3:00 – 4:30 PM Breakout Session Number 1
Diversity Track | Ethics Track
How Your Heritage Informs Your Values, Cultural Competence, and Unconscious Bias
Laurie A. Persh, LCPC, LMFT, CCMHC, EAS-C
Multicultural counseling, “Cultural competence,” and “Diversity training” are all relatively recent concepts and areas of study for counselors. Multicultural counseling was not even a required course in many master's programs when the fields of community counseling and counseling psychology were still young, before CACREP. However, it is very much a requirement now. Counselors and other mental health professionals are also bound by codes of ethics. The ACA Code of ethics addresses multicultural issues in sections on “Professional Responsibility,” “Assessment,” “Supervision and Training,” and Ethical Decision Making. With this foundation of understanding and need, the current political and world environment which we all work in has been undergoing tremendous change and public awareness of conflict around immigration and civil rights. Many journalists and researchers have noted increases in incidents of overt racism, antisemitism, and hate crimes. Concerns have been raised about the effectiveness of corporate diversity or sexual harassment training while police departments are feeling the pressure to increase trainings to avoid “implicit bias” or racial profiling. As counselors, we need to understand the origins and dynamics of cultural diversity. Within every culture, there are values that predominate. Understanding and embracing our own values can help us see where we may differ and unconsciously judge others for who they are or what their values are. This presentation will present some review and exploration of the development of the concept of cultural competence and related concepts. We'll examine developmental values and how they influence attitudes and interactions, for both clients and counselors. We'll also look at some of the latest research and work on measuring and training around unconscious bias.

Thursday, June 25, 2020

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM Breakout Session Number 1
Ethics Track
Ethical and Legal Expectations in Clinical Documentation
Presented by James H. Dalton, PhD, LPC/MHSP, CCMHC and Mike Cravens, LPC/MHSP, LMFT, NCC
Many clinicians struggle to feel fully proficient in the area of documentation. Clinicians lack confidence in their documentation skills for multiple reasons. First, clinical documentation is different from state to state and from practice to practice, leaving clinicians unsure which standards are best or even appropriate. Second, many graduate programs do not spend much time on documentation. Those who are taught documentation in their graduate program find the real-world practice expectations to be very different. Third, few continuing education offerings focus on documentation and provide clear guidelines and suggestions to help clinicians improve in the area of documentation. For all of these reasons, and others, clinicians are often unsure of what should and should not be documented in clinical records. In this presentation, Drs. Dalton and Cravens will discuss ethical guidelines for documentation from the Code of Ethics for the AMHCA, ACA, and other mental health professions. Legal responsibilities of documentation reflected in HIPAA will also be reviewed as will guidelines of documentation from selected third-party payers. The two presenters have a combined experience of over 45 years in counseling. Both are counselor educators with experience teaching ethics and presenting on documentation to mental health professionals. One presenter has administrative experience in quality assurance and the other presenter has past service on a state licensing board. Bringing together the ethical and legal standards, literature related to documentation, and their wealth of experience, the presenters will share theoretical as well as practical guidelines for clinicians of what should and should not be included in mental health records.

5:00 – 6:30 PM Breakout Session 3
Ethics Track

Ethics in Soundbytes: Bite-Sized Strategies to Enhance Ethical Practice
Presented by Susan Meyerle, LIMHP

We are all aware of how technology is changing our lives. This is true in how we consume information, even clinical research impacting our profession. How are counselors staying abreast of the deluge of evidence-based research? How effectively are we consuming the research? Or, does it become one of those things “we’ll get around to someday”? This presentation focuses on how counselors are consuming data and incorporating new information into their practice. The session poses the question of whether researchers are communicating their findings in a way that is user-friendly. Counselors have an ethical obligation to “Maintain knowledge of relevant scientific and professional information related to the services rendered, and recognizes the need for on-going education” (AMHCA, 2015). Yet, most organizations will tell you their printed journal subscription rate has continued to steadily decline over the last several years, leading them to publish online. Sure, we can obtain information through an online journal, but do we? This presentation is based on a research study conducted in 2019 of professional counselors, social workers, and marriage and family therapists. The study sought to explore how behavioral healthcare professionals access ongoing educational materials and their perceived usefulness. Furthermore, the implications of the information address the growing trend of counselors who share research blurbs through social media platforms. How do we communicate results effectively, ethically, and usefully to our intended audience?
Neuroscience Track | Ethics Track

Neuroeducation: Practical Translations of Neuroscience in Clinical Work
Presented by Raissa Miller, LPC and Eric Beeson, LPC, NCC, ACS, CRC

Mental health counselors are expected to use interventions informed by current research and best practice guidelines. Principles of neuroscience are increasingly informing best practices and are now included as components of foundational knowledge. For example, the AMHCA Standards for the Practice of Clinical Mental Health Counseling (2018) identify the necessary knowledge and skills for neuroscience-informed practice. One type of neuroscience-informed intervention is neuroeducation, a didactic or experiential intervention that aims to reduce client distress and improve client outcome by helping clients understand and influence the neurobiological processes underlying mental functioning (Miller, 2016). Neuroeducation is grounded in individuals’ here-and-now experience and promotes common factors of change, such as the therapeutic alliance, expectancy, and goal consensus. Although research on the effects of neuroeducation is just emerging (e.g., Louw, Zimney, Puentedura, & Diener, 2017), practitioners have anecdotally reported many positive uses and outcomes (Badenoch, 2018; Fishbane, 2013; Miller & Barrio Minton, 2016). The most frequently cited benefits include increased empathy and compassion for self and others, decreased blame and shame, greater client empowerment and hope for change, and normalization and validation of experiences. Neuroeducation is much more than providing a reductionist explanation of symptoms; it is about exploring relevant neurobiological principles in a way that honors complexity, individuality, and context. When delivered within a grounded theoretical framework, neuroeducation can serve to enhance the overall therapeutic process. This presentation will focus on introducing attendees to the principles and process of neuroeducation. Participants will come away with a clear definition of neuroeducation and guidelines for implementation. Participants will also be able to observe and participate in two neuroeducation demonstrations.

