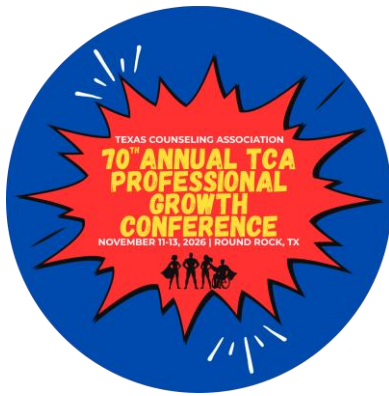




PROGRAM GUIDE:

70th Annual TCA Professional Growth Conference

November 11–13, 2026
Kalahari Resorts & Conventions - Round Rock

Last updated: 8/07/2026. Subject to change.

Learning Institutes

Wednesday, November 11, 2026 • 9:30am-5:00pm

Additional Registration Fee

A. Building an Ethical AI-Integrated Counseling Practice: From Policy to Practice

CE Requirement Category: Ethics; General

Presenter(s): Amanda Davison

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly entering counseling practice, yet most clinicians lack clear guidance on how to ethically and practically implement these tools. This full-day, hands-on Learning Institute moves beyond theory to provide step-by-step strategies for integrating AI into clinical workflows while maintaining ethical and legal compliance.

Participants will actively develop components of an AI-informed practice, including informed consent language, ethical decision-making frameworks, and HIPAA-conscious workflows. Through guided exercises, real-world case scenarios, and structured implementation planning, attendees will gain the skills needed to responsibly incorporate AI into documentation, client engagement, and administrative processes.

This training is designed for clinicians seeking practical tools, increased confidence, and a clear roadmap for ethical AI integration in counseling practice.

B. TACES PRESENTS: Supervising with Purpose: Integrating Ethics, Theory, and Advocacy into Counselor Education and Clinical Supervision

CE Requirement Category: Supervision

Presenter(s): Cortnee Wright; Adriana Gutierrez; Adriana Gutierrez, Alexia Florentin; Melissa Alvarado

This professional Learning Institute offers a practice-oriented examination of contemporary issues in counselor supervision and education. Across four interconnected programs, participants engage ethical, theoretical, and applied dimensions of supervision practice.

Program one examines the 2024 [AF1.1]updates to CACREP competencies and the revised ACA Code of Ethics (2026), situating these changes within Bernard and Goodyear's (2019) foundational supervision framework to clarify supervisors' ethical responsibilities. Program two integrates established and emerging supervision theories, including Kemer's (2025) Cohesive Model of Supervision and the Multicultural Integrated Supervision Model (Mitchell & Butler, 2021), alongside evidence-informed strategies for progress assessment. Program three emphasizes application through the development of supervision contracts and remediation plans informed by scholarship on gatekeeping and professional competence (DeCino et al., 2020; Demyan et al., 2018). The Institute concludes with a focus on advocacy, preparing participants to advance ethical supervision, professional standards, and systemic change in practice.

C. TMHCA Presents: Survival Skills for Launching and Operating an Ethical, Legal, and Profitable Private Practice

CE Requirement Category: General; Supervision

Presenter(s): Kate Walker; Dawn Brunkenhoefer; Jennifer-Marie Fairchild; Jenny Melrose

Graduate programs do not train clinicians to run a business, incorporate a changing ethics code into their marketing and operations, or build a practice that can survive their absence. This six-hour Learning Institute fills that gap. Facilitated by counselor educators and successful private practice owners alongside expert colleagues, this program is structured around real questions clinicians are asking as well as ones they do not yet know to ask. Participants will leave with a clear understanding of the 2026 legal and ethical landscape; evolving trends in the effective use of artificial intelligence in marketing, documentation, and client workflows; and a personalized plan for building systems that mitigate risk, promote profit, allow for self-care,

and comply with laws and ethics. Content is grounded in current Texas regulatory standards, the forthcoming ACA Code of Ethics revisions, and best practices for ethical and practical use of AI in clinical business operations.

D. TxSAIGE Presents: Counseling Queer Clients Beyond the 101: Advancing Competency with LGBTGEQIAP+ Communities

CE Requirement Category: Cultural Diversity; General

Presenter(s): Melissa Shiplett-Jupe; Rachel Allen; Amara Yachimski

This advanced 6.5-hour Learning Institute is designed for counselors, counselor educators, supervisors, and trainees seeking to move beyond introductory work with LGBTGEQIAP+ clients. In a rapidly shifting sociopolitical climate marked by restrictive legislation in Texas and federal policy changes affecting gender-affirming care, confidentiality, and LGBTQ+ protections, the need for ethical and affirming counseling practice is urgent. Grounded in the ACA Code of Ethics (2014) and advocacy competencies, this program integrates LGBTGEQIAP+ affirmative practice into clinical formulation, supervision, and systems-level intervention rather than treating identity as a standalone topic. Attention is given to clients throughout the community regarding identity development, systemic barriers, and clinical interventions. Through case-based learning, discussion, and interactive exercises, participants will strengthen ethical decision-making, advocacy, and clinical responsiveness. The Institute emphasizes multi-level advocacy, counselor resilience, and culturally responsive care to support client safety and dignity in increasingly complex and restrictive environments.

3-Hour Hot Topics

Wednesday, November 11, 2026 • 2:00pm-5:00pm

Additional Registration Fee

E. The New 2026 ACA Code of Ethics: Key Changes and Implications for Contemporary Counseling Practice

CE Requirement Category: Ethics; Supervision

Presenter(s): Bret Hendricks; Rochelle Cade; Annette Tommerdahl

This program provides a focused overview of the new 2026 ACA Code of Ethics, highlighting key revisions, clarifications, and emerging areas of ethical practice. Participants will examine substantive changes across each

section of the new code. Emphasis will be placed on how updated standards reflect evolving clinical realities and societal expectations. Using applied examples, the program will explore how counselors can integrate these updates into ethical decision making and daily practice. Attention will also be given to areas of potential ambiguity, increased risk, and common ethical dilemmas under the revised code. Designed for counselors, supervisors, and counselor educators, this program offers practical guidance for maintaining ethical competence and aligning professional behavior with current ACA standards. Participants will leave with a clearer understanding of the 2026 code and its implications for contemporary counseling practice.

