identify appropriate training for EMS professionals and EMS leadership based on the research findings.

APPROVED LICENSED PROFESSIONAL SUPERVISOR (ALPS) TRAINING PROGRAM *TRAINER (2023-PRESENT)*

- Assist with the expansion and implementation of the statewide, WVBEC-approved ALPS training program.

MARSHALL UNIVERSITY RESEARCH CORPORATION

SENIOR DIRECTOR OF PROJECT STRATEGY AND EVALUATION, WV BEHAVIORAL HEALTH TRAINING CENTER (FORMERLY THE WV BEHAVIORAL HEALTH WORKFORCE AND HEALTH EQUITY TRAINING CENTER; AUG. 2024-PRESENT)

- Serve as co-PI for The Training Center grant project.
- Collaborate with subject matter experts to coordinate high-quality, evidence-based trainings for behavioral health providers across the state.
- Develop and deliver trainings within my areas of expertise as needed/requested.
- Partner with other state and national organizations to facilitate specialized training events and series for behavioral health providers.
- Follow appropriate procedures to offer continuing education credit for the behavioral health professions.
- Oversee marketing information being disseminated about upcoming trainings via multiple platforms, including WordPress (website), Constant Contact (email marketing), and social media.
- Collect and analyze training data using Zoom reports, Qualtrics, and SPSS for quarterly and yearly grant reporting.
- Oversee the management of The Training Center's yearly budget based on grant funding available.
- Support and expand the existing Statewide Training Advisory Council by identifying additional invitees, scheduling and facilitating quarterly meetings, and following up on the Council's recommendations.

DIRECTOR, WV BEHAVIORAL HEALTH WORKFORCE AND HEALTH EQUITY TRAINING CENTER (2022 - 2024)

- Collaborated with subject matter experts to coordinate high-quality, evidence-based trainings for behavioral health providers across the state.
- Developed and delivered trainings within my areas of expertise as needed.
- Partnered with other state and national organizations to facilitate specialized training events and series for behavioral health providers.
- Followed appropriate procedures to offer continuing education credit for the behavioral health professions.
- Disseminated marketing information about upcoming trainings via multiple platforms.
- Collected and analyzed training data for quarterly and yearly grant reporting.
- Created and managed The Training Center's (TTC) yearly budget based on grant funding available.
- Supported and expanded the existing Statewide Training Advisory Council by identifying additional invitees, scheduling and facilitating quarterly meetings, and following up on the Council's recommendations.
- **Outcomes:** In 2023-24, 3431 people attended TTC trainings. An average of 94.64% of attendees agreed or strongly agreed that TTC trainings effectively met the objectives related to knowledge, skills, and self-efficacy, and there was an average 43.2% increase in knowledge, skills, and self-efficacy post-training compared to pre-training across all TTC trainings during this time period. In assessing the

impact of TTC trainings on the workforce/workforce retention, 98.72% of attendees said that TTC trainings at least somewhat re-energize them professionally, and 69.51% said that the trainings re-energize them a great deal. TTC was also successful in supporting diverse and underserved communities. Racial demographics of TTC attendees were consistent with the racial demographics of the behavioral health workforce in West Virginia. Additionally, TTC performed best in Region 6, with 19.08% of attendees being located in that region compared to only 13.29% of the behavioral health workforce being located there.

WEST VIRGINIA COUNSELING ASSOCIATION (WVCA)

BOARD MEMBER (2021-PRESENT)

- Immediate Past-President and Historian (begins July 2025)
- President (July 2024-present)
 - Organize and lead Board meetings.
 - Oversee Association Committees.
 - Rebuilt the Association website (<https://wvcounseling.org>) in July 2024.
 - Reinstated Association Committees in July 2024.
 - Established collaboration with the West Virginia Licensed Professional Counselors Association (WVLPCA) in July 2024 to form a joint legislative task force to more effectively advocate for counselors and the counseling profession in West Virginia.
- President-Elect (July 2023-June 2024)
- **Committee(s):** Communications Committee, Conference Committee (Co-Chair), Legislative/Advocacy Committee (Chair), Nominations/Elections Committee (Co-Chair), Professional Development Committee, Social Justice Committee

WEST VIRGINIA LICENSED PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS ASSOCIATION (WVLPCA)

BOARD MEMBER (2018-PRESENT)

- **Committee(s):** Communications Committee, Conference Committee, Legislative Committee
- Previously served as Membership Committee Chair (2021-2023)

CABELL COUNTY CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT TEAM

MENTAL HEALTH TEAM MEMBER (2019-PRESENT)

- Provide individual and group crisis intervention services for first responders on a volunteer basis.
- Previously served on the Executive Board as Clinical Director (2019-2021) and Secretary (2019-2021).