Friday, June 26, 2020

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM Breakout Session Number 1
Ethics Track | Technology Assisted Counseling Track
Engaged and Ethical Blogging for the Modern Counselor
Presented by Michele Kerulis, EdD and Jennifer Robertson

Mainstream media recognition of mental health issues has become more visible over the last few years. Celebrities, athletes, the British Royal Family, and popular news sites have a strong online presence and advocate for mental health awareness. Blogging has become a popular way for mental health professionals to share their ideas with the intention of helping people understand that they are not alone and to decrease stigma related to discussing
mental health. The impact of topics like wellness, suicide prevention, relationships, violence, bullying, and aging have appeared online. Many counselors want to blog but are not sure how to start. In this interactive workshop, participants will learn from fellow counselors and an award-winning blogger and media specialist who will help them develop an outline of their first (or 10th!) blog. Steps to ethical blogging will be presented, including highlighting ethics codes, using peer reviewed references, and understanding your audience. Participants will also learn how to pitch ideas to media. Counselors who sign up will receive a download with additional tips that build on the information in the presentation. Come to this active workshop with your creativity and leave with a plan for your new blogging strategy.

OR

Geriatric Track | Ethics Track
How to Become an Effective Clinical Mental Health Counselor in Geriatrics and Create a Successful Specialized Practice
Presented by Greggus Yahr, PhD, DCMHS
There are more older adults in the United States than ever before in history, making this segment one of the fastest-growing portions of the population. The appropriate care of older adults requires health care providers to have a solid understanding of the physiologic changes that accompany aging. The mental health of older Americans has been identified as a priority by the Healthy People 2010 objectives (1), the 2005 White House Conference on Aging (2), and the 1999 Surgeon General’s report on mental health (3). It is estimated that 20% of people age 55 years or older experience some type of mental health concern. Yet, as noted by the Geriatric Mental Health Foundations (4), the number of mental health providers skilled in geriatrics, or even those with only a rudimentary awareness of the differences between dementia’s and other mental health issues, the ethical considerations that often accompany this population, such as how to remain vibrant and yet approach end of life care, is significantly deficient to meet the needs of this rapidly expanding population. Along with the dearth of specialty providers, effectively serving the senior population from the clinical perspective requires different approaches to treatment, an understanding and appreciation of client stresses, that come from waking up each day knowing there's more life in the rear view mirror than in the road head, than commonly presented in most clinical training programs. The function of this presentation is to outline the necessary educational, clinical, and professional business tools in order to become a skilled senior care clinician, and build a successful specialty practice in this vastly under served arena. The the angst among seniors, and the family distress resulting from the difficulty finding skilled providers, can be avoided by increasing the number of providers possessing the appropriate training, clinical skills, and practice creation acumen in this specialty area. (1) U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2000). Healthy People 2010. Available at: http://www.health.gov/healthypeople. (2) U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2006). 2005 White House Conference on Aging. Available at: http://www.whcoa.gov/index.asp. (3) U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (1999). Older Adults and Mental Health. In: Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon
5:00 – 6:30 PM Breakout Session Number 3
Ethics Track | Technology Assisted Counseling Track

Innovation in Process: The Ethical Use of Social Media in Mental Health Counseling
Presented by Rebecca K. Rucker, MA, LPC-S, LMFT

Social networking is offering a number of new clinical and ethical challenges for mental health counselors. These challenges include extra-therapeutic contacts between counselors and their clients, questions of what distinguishes personal and professional activities online, and an evolving set of policies related to counselors’ online behaviors and interactions. This workshop offers an introduction to digital ethics and social networking sites and activities. The presenter provides guidelines for how to manage the concerns that may arise for mental health counselors who are using social media sites, especially Facebook and LinkedIn. Applicable ethical standards for professional counselors, marriage and family therapists, and social workers will be addressed. Participants will gain a keen understanding of how to ethically participate with social media in their practices.

Program Goals:
1. Participants will become able to distinguish between one’s personal and professional activities on the Internet.
2. Participants will identify the ethical challenges that may arise from engaging in activities on the Internet.
3. Participants will identify and describe social media sites and learn best practices for the use of two popular social media sites - Facebook and LinkedIn.
4. Participants will develop strategies for minimizing the risk of ethical violations on the Internet.
5. Participants will learn the relevant ethical issues that pertain to therapists’ web sites and social networking profiles.

Method of Presentation: The presenter provides didactic information about online transparency between counselors and clients in the digital age. Information is provided and participants engage in an exercise about the difference between digital natives and digital immigrants when delivering and promoting counseling services via the internet. Guidelines for the best practice approach to the use of the internet and social media services, especially Facebook and LinkedIn, are provided. Participants engage in an exercise to explore their own digital footprints on the Internet and are encouraged to discuss how this awareness informs their use of the internet and social media with their clients. The AMHCA ethical code and specific ethical best practice standards are discussed. Best practice guidelines are provided to increase the counselors' informed use of the internet and social media.