F. Stronger Together: Strengthening Trauma-Informed Leadership

CE Requirement Category: Ethics; Supervision

Presenter(s): Jessica Davis; Altaira Davis; LaByrant Benjamin; Kelcey White

Professionals across counseling, education, and leadership roles are navigating increasing demands that impact decision-making, communication, and overall effectiveness. Without intentional strategies, these pressures can lead to burnout, misalignment, and reduced team engagement. This 3-Hour Hot Topic program focuses on strengthening trauma-informed leadership practices that support sustainable performance across clinical, school, and organizational settings. Participants will explore how stress and environmental demands influence behavior, leadership responses, and team dynamics. The program integrates practical strategies for recognizing overload, responding with intention, and maintaining clarity in high-demand environments. Through guided reflection, applied activities, and collaborative discussion, participants will strengthen communication, improve relational engagement, and enhance leadership effectiveness. Aligned with the theme Stronger Together, this program emphasizes shared leadership, emotional awareness, and intentional practices that support both individual professionals and the teams they lead.

G. Unlocking the Power Within: A Comprehensive Review of Trauma Modalities for Mental Health Counselors

CE Requirement Category: General

Presenter(s): Jessica Endres; Misty Solt

Navigating the rapidly evolving landscape of trauma treatment can feel overwhelming for both new and seasoned counselors. With numerous modalities available, clinicians often struggle to determine which approaches best match clients' needs, their own training level, and real-world practice demands. This program delivers a clear, comprehensive review of today's major trauma treatment modalities ranging from Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT), Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT), and Prolonged Exposure Therapy (PE) to recent post modern approaches such as Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), Somatic Experiencing (SE), and Internal Family Systems (IFS), and more. Participants will examine each modality's theoretical foundations, empirical efficacy based on recent literature, practicality, cultural considerations, and required training or certification standards. Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of how these modalities differ and leave with an improved ability to select a treatment intervention that best supports their clients' healing and empowerment.

H. Scrolled, Saved, and Self-Diagnosed: Clinical and Ethical Responses to Social Media in the Therapy Room

CE Requirement Category: Ethics; General

Presenter(s): Morgan Bloomfield; Christina Daou; Priscilla Prasath

Clients are increasingly arriving to counseling programs pre-diagnosed by social media. Among them are trauma survivors, neurodivergent clients, and adolescents increasingly self-identify with mental health conditions through viral content before ever seeing a clinician, and the research demonstrates that this carries substantial risk. This program equips counselors to respond with both clinical precision and ethical clarity. Through video analysis, structured role play, and framework-building, participants will examine what the evidence indicates about social media's influence, identify professional obligations, and explore how to validate a client's experience without reinforcing a potentially inaccurate label.

Attendees will leave with practical language for conversations regarding client self-diagnosis via social media, a framework for navigating the tension between expanding client access to information and protecting them from its costs, and a prompt to audit their own intake and consent processes. Your credential carries weight. So does your silence.

I. Working Through Conflict and Forgiveness

CE Requirement Category: Cultural Diversity; General

Presenter(s): Richard Balkin

Issues of conflict and forgiveness impact relationships. How clients recognize and work through conflict may impact well-being and life-satisfaction. In this program attendees will be introduced to essential components to understanding forgiveness and how conflicts may be addressed, and perhaps alleviated or at least worked through, in the counseling process. Attendees will leave with an understanding of a viable model and instrument they can use in their practice.

J. Addressing Human Trafficking in Counseling: A Multidisciplinary Approach

CE Requirement Category: General

Presenter(s): Sara Jennings; Derek Lee; Sherry Rosenbladd; Evans Spears

Human trafficking is a pervasive crisis occurring in our own neighborhoods, often hidden in plain sight. Texas consistently ranks as the second-highest state in the U.S. for reported trafficking cases, driven by its extensive international border and major transit corridors like I-10 and I-35. The program invites participants to uncover the reality behind the headlines. Trafficking is far more complex than common misconceptions suggest. Research indicates that cases can involve family members or known caregivers, making recovery a deeply sensitive process that intertwines mental health with the rebuilding of basic human trust. This program explores current research and the multidisciplinary approach being developed to provide victims with a comprehensive pathway to healing.

K. TAMFC Presents The Gold Standard for Treating Child Behaviors: Parent Training in Behavior Management

CE Requirement Category: General

Presenter(s): Tricia Foster

Did you know the recommended primary intervention for treating children with ADHD-like behaviors is Parent Training in Behavior Management (PTBM)? Previously championed by ABA behavioral therapists, Parent

Training is growing in application and effectiveness among counselors, family therapists, and social workers who are trained to guide parents through processing the many personal factors affecting how they show up as parents. Come learn about PTBM, what it is, its theory of change and need for adaptability to any cultural background and diverse family arrangement, compatibility with family systems and counseling theories, core principles and goals, a review of existing Parent Training programs, and the effectiveness of working with any parent who is willing to be involved in the treatment of their children through Parent Training.

90-Minute Programs

Thursday and Friday, November 12 – 13, 2026

1. AI in the Therapy Room: Ethical Decision-Making for Emerging Counselors

CE Requirement Category: Ethics; Supervision

Presenter(s): Jesusa Jasso; Rachelle Morales; Julissa Espinoza

This program examines the growing presence of artificial intelligence (AI) in counseling practice, with a focus on ethical decision-making for LPC-Associates and Counselors-in-Training. Participants will explore practical applications of AI in documentation and skill development, evaluate ethical risks, and differentiate appropriate versus inappropriate use through case-based scenarios. The participants will be introduced to a structured ethical decision-making framework and supervision strategies to support responsible and developmentally appropriate AI use in clinical training that is grounded in ACA Code of Ethics. Additionally, this program equips emerging counselors with practical tools to integrate AI while maintaining ethical standards and the relational integrity of counseling practice.

2. Holding the Tension: Working Effectively with Clients Who Challenge Our Values

CE Requirement Category: Ethics; Cultural Diversity

Presenter(s): Monique Rahman; Sneha Nayar-Bhalerao

Counselors increasingly encounter clients, students, and supervisees whose values differ from their own, creating moments of internal tension that can challenge therapeutic presence and effectiveness. This experiential program explores how counselors can navigate value-based differences while maintaining ethical, respectful, and client-centered care. Participants will engage in guided reflection and structured activities designed to increase awareness of their cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses to value conflict. Emphasizing self-awareness over debate, the program introduces practical strategies for staying grounded, curious, and relationally engaged when faced with perspectives that differ from one's own. Attendees will practice skills for managing internal reactions, maintaining the therapeutic alliance, and making thoughtful, ethical decisions in complex situations. This program is applicable to counseling, supervision, and educational settings and offers immediately usable tools for working effectively across differences.