CULLODEN VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

MEMBER (2019-2023)

- Full Member, Emergency Medical Technician (2020-2023)
- Associate Member (2019-2020)

ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION FOR SPECIALISTS IN GROUP WORK (IASGW)
NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS CHAIR (2015-2017)

- Elicited nominations for open Board positions, generated and distributed electronic ballots for the election process, and communicated the results of the election to the membership.

ASCENSION HEALTH SYSTEM
MENTAL HEALTH DISASTER/CRISIS RESPONSE TEAM MEMBER (2013-2015)

- Received specialized training in crisis, trauma, disaster, and emergency response as well as Psychological First Aid and Critical Incident Stress Debriefing.
- Provided mental health disaster/crisis response services on a volunteer basis as needed/requested.

PSI CHI, THE INTERNATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY IN PSYCHOLOGY (UIC CHAPTER)
SECRETARY/HISTORIAN (FALL 2008 SEMESTER)

AWARDS, HONORS, AND RECOGNITIONS

- Excellence in Grantsmanship (2025), in celebration of exceptional academic dedication through grant submission, therefore significantly contributing to advancing the goals and mission of Marshall University
- WVCA Outstanding Counselor Educator Award (2024), in recognition of excellence and innovation as an instructor
- WVCA Distinguished Advocacy Award (2024), in recognition of outstanding service and commitment to the counseling profession, clients, and/or community through advocacy work in West Virginia
- WVCA Innovative Research Award (2023), in recognition of dedication to the advancement of the counseling profession through scholarship
- Nominated for the WVCA Excellence in Clinical Mental Health Counseling Award (2023), in recognition of exceptional knowledge and skills in the art of counseling and dedication to providing quality care and support to those in need of mental healthcare in West Virginia
- Wesley I. Schmidt scholarship recipient (2022)
- Kappa Delta Pi Honor Society for Teaching Excellence (2022)
- Ridgewood High School Alumni Hall of Fame inductee (2018)
- Chi Sigma Iota, the Counseling Academic and Professional Honor Society International (2015)
- Psi Chi, the International Honor Society in Psychology (2010 and 2008)

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS (*DENOTES LEADERSHIP INVOLVEMENT)

- American Counseling Association (ACA)
- International Association of Resilience and Trauma Counselors (IARTC)*

- Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES)
- Southern Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (SACES)
- West Virginia Counseling Association (WVCA)*
- West Virginia Licensed Professional Counselors Association (WVLPCA)*
- National Alliance of Mental Health Professionals (NAMHP)
- Past: American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMHCA), National Association for Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors (NAADAC), Illinois Counseling Association (ICA), Illinois Mental Health Counselors Association (IMHCA), and Illinois Association for Specialists in Group Work (IASGW)*

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

A silent storm brews, and the air crackles with unseen energy. The atmosphere is charged with anticipation of something to come. Then it happens – a spark sends a cascade of currents threading across the neural landscape, momentarily illuminating what had previously been obscure. Just as quickly as it began, the lightning recedes, leaving behind a residue of newfound awareness. Soon, though, there will be another spark, and then another... because the path toward knowledge is never-ending; in the silent storms of learning, there will always be new knowledge to pursue.

As both an educator and as a learner, I believe that learning is a lifelong pursuit. Especially in a field such as counseling, scholars and practitioners are continuously uncovering new information to help better the profession. As I sat down to write this, I realized that it had been a decade since I wrote my initial, and heretofore *only*, teaching philosophy statement! After I got over the shock of the fact that ten years have already gone by, I began to reflect on how much has changed and how much has happened since I first learned about the theory and practice of counselor education:

In those ten years, humanity has experienced a number of significant events, perhaps the most noteworthy of which was a global pandemic that has contributed to an ongoing mental health crisis for which, particularly in West Virginia, there are not nearly enough providers to meet the demand. Technological advances have surged with the continued expansion of social media and the introduction and enhancement of artificial intelligence. The U.S. has continued to grapple with issues like systemic racism, health inequities, and seemingly unending political divide, and we have now witnessed the historic overturning of *Roe v. Wade*. The mental health field has seen the emergence of a “fourth wave” of psychotherapies, which maintains a humanistic basis while also incorporating neuroscience, mindfulness, and somatic elements (Stapleton, 2022), and yet another revision to the (controversial) *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (APA, 2023). “Big tech” companies have invaded the mental healthcare space, likely seeing opportunity (read, dollar signs) during and since the pandemic, leaving providers vulnerable not only to financial exploitation but also to potential ethical and legal liability. Unfortunately, what we have *not* seen since 2014 is an update to the ACA Code of Ethics, leaving counselors and counselor educators alike to wade through a sea of contemporary dilemmas with a set of aging guidelines. Personally, I have experienced divorce, relocation from Illinois to West Virginia, adjusting to a completely different regional culture, remarriage, step-parenthood, starting and growing a business, and a series of personal traumas. In short, a lot has happened – both personally and contextually – and a great deal of stress has been placed on the profession and on all of us, including our students. Thus, a revisit to my teaching philosophy was long overdue.

All of this to say, while my core beliefs about education – that learning is a lifelong endeavor, for example – have not *changed*, they have certainly been *influenced* by the evolution of the counseling profession, the greater social context, as well as the things I have learned and experienced over the last ten years. Therefore, in this teaching philosophy statement, I will expound upon my (slightly) recalibrated beliefs about learning,

what I hope for my students to gain, and my instructional methods for cultivating a dynamic, engaging, and inclusive educational experience for my students.

My Beliefs About Learning

My beliefs about how learning occurs have always been grounded in constructivist-developmental andragogy (McAuliffe, 2011; Whitman & Beeson, 2019) and self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1977; Barnes, 2004; Larson, 1998) in that I have long believed that learning occurs when students feel safe and respected and when the material is relevant, meaningful, and developmentally appropriate. Although there was foundational knowledge of brain-based learning, it was not emphasized in my graduate program nor in my doctoral program at the time that I took the andragogy course. Since 2014, the influence of the “fourth wave” has led to greater understanding of the neuroscience behind learning and the somatic experiences of learners, which has not only reinforced my original beliefs but also nuanced them.

Learning Occurs When Students Feel Safe and Respected

First and foremost, learning occurs when students feel safe and respected. The constructivist approach to counselor education assumes that most students have experienced fear related to education and that it is counterproductive to learning (McAuliffe, 2011). Some of this may be related to a lack of confidence or self-efficacy (Barnes, 2004; Larson, 1998), but my experiences as an educator and as a learner – as a human being – over the past decade also indicate that what happens to us outside of the classroom inevitably creeps into the classroom with us and may be triggered by content or interactions.

Neuroscience literature tells us that stress and threat disrupt learning and memory (Caine & Caine, 1990; Owens & Tanner, 2017) and can even cause structural changes in the brain (Owens & Tanner, 2017). Additionally, fear- and stress-related chemicals such as cortisol can hinder synaptic plasticity (Owens & Tanner, 2017). Contemporaneously, however, optimal learning occurs when the brain is appropriately challenged (Caine & Caine, 1990; Owens & Tanner, 2017), which aligns with the “window of tolerance” concept from Polyvagal Theory (PVT), or what Pat Ogden (2018) originally referred to as the “optimum arousal zone”. While the term typically refers to the optimum zone of arousal for the support of trauma processing and other clinical work (Kase, 2023), I believe the term is also applicable to education. Our students are not blank slates or empty vessels; they come into the classroom carrying the weight of what is going on in their personal lives as well as the larger societal context. As an educator, I cannot ignore that reality; I want to ensure that my students are within their window of tolerance for optimum learning.

Learning Occurs When the Material is Relevant, Meaningful, and Developmentally Appropriate

Along with safety and respect, optimal learning occurs when the material is relevant, meaningful, and developmentally appropriate. The constructivist-developmental framework of counselor education emphasizes engaging students in activity, providing opportunities for immediate application of concepts, personalizing the subject matter by making connections to students’ personal lives and experience, and tailoring the delivery of

the subject matter according to the students' developmental level (McAuliffe, 2011; Whitman & Beeson, 2019). The neuroscience literature again bolsters this original belief, with Caine and Caine (1990) describing people as "meaning makers" in need of novelty and challenge and Owens and Tanner (2017) discussing the importance of motivation and attention for improving learning outcomes.

What I Hope My Students Will Gain

When it comes to learning outcomes, I imagine that every educator hopes that their students will acquire knowledge, and I imagine that every *quality* educator hopes that their students will be engaged in and enjoy the process of acquiring said knowledge. Obviously, I have those hopes for my students, as well. However, in addition to acquiring knowledge in engaging and enjoyable ways, I hope my students will be able to *apply* that knowledge with skill and intentionality. I hope my students will be able to integrate skills and concepts from earlier courses into more advanced courses, seeing how the pieces fit together (Dempsey et al., 2001), while also being able to tolerate the ambiguity of the unknown (Nelson & Neufeldt, 1998). Finally, throughout the process, I hope my students will experience increased counseling self-efficacy (CSE) in context with accurate self-reflection (Barnes, 2004).

My Instructional Methods

In addition to the beliefs I outlined above, constructivist counselor educators like myself also believe that students are the experts of their own learning, that learning is self-reflective, and that educators are co-constructors or guides (McAuliffe, 2011; Nelson & Neufeldt, 1998; Whitman & Beeson, 2019). In some ways, I draw parallels between this and counselors using Motivational Interviewing with their clients to evoke the client's own internal resources and motivation; similarly, I see my role as a counselor educator, in part, as drawing out students' strengths, ideas, and confidence.