3. Grief: Multicultural Perspectives and Approaches for Counselors

CE Requirement Category: Cultural Diversity

Presenter(s): John Spoede

This program equips counselors with culturally responsive tools for grief work and suicide prevention. Participants will explore how cultural beliefs shape grief and learn research-based, practical strategies to deliver effective, respectful interventions across diverse populations.

4. When It's Not Resistance: Understanding Client Worldview Across Lived Experiences

CE Requirement Category: Cultural Diversity

Presenter(s): Desirae Coriz; Jaime Torres-Rivera

Clients don't always show up to counseling in ways that align with traditional expectations, sometimes they are labeled as "resistant" when their behavior is shaped by lived experiences and worldview. Factors such as gender roles, socioeconomic background, and interactions with systems can influence how clients approach trust, vulnerability, and engagement in therapy.

This interactive program will help counselors recognize common misinterpretations of client behavior and respond more effectively in program. Through real-world scenarios and guided activities, attendees will

practice reframing client behavior and applying culturally responsive strategies that strengthen rapport and improve engagement. Attendees will leave with practical tools they can immediately use to better connect with clients across diverse backgrounds.

5. Stronger Together: Leading Schools from Crisis to Connection

CE Requirement Category: School Counseling; General

Presenter(s): Ashley Luhrs; Shelby Miller

Any campus can face the unexpected. When crisis disrupts a school community, what happens next matters. School counselors are uniquely positioned to lead through uncertainty and play a critical role not only in the immediate response, but in rebuilding connection, safety, and stability. Grounded in real-life experience and outcomes, this program highlights how one high school counseling team shifted from reactive crisis response to proactive, campus-wide leadership through intentional visibility, strong staff collaboration, and data-driven intervention systems. Participants will leave with a practical, replicable framework for guiding schools from crisis to connection while strengthening long-term student outcomes and campus culture.

6. Understanding Chronic Sorrow in Men: Masculinity, Invisible Loss, and Counseling Considerations

CE Requirement Category: General

Presenter(s): Tiffany Bordonada; Ryan Barbre

This program explores chronic sorrow as an ongoing, cyclical form of grief often linked to repeated or non-death losses such as identity shifts, caregiving, divorce, and job loss. These experiences, particularly among men, are frequently shaped by societal expectations of masculinity that discourage emotional expression and limit help-seeking, resulting in unrecognized or internalized grief. This program integrates perspectives on masculine socialization, disenfranchised grief, and meaning-making approaches to address men's lived experiences with chronic sorrow. Although chronic sorrow remains underrepresented in counseling practice, this program seeks to address this gap by exploring how chronic sorrow manifests in men. Additionally, effective coping mechanisms and counseling

considerations are examined to enhance the counselors' ability to recognize invisible loss to reduce chronic sorrow and support overall well-being in men.

7. Behind the Cape: Super Mom, Super Educator, & Supervisors in Counseling

CE Requirement Category: Supervision; General

Presenter(s): Olivia Wedel; Jessica Endres

Moms in the counseling profession are superheroes wearing many capes. They do so much for everyone else, but who is there for them in return? As counselors, helping moms be as “super” as they can be means helping address the significant changes that happen when becoming a parent that impact mental and physical health, self-image, and how they relate to others in their lives. In this program, through the use of case study examples based on sections A, C, and F of the ACA Code of Ethics (2014); we will discuss postpartum changes, identity and role transitions, and relational impacts that moms experience as well as how counselors can help facilitate therapeutic growth and sustainable change. In the program, dedicated emphasis will be given to counselors, counselor educators, and supervisors who are supermoms in our profession, and how they navigate those roles along with motherhood.

8. Texas Association of Marriage and Family Counselors (TAMFC) Presents: Managing High Conflict Dynamics- Proven Strategies for Counselors, Couples, and Families

CE Requirement Category: General

Presenter(s): Jayna Haney

Emotionally healthy people can become upset and difficult when under stress. Then, there are those individuals who are consistently high conflict. High conflict people break the rules! Encountering them in our practice, schools, or personal lives can undermine our self-confidence and our own emotional regulation. In this program, the presenter explains the underlying dynamics of the high-conflict cycle and traits of high conflict people. She engages the audience with proven tools and outlines the Dos and Don'ts for therapeutic professionals to protect their license as well as their sanity in managing high conflict situations and individuals —whether as clients, colleagues, or people in their daily lives. An effective plan and specific

interventions are provided to offer support, build resilience and reduce conflict for counselors. Successful strategies shared are designed to be utilized immediately in client programs for high-conflict dynamics including couples, co-parents, and families.

9. The Power of Affirmation: Leveraging Caregiver Consultations to Support LGBTQIA+ Youth

CE Requirement Category: Cultural Diversity General

Presenter(s): Eric Dafoe; Sloane Sivek; Reagan Dickson; Maya Patterson

Caregiver consultations are the essential bridge between clinical progress & holistic care for youth-aged clients. However, for LGBTQIA+ youth, that bridge can alter when caregivers struggle to affirm their child's identities. Many counselors report decreased confidence in navigating consultations, often feeling caught between ethical obligations to the client & the legal rights of non-affirming guardians (DeVoss et al., 2021; Kuria & James, 2025). Because familial acceptance is a predictor of emotional health & resilience for LGBTQIA+ youth (Ceatha et al., 2021; Katz-Wise et al., 2016), the counselor's engagement with the family system is paramount. This program provides both the clinical rationale & practical "how-to" strategies for caregiver consultation. Attendees will reflect on the unique dynamics of parental engagement and gain actionable solutions for conducting meaningful informed consultations. Participants will leave with a free therapist toolkit with activities to deepen their work with caregivers and support LGBTQIA+ youth-caregivers relationships.

10. Beyond Verbal Expression: Sandtray Therapy as a Therapeutic Modality for Nonverbal Adults

CE Requirement Category: General

Presenter(s): Amber Ruiz; Juan Martinez

Adults who have experienced trauma often encounter difficulties expressing thoughts and emotions through traditional talk-based therapy, particularly when verbal communication is limited. Mental health professionals may have limited preparation in alternative therapeutic approaches that support symbolic and experiential forms of expression. As a result, there is a growing need for trauma-informed and developmentally responsive interventions that foster safety, engagement, and emotional healing. Sandtray therapy offers a

creative, client-centered modality that enables individuals to communicate experiences and process emotions through nonverbal and symbolic means, making it a valuable approach for supporting recovery in clinical practice. There is also an increasing need for guidance on the ethical and responsible integration of sandtray therapy, including the importance of obtaining appropriate training and practicing within one's professional scope of competence.

11. Behind Locked Doors: Collaboration in Maximum-Security Mental Health Settings

CE Requirement Category: Cultural Diversity; General

Presenter(s): Rikki Collier

This program explores how counselors and interdisciplinary teams navigate communication challenges and systemic pressures to provide effective care. Participants will gain practical strategies to build collaborative teams, enhance cohesion, and improve client outcomes in high-stakes environments.

12. Beyond Awareness: Trauma-Informed and Culturally Responsive Interventions for Race-Based Stress in Clinical Practice

CE Requirement Category: Cultural Diversity; Supervision; General

Presenter(s): Cicelia Como

This program equips counselors with practical, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive strategies to address race-based stress and historical trauma in clinical practice. Grounded in current research and aligned with the American Counseling Association Code of Ethics, the program moves beyond awareness to application by providing concrete tools for assessment, case conceptualization, and intervention.

Participants will engage in case-based discussions, guided reflection, and skill-building exercises designed to strengthen their ability to recognize the impact of systemic oppression on client functioning. Emphasis will be placed on integrating culturally responsive approaches into treatment planning while maintaining ethical and client-centered care. Attendees will leave with actionable strategies to enhance clinical effectiveness and support diverse populations across counseling settings.

13. Strengthening Bonds Under Stress: EFT with Veterans and First Responders

CE Requirement Category: Cultural Diversity; General

Presenter(s): Ashley Rossi

Veterans and first responders face elevated rates of trauma exposure, emotional suppression, and relational distress, often compounded by cultural norms that discourage vulnerability and help-seeking. Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT), an evidence-based, attachment-centered model, offers counselors a powerful framework for addressing both trauma symptoms and relationship disconnection.

This program will introduce participants to the application of EFT with veterans and first responders, highlighting why this model is uniquely suited for these populations. Attendees will explore key clinical considerations, including cultural competence, trauma-informed adaptations, and engagement strategies for clients who may be reluctant to access emotional experiences. Practical interventions and case examples will be provided to support immediate clinical integration.

14. Therapy-Speak Is Killing Intimacy: When Self-Awareness Replaces Desire in Relationships

CE Requirement Category: Cultural Diversity; General

Presenter(s): Angela Jones

Therapy has made people more articulate, but not always more connected. In many cases, the ability to explain emotions has replaced the ability to feel them in real time.

This program explores how over-intellectualization can create distance from intimacy, desire, and relational connection. Grounded in experiential and emotion-focused approaches, participants will learn how to recognize when clients are engaging cognitively rather than emotionally, and how to guide them toward more present, embodied, and vulnerable experiences in session. This program offers practical strategies to help clinicians move beyond insight and support deeper emotional and relational engagement.

15. You can't say you don't have time

CE Requirement Category: General

Presenter(s): Jennifer Yarbrough

Self-care is a critical yet often overlooked component of a counselor's professional life. While counselors are trained to support the well-being of others, they frequently neglect their own needs, leading to increased stress, emotional exhaustion, and vulnerability to burnout. Without intentional self-care, counselors are at greater risk for ethical mistakes, compassion fatigue, and shortened career longevity.

This program highlights the essential role of self-care in sustaining ethical, effective counseling practice. Participants will explore the warning signs of burnout, understand how chronic stress impacts clinical judgment, and learn practical, culturally responsive strategies to maintain personal and professional wellness. The focus is on realistic, accessible self-care practices that counselors can integrate into their daily routines to stay grounded, energized, and aligned with their values.

Attendees will leave with concrete tools and a renewed commitment to caring for themselves as deeply as they care for their clients.

16. Treating Moral Injury in Clinical Settings: Theory and Practice

CE Requirement Category: General

Presenter(s): Stephen Lenz; Gillian Rodriguez; Christine Wong

Experiences that conflict with one's moral code are a common part of development, yet some lead to moral injury and its characteristic persisting guilt, shame, anger, or betrayal that disrupts identity, relationships, and meaning-making. Distinct from fear-based conditions such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, moral injury arises from perceived violations of what is right, implicating the self, others, or institutions.

This program provides a concise overview of moral injury theory and developmental processes, including risk and protective factors that influence recovery. Participants will learn practical approaches to assessment and evidence-informed interventions, such as narrative reconstruction, self-compassion, and meaning-centered techniques. Clinical examples will illustrate strategies to support moral repair, rebuild trust, and restore coherence in the moral self. The program concludes with a brief review of the current evidence base and applications across settings, including education, healthcare, and other helping professions.

17. Why Teens React, Avoid, and Shut Down: A Brain-Based Approach for Counselors

CE Requirement Category: General; School Counseling

Presenter(s): Ashley Warren

Adolescence is a period of rapid brain development that can make behavior, emotions, and motivation difficult for both teens and the adults supporting them to understand. School counselors and mental health professionals often work with teens who appear unmotivated, reactive, anxious, or withdrawn, leaving adults unsure how to respond effectively. This program translates current neuroscience into practical strategies counselors can use immediately with students and families. Participants will explore how adolescent brain development influences emotional regulation, motivation, executive functioning, and social sensitivity. Through real-world examples and discussion, attendees will learn how stress responses and developing brain systems shape teen behavior. Practical tools will be shared for reducing conflict, supporting executive functioning, and helping teens build emotional resilience in school and counseling settings.

18. Hope and Faith in the Fire: Clients Who Face Spiritual Injury and Faith Crisis after Trauma

CE Requirement Category: Cultural Diversity

Presenter(s): Mary Whiting; Shawna Corley; Sunkyung Chng

When clients experience trauma, profound questions of faith, meaning, and suffering often emerge at the center of their pain. This program examines how spiritual and religious coping tools can be ethically and effectively integrated into trauma-informed counseling practice, offering counselors practical, research-supported strategies for addressing spiritual distress.

19. Beyond the Journey: Navigating Immigration Trauma through the Stages of Migration and Advocacy

CE Requirement Category: Cultural Diversity

Presenter(s): Diana Rodriguez; Ceyda Haggan; Cristina Granados

This program explores immigration trauma as a critical framework for counseling focusing on the pre-migration, transit, and post migration stages. Grounded in the conference theme, participants will examine the

psychological impacts of migration with focus on PTSD, acculturative stress, and systemic marginalization. Using evidence-based tools such as the Trauma-Informed Structured Interview Questionnaire for Immigration Cases (SIQI), this program introduces trauma-informed strategies that prioritize client agency and resilience.