To do this, though, there first must be an environment of safety. Since much of my teaching experience has been in online or hybrid environments, I start to establish this before the course even begins by posting a welcome message on the course "Wall". In my message, I welcome them to the course and provide not only professional background information about myself, but also some personal details to show my humanness and provide some ways in which my students may be able to relate to me. I generally share photos of my dogs and encourage the students to include photos of their choice with their responses. This exercise allows me to begin establishing rapport with my students before the semester even starts (Malott et al., 2014).

Once the semester does begin, I want to continue building on that foundation. The first day of class generally involves introductions and icebreakers, and I've put a "fourth wave" spin on that by infusing PVT concepts into my introductory activities. For example, in one of my courses, I start by providing a brief overview of neuroception, the PVT hierarchy, and co-regulation. I then guide students through the completion of a Personal Profile Map, whereby they create a "map" of their nervous systems. Students are then asked to introduce themselves to the class by sharing their preferred name, what autonomic state in which they feel they spend the most time, and a description of their ventral vagal (connected/calm) state. The purpose of this

exercise is to not only have a unique and engaging icebreaker for the first day of class but also to increase students' self-awareness. PVT concepts are then embedded throughout the rest of the course and discussed at the levels of how they can be applied with clients as well as with self.

Ideally, if a safe learning environment is established and then maintained, students will be primed to engage with content that is relevant, meaningful, and developmentally appropriate, and the “evoking” can begin! To engage my students in a way that is consistent with a constructivist approach, I de-emphasize myself by minimizing the lecture component of class; I only do as much lecturing as is needed to convey information that is necessary for students to be able to engage in other activities, such as deliberate skills practice (e.g., role plays) and problem-based learning (e.g., case discussions, ethical dilemmas). During synchronous sessions, there are some large-group discussions, but I frequently divide the class into breakout rooms to give all students more of an opportunity to participate, both to engage students who may be less inclined to speak in a large-group setting and to allow all students to dig into the material more deeply (McAuliffe, 2011), thereby maintaining their attention (Owens & Tanner, 2017).

I am also intentional about scaffolding, weaving in concepts from earlier coursework to assist students in building upon their previous learning. For example, I teach a course on social justice and advocacy, and one of the topics is trauma-informed care. I ask students at the beginning of the quarter to watch the Netflix docuseries, *Inside the Mind of Aaron Hernandez* (and if they do not have access to Netflix, I have them reach out to me privately, as there is a free alternative documentary they can view on YouTube). The lesson involves dividing the class into three groups. The first group discusses the case focusing on the “Pair of ACEs” (Adverse Childhood Experiences and Adverse Community Events), the second group discusses the case focusing on the first three of Berman’s Red Flag Guidelines for Trauma-Informed Care, and the third group discusses the case focusing on the remaining three of Berman’s Red Flag Guidelines for Trauma-Informed Care. All three groups also discuss missed opportunities for advocacy throughout Aaron’s life. This activity personalizes learning because it is a relatively current event that many students remember seeing on the news. The docuseries humanizes the celebrity, and inevitably this activity raises discussions of cultural intersectionality, layers of privilege and oppression, family dynamics, substance use, celebrity/sports/NFL culture, the criminal justice system, the role of the media in how “facts” are presented and perceived, traumatic brain injury, dehumanization, ethics, and advocacy. It is problem-based learning at its finest in that there is no “right” answer; students are challenged to consider the case from multiple angles in a safe relational environment, which helps build their tolerance for ambiguity/not knowing (Malott et al., 2014; McAuliffe, 2011; Nelson & Neufeldt, 1998).

All of these methods enhance students’ counseling self-efficacy, as they align with Bandura’s (1977) four sources of efficacy expectations: mastery experiences (e.g., deliberate skills practice, problem-based learning), vicarious learning (e.g., observing their peers in small groups), verbal persuasion (e.g., feedback from peers in small groups), and emotional arousal (e.g., PVT techniques focused on better understanding and regulating their

nervous systems). When coupled with formative and summative feedback from me, self-efficacy enhancement is placed in context with accurate self-reflection (Barnes, 2004; Nelson & Neufeldt, 1998).

Conclusion

In conclusion, my teaching philosophy remains grounded in constructivist-developmental andragogy and self-efficacy theory but has evolved thanks to greater understanding of neuroscience and the somatic experiences of learners. I remain committed to fostering an environment where students feel safe, respected, and engaged as well as cultivating an educational experience that goes beyond the acquisition of facts, but there is now a deeper understanding of the *why* and the *how* behind those goals. With this understanding, I am better equipped to empower students with not only skills but also the confidence and reflective self-awareness needed to embrace the challenge of becoming successful counselors.

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