Attendees will engage in a guided experiential activity to analyze trauma manifestations across the migration trajectory and apply culturally responsive, socially just interventions. The program emphasizes practical application, highlighting advocacy-oriented techniques to address systemic oppression and navigate the unique policy vulnerabilities faced by immigrant populations in Texas. By centering lived experiences, counselors will leave with concrete tools to foster healing and empowerment within diverse immigrant communities.

20. Helping Teens Develop the Superpower of Self-Regulation

CE Requirement Category: School Counseling

Presenter(s): Betty White

While schools focus mostly on academic achievement, the reality is that self-regulation skills are more important. Explicitly teaching and modeling self-regulation skills for tweens and teens provides them with a "super power" they can use throughout their entire lives. Research shows that children's self-regulatory behaviors in the early years are a better predictor of academic achievement than their IQ scores. (Blair 2002, Blair and Razza, 2007). While ideally teens reach middle and high school with a full repertoire of self-regulation skills, reality shows that many of them have not learned these skills. This severely impacts their ability to be successful in middle and high school, in college, and on the job. This program will provide you with tips and tools you can use to help young people develop their own superpower of self-regulation!

21. The Art of Healing Across the Lifespan

CE Requirement Category: School Counseling; General

Presenter(s): Vanessa Molina; Daniel Olvera; Cynthia Dequevedo

This program examines how trauma impacts individuals across the lifespan and emphasizes the importance of integrating trauma-informed care into counseling practice. Participants will develop skills to recognize trauma

symptoms in diverse populations and explore how creative arts interventions—such as art, music, movement, and storytelling—can support healing, self-expression, and resilience. Grounded in culturally responsive and developmentally appropriate strategies, this program provides practical tools to promote regulation, recovery, and overall wellness across settings.

22. Talking about student death without saying “death”: One college’s path to a comprehensive postvention plan

CE Requirement Category: General

Presenter(s): Eitandria Tello; Veronica Munis-Ochoa; Joseph Luedecke

Talking about student death is often avoided, leaving campuses and schools unsure how to respond when it matters most. This program shares how one community college district approached building a thoughtful and coordinated response by working through hesitation, language barriers, and institutional discomfort. Through real-world insight, participants will explore how intentional communication, cross-campus and school-based collaboration, and a culture of care can shape meaningful responses. Whether your setting is beginning postvention work or looking to strengthen existing efforts, this program offers practical insight to support a more prepared and responsive environment.

23. Holding Space While the World Burns: Sustainable Self-Care for Counselors

CE Requirement Category: General

Presenter(s): Lauren Parish

Counselors are increasingly navigating the dual responsibility of supporting clients through distress while managing their own responses to ongoing societal and systemic stressors. While burnout has traditionally been framed through workload and caseload, many clinicians are now experiencing a deeper form of fatigue rooted in the emotional toll of practicing in complex and rapidly changing environments.

This program explores the intersection of counselor well-being, sociocultural awareness, and sustainable self-care practices. Participants will examine how external stressors contribute to emotional exhaustion, compassion fatigue, and reduced capacity to effectively hold space for clients. Attendees will gain practical, evidence-informed strategies to support their well-being,

strengthen professional boundaries, and cultivate sustainable practices that promote long-term effectiveness in clinical work.

24. Home Is Where the Heart Is: The Role of Counselors Supporting Individuals Experiencing Homelessness

CE Requirement Category: Cultural Diversity

Presenter(s): Brian Hicks

This program takes participants on a journey that explores the mental health needs of individuals experiencing homelessness in communities across Texas. Participants will learn about the intersections of homelessness, trauma, and mental health, including the prevalence of depression, anxiety, PTSD, and substance use disorders within this population. The program reviews evidence-based practices such as trauma-informed care, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Motivational Interviewing (MI), and harm reduction strategies in nontraditional and community-based settings. Further, this program reviews ethical considerations grounded in the American Counseling Association (ACA) Code of Ethics that are integrated throughout, including client autonomy, boundary management, cultural humility, and advocacy. Participants will also explore systemic barriers, interdisciplinary community collaboration, and strategies to improve engagement, retention, and continuity of care that will enable learners to become effective in supporting and advocating for diverse client populations experiencing homelessness.

25. Play Therapy with Mexican American Children in School and Community Settings

CE Requirement Category: Cultural Diversity; School Counseling

Presenter(s): Jennifer Baggerly; Diana Pedroza

Mexican American children experience unique challenges in Texas such as sociopolitical oppression, higher rates of depression, and lower psychosocial functioning in schools. They may also face barriers to treatment due to cultural stigma, accessibility, and language. In this program, participants will learn a multicultural and social justice framework; culturally responsive play therapy approaches such as specific toys and games, key play therapy phrases in Spanish, and Child Centered Play Therapy skills of facilitating understanding in line with cultural values; and innovative strategies of

providing play therapy to Mexican American children in school and community settings.

26. Every Story Matters: Supporting Individuals with IDD in Forensic Settings

CE Requirement Category: Cultural Diversity; General

Presenter(s): Rikki Collier

This program equips counselors to differentiate between behavioral, psychiatric, and developmental factors influencing client presentation while examining systemic barriers that impact care. Participants will also learn to apply trauma-informed principles when working with justice-involved individuals with co-occurring IDD, leaving with practical strategies to support more ethical, responsive, and individualized treatment.

27. Holding the Mic and Holding Space: A Program Evaluation of Hip-Hop Mentoring within a Community-Based Youth Pilot Program

CE Requirement Category: Cultural Diversity; School Counseling; General

Presenter(s): Daniel Helvetius; Kendrick Kees; Takiesha Watson

This program explores the Rising Artist Program (R.A.P.), a Free My City Outreach summer pilot program designed to support youth voices, identity development, leadership, and emotional wellness through the culture of hip-hop, mentorship, and creative expression. This program examines how mental health professionals integrate with community mentors to enact hip-hop mentoring by “holding the mic” and “holding space” within a culturally sustaining youth program. Participants will learn about the program structure, curriculum implementation methods, mentor roles, cultural artifacts, and early evaluation data from the pilot experience. The program will also include practical considerations related to supervision, ethical boundaries, pedagogy adaptation, and community partnerships. Participants will leave with actionable strategies for cultivating community partnerships that expand access to healing, amplify youth's voices, and sustain culturally grounded programming.

28. Reconstructing the Self: Helping Clients Discover Their Power to Break Generational Cycles

CE Requirement Category: General

Presenter(s): Regina Tate

Many clients who grow up in dysfunctional environments develop survival strategies that once protected them but later interfere with relationships, identity development, and long-term stability. However, transformation often occurs when individuals recognize their strengths, establish protective boundaries, and commit to creating different futures for themselves and future generations. This program introduces key components of the Accepting Our Roots Framework, focusing on the development of protective identity and boundary formation among cycle breakers. Drawing from qualitative research findings, participants will explore how clients shift from survival-based behaviors to intentional generational change. Through case examples and practical strategies, attendees will learn how to support clients in recognizing strengths developed through adversity, setting effective boundaries, and protecting younger siblings, children, and future generations. This program emphasizes actionable tools for clinicians seeking to help clients move beyond survival toward empowered and legacy-focused healing.

29. Pleasure and Other Sexual Health Principles: Building a Framework for Sexual Health Conversations

CE Requirement Category: General; Supervision

Presenter(s): Edita Ruzgyte

Sexual concerns are embedded within relational systems, and having a clear, grounded framework can support therapists in engaging these conversations in ways that feel both clinically meaningful and relationally attuned. This program introduces sexual health principles as a systemic “infrastructure” that helps therapists co-construct conversations about sexuality that are thoughtful, flexible, and responsive to context—including conversations about pleasure. Participants will learn how to use these principles to guide assessment, case conceptualization, and intervention across diverse relational contexts.

Participants will be invited to submit brief cases in advance, creating opportunities to collaboratively engage real clinical material during the program .

30. Ageism Among Us: A Résumé Experiment on Counselor Hiring Bias

CE Requirement Category: General; Supervision

Presenter(s): Rachael Longoria

Counseling is a unique profession; it is a second career for many individuals, pursued at all ages, and grounded in unconditional positive regard. However, even counselors are not immune to bias. Age-related biases prompt us to consider how a counselor's perceived hirability may be influenced by the traits of those evaluating them. The experiment presented two identical fictitious counseling resumés that differed only in the resumé photo: one featured a 30-year-old, and the other a 50-year-old. Findings revealed statistically significant differences: one counselor applicant was consistently rated more favorably across hirability measures than the other. These results highlight how implicit cognitive processes may shape counselors' evaluations. This program will help counselors challenge their assumptions about age and competence in hiring. Participants will learn how biases affect perceptions of counselors and acquire strategies to mitigate age-related bias, fostering equitable decision-making.

31. TMHCA Presents: Updates from the Texas State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors

CE Requirement Category: Ethics; Supervision

Presenter(s): Cristina de Luna; selected board members

Join members of the Texas State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors (TSBEPC) for an informative panel presentation and interactive Q&A session. This discussion will address current licensing and ethics issues impacting Licensed Professional Counselors (LPCs) and Supervisors across Texas. Board members and staff will also share important updates on the licensing application process, address common causes of processing delays, and share recent improvements and regulatory developments.

32. Strategies for Using Trauma Informed Care with Survivors of Sex Trafficking

CE Requirement Category: General; School Counseling

Presenter(s): Krystal Humphreys; Wendy Helmcamp

Sex trafficking is the fastest growing criminal industry in the world and requires intentionality from the counseling profession. Drawing on years of

work with sex trafficking survivors and conducting research in the field, the presenters have found that effective restoration requires intentional, trauma-informed strategies. This program will help participants identify specific needs related to sex trafficking and learn trauma informed strategies for prevention and working with survivors.

33. How Trauma Manifests: Improving Counseling Outcomes with Trauma Informed Treatment for Borderline and Narcissistic Personality Disorders

CE Requirement Category: General

Presenter(s): Jessica Endres; Azadeh Mansour

As professional counselors, we all have likely had discomfort, fears, or stories about working with clients with BPD and NPD. Considering trauma's impact on the development of personality disorder symptoms is a critical, yet often forgotten, piece of clinical work to help these clients. Our goal in this program is to demystify some common therapeutic barriers, functional needs, and treatment interventions to reduce bias and improve treatment outcomes while addressing underlying trauma.

34. Psychospiritual Development & Counseling Applications

CE Requirement Category: Cultural Diversity; School Counseling

Presenter(s): Jennifer Moore

This program explores psychospiritual development theories—such as those by Fowler and Helminiak—to help counselors support the whole person. Attendees will examine how clients' search for meaning and purpose evolves across developmental stages. Attendees will learn practical strategies to integrate these insights into holistic counseling practices, fostering resilience and identity formation while maintaining professional boundaries and cultural sensitivity in school and private practice settings.

35. The Power of Bicultural Strength: Supporting Latinx Clients Navigating Two Worlds

CE Requirement Category: Cultural Diversity; General

Presenter(s): Gloria Ramirez; Nicole Presa

This program explores the power of bicultural identity in supporting Latinx clients as they navigate multiple cultural worlds. Participants will understand how bicultural identity, acculturation, and systemic factors influence mental health and help-seeking behaviors. Emphasis is placed on applying culturally responsive counseling strategies that affirm bicultural strengths and support clients in dual cultural contexts. Participants will also evaluate counseling interventions and ethical considerations, including language access, power, and equity, to enhance culturally responsive and effective clinical practice.

36. Recognizing and Assessing Suicide Risk in Adolescents: Understanding Suicidal Thoughts and Behaviors to Determine Best Course of Support.

CE Requirement Category: School Counseling

Presenter(s): Maricela Ponce

Determining if an adolescent has plans to die by suicide or is having thoughts of suicide is more than a yes or no questioning approach. There are several research-based evidence screening tools, such as Ask Suicide-Screening Questions, Patient Health Questionnaire-9 Adolescent Version, and the Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale, that are used to assess the mental health status; however, in a school setting, counselors, police officers, and administrators lack the appropriate training and experience in comparison to a licensed or clinical professionals who use specific questioning techniques and strategies that can determine the best appropriate support such as psychiatric hospitalization or referral to the local mental health authority. Assessing suicidality is not just about the type of questions asked or the assessment; oftentimes, the dynamics of how the screening is conducted, along with the lack of a follow-up plan, are what lead to continued hospitalizations.

37. Traumatic Grief: Counseling Adult Suicide Loss Survivors

CE Requirement Category: General

Presenter(s): Brittany Hudson; Gillian Rodriguez

The suicide of a loved one can cause significant disruptions in survivors' relationships with the deceased, themselves, and the world. Counselors have a role in restoring connection and meaning, but many feel underprepared for this complicated and emotionally demanding work. This program will equip

attendees with information and skills to address the most common experiences and needs of adult suicide loss survivors. The presenters will provide an overview of themes, such as anger, guilt, shame, and stigma, and the impact of a traumatic death. Attendees will learn concepts and interventions based on Jordan's tasks of psychological integration and will have opportunities to apply these through practice scenarios. This program will also include special attention to self-care for counselors in this space. In line with the conference theme, Stronger Together, attendees will leave better prepared to be a compassionate, informed, and steady presence in the aftermath of profound loss.

38. Supporting the Grieving Professional

CE Requirement Category: Supervision; General

Presenter(s): Melissa Griffing; Briana Webb

Grief, particularly unexpected grief, is associated with a variety of symptoms that all have the potential to significantly impede functioning. Counselors, like others with a helping profession, face the unique challenge of providing strength and encouragement to others even when they face significant loss. Many counselors are faced with the reality of choosing between emotional sacrifice (continuing to work while grieving) and financial sacrifice (reducing or suspending clinical hours) in the midst of loss. Despite the prevalence of loss experiences among clinicians, navigating counselor grief is rarely addressed adequately in counselor supervision training. This program bridges the specific gap by providing evidence-based resources on this essential type of care and support for their grieving supervisees.

39. Stronger Together: Teaching Trauma-Informed Group Counseling Supervision Through Graduate Student Research and Practice

CE Requirement Category: Supervision; Cultural Diversity

Presenter(s): Jessica Davis; Kierra Johnson; Dejanay Kelly; Breona Bradley; Kelcey White

This program presents a collaborative approach to counselor education grounded in trauma-informed group counseling. Following structured instruction and supervision in group counseling, graduate students selected, developed, and applied focused research topics, which are presented through both scholarly and practice-based lenses. The program

demonstrates how teaching and supervision can be integrated to strengthen student learning, skill development, and professional identity. Participants will gain insight into how counselors-in-training translate group counseling theory into real-world application, including managing group dynamics, maintaining emotional safety, and responding to trauma within group settings. The program highlights the importance of intentional instruction, guided supervision, and student engagement in developing competent and confident group facilitators. Aligned with the theme Stronger Together, this program emphasizes collaboration, shared learning, and the value of integrating student-developed work into professional practice, offering a model that counselor educators and supervisors can replicate across training environments.

40. Turning Pages into Powerful SEL Lessons

CE Requirement Category: General

Presenter(s): Soranjel Pena

This program explores the intentional use of children's literature as a counseling intervention (bibliocounseling) to support the development of social-emotional skills, including emotional regulation, empathy, grief processing, stress management, self-esteem, and relationship skills. Participants will learn how books can be effectively integrated into individual counseling programs, small groups, and classroom guidance lessons to promote students' emotional growth in developmentally appropriate and engaging ways.

Grounded in counseling research and best practices, this program highlights how stories provide a safe and meaningful framework for students to explore emotions, build self-awareness, strengthen perspective-taking, and develop effective coping strategies. Attendees will leave with curated book lists across multiple age groups and SEL needs, ready-to-use activities for individual, small group, and whole class settings, practical tools to enhance their use of children's literature, and opportunities to practice and apply strategies they can immediately implement in their counseling programs.

41. Beyond Words: Using Play as a Developmentally and Culturally Responsive Intervention in Counseling Children

CE Requirement Category: General; School Counseling

Presenter(s): Theresa Libios

This interactive program introduces play as a developmentally and culturally responsive counseling intervention for children. Participants will explore how play serves as a child's primary language and learn practical directive and non-directive techniques to support emotional expression and regulation. Through demonstrations and experiential activities, attendees will gain strategies applicable across clinical, school, and community settings.

42. Beyond the Neutral Stance: Proactive Affirmative language in Trauma-Informed care

CE Requirement Category: Cultural Diversity; General

Presenter(s): Katryn Melfi

Counselor education programs tackle complex, emotionally charged topics like gender, sexuality, and identity-based trauma. For many students, these discussions intersect with lived experiences. Without a trauma-informed lens, classroom interactions can trigger high-arousal states, causing re-traumatization, withdrawal, or defensiveness. This program's first objective is to equip educators with affirming, trauma-informed language. Shifting away from dismissive academic terminology, we apply the Minority Stress Model (Meyer, 2003, 2005) to recognize proximal and distal stressors. Validating diverse identities lowers students' affective filters, moving them from physiological "stuckness" (Levine, 2010) into relational attunement and deeper curriculum engagement. The second objective focuses on practical de-escalation strategies for when discussions become charged. Educators will learn to pivot to a supervisory and facilitative role, utilizing specific supervision prompts designed to move students from a reactive state to a reflective state.

43. Beyond the Algorithm: Strengthening What Makes Counselors Irreplaceable in the Age of AI

CE Requirement Category: General

Presenter(s): Dawn Brunkenhoefer; Kate Walker

This program examines the growing role of artificial intelligence in counseling and its implications for clinical practice, professional identity, and client care. As AI becomes increasingly capable of generating empathic responses, identifying patterns, and delivering structured interventions, counselors must

consider what aspects of their work are replicable and what remains distinctly human. This program provides a balanced examination of AI's capabilities and limitations, highlighting elements of counseling that extend beyond simulation, including co-regulation, relational risk and repair, embodied presence, ethical accountability, and the use of self. Participants will evaluate how overly procedural approaches may reduce therapeutic impact and learn strategies to strengthen relational depth and responsiveness. Experiential approaches, including nature-based interventions, will be introduced to enhance engagement and presence. Attendees will leave with a practical framework and actionable strategies to reinforce the human elements of counseling and maintain effectiveness in an evolving technological landscape.

44. Sexual Wellness in Couples Therapy: Assessment, Intervention, and Inclusive Practice for LPCs

CE Requirement Category: General

Presenter(s): Elizabeth Lugo Munoz

This training will equip LPCs and LPC-S with practical, ethical tools to integrate sexuality into couples therapy while remaining within scope of practice. Participants will learn how to assess sexual concerns using structured frameworks such as sexual history intake and desire discrepancy mapping. The program introduces evidence-informed interventions including sensate focus adaptations, intimacy-building exercises, and communication tools to address mismatched desire, shame, and disconnection. Attendees will also explore how to support diverse relationship structures—including monogamy, consensual non-monogamy, and polyamory—without bias or pathologizing differences. A strong emphasis is placed on therapist self-awareness, helping clinicians identify personal and cultural biases that may impact treatment. Through case examples, interactive exercises, and take-home resources, participants will gain confidence in facilitating healthier conversations about sexuality, strengthening relational intimacy, and making appropriate referrals when concerns exceed their clinical scope.

45. From Insight to Action: Bridging the Gap Between Talk Therapy and Exposure-Based Treatment for OCD

CE Requirement Category: General

Presenter(s): Saharah Shrout; Katy Rothfelder; Andrea Alvarez; Azul Lozoya-Gomez

It is not uncommon for individuals with OCD to spend years in therapy gaining insight into their thoughts without experiencing meaningful symptom reduction. Many arrive to treatment able to explain their patterns in detail, yet remain highly distressed and functionally impaired. In these cases, the issue is often not lack of insight, but the absence of behavioral intervention. This program examines how well-intentioned therapeutic approaches, including cognitive restructuring, reassurance, and extended processing, can inadvertently maintain OCD symptoms. Attendees will learn how to recognize these patterns in their own work and shift toward Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP) in a way that is collaborative, structured, and clinically effective. Case examples will illustrate how to move from discussion-based programs to action-oriented treatment.

46. TMHCA Presents: No Session, No Slowdown: A 2026 Regulatory and Practice Update

CE Requirement Category: Ethics; Supervision

Presenter(s): Darrel Spinks

This program provides a regulatory and practice update for licensed professional counselors and supervisors during a legislative “off year” marked by significant agency activity. It covers key legal developments, regulatory initiatives, rule changes, and emerging policy issues, along with trends in licensee growth, complaints, and new compliance tools. Emphasis is placed on practical implications for counselors, supervisors, and the public as the regulatory landscape evolves ahead of the next legislative cycle.

47. In the Midst of the Storm: Building Resilience and Mindfulness as a Counselor-in-Training

CE Requirement Category: Ethics; Supervision

Presenter(s): Danelle Flores; Julia Leclair

Counselor training is demanding. Between academic pressures, clinical expectations, and the emotional weight of the work, it can feel like everything is falling apart — and for many students, that feeling is compounded by significant life events happening in the middle of it all. This program invites counseling students to explore mindfulness and resilience

as essential tools for navigating training, especially when life does not pause for your program. Featuring a firsthand narrative of a significant life event during counselor training, participants will witness how mindfulness and resilience not only sustained one counselor-in-training but ultimately strengthened their professional identity.

Drawing from current research, participants will identify evidence-based mindfulness strategies for self-care and stress reduction, examine how resilience is built through personal strengths and reflective practice, and explore ways to integrate these tools into their own self-care plans when life feels most overwhelming.

48. Centering the Client: Relationship and Sociocultural Context in Ethical Decision-Making

CE Requirement Category: Ethics; Cultural Diversity

Presenter(s): Diane Smedley; Alexis Croffie; Carrie Beyer

Ethical guidance (e.g., ACA, 2014; 2026) approaches ethical decision-making (e.g., Forester-Miller & Davis, 2016) from a power-over framework, minimizing the importance of the client-counselor relationship and placing the counselor in an expert position. Researchers support expanding ethical decision-making to include the client-counselor relationship and sociocultural contexts (Birrell & Bruns, 2016; Levitt et al., 2020). Moreover, researchers suggest that a relational approach to ethical decision-making will improve its relevance to diverse populations (Levitt et al., 2020). Currently, there is no existing ethical decision-making framework that considers the client-counselor relationship and sociocultural contexts. However, the tenets of relational cultural therapy (RCT) provide a pathway to relational ethical decision-making. In this program, presenters will share data from a content analysis of counseling literature on RCT and ethical decision-making. Additionally, attendees will examine strategies for using an RCT approach to ethical decision-making.

49. Beyond Trauma: Understanding Complex PTSD Through Culture, Systemic Stress, and Microaggressions

CE Requirement Category: Cultural Diversity

Presenter(s): Patrice Dunn; Melissa Callahan; Yuhan Xu

Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (C-PTSD) has long affected individuals exposed to prolonged invalidation, neglect, and abusive environments during development. These early experiences often leave individuals in a persistent state of stress as a learned survival response. In adulthood, C-PTSD can present in diverse ways shaped by cultural, systemic, and personal history, creating a higher risk for misdiagnosis and less effective treatment when these factors are not fully explored. Additionally, ongoing experiences such as microaggressions may continue to activate trauma responses, particularly for marginalized populations, including within the therapeutic setting when clinicians are not adequately attuned. This program integrates phase-based, culturally responsive, and trauma-informed approaches to support effective clinical practice. Participants will be introduced to how cultural and systemic factors influence C-PTSD presentation and explore how to improve treatment outcomes by supporting safer, more attuned therapeutic processes and reducing the risk of retraumatization.

50. Bridging Borders in Counselor Education: A Binational Partnership in Practice

CE Requirement Category: Cultural Diversity; General

Presenter(s): Johana Rocha; Paul Carrola; Dania; Dosal Terminel

This program highlights a sustainable binational partnership between counselor education faculty at a UT System university and psychology faculty at the Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez in Mexico. Presenters explore how cross-border collaboration can strengthen counselor training and address complex mental health needs in diverse contexts. The program reviews the partnership's development, including shared priorities, cross-cultural learning opportunities, and coordinated academic efforts. It also examines practical challenges such as institutional differences, logistics, and maintaining equitable collaboration. Outcomes related to student learning, faculty development, and community engagement will be discussed. The program concludes with concise, actionable strategies for building and sustaining meaningful international partnerships grounded in cultural responsiveness and mutual benefit.

51. School-Based LPCs to the Rescue: The Fantastic Four Framework for Empowering Counseling Heroes

CE Requirement Category: School Counseling; General

Presenter(s): Tina Killian

Texas currently ranks 51st in the nation for youth access to mental health care. Within this gap, school-based Licensed Professional Counselors (LPCs) are uniquely positioned to provide life-changing Tier-3 interventions; however, they are often hindered by systemic role ambiguity and "legal limbo." This high-energy, superhero-themed program introduces the "Fantastic Four Framework"—a structured approach to professional empowerment. Participants will explore Foundations (ethics and identity), Frameworks (navigating policy), Fortitude (resilience and advocacy), and Futures (innovative interventions). Attendees will learn how to advocate for their clinical presence on campus, ensuring every student has access to the mental health "hero" they deserve. Participants will leave with a personal advocacy plan and a toolkit of creative strategies to transform student outcomes while sustaining their own professional wellness.

52. TAMFC Presents: From Reactivity to Superpowers: Value-Based Interventions in Couple Therapy

CE Requirement Category: General

Presenter(s): Susan Henderson; Kimber Albrechtsen; Kaitlynn Crudington; Esther Mutombo

The presenters of this program integrate three therapeutic approaches that work well together to highlight the role of values work in couple therapy. Choice Point from Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (Harris, 2023; Lev & McKay, 2017), differentiation from Bowen Family Systems Theory (Kerr & Bowen, 1988; Rodríguez-González et al, 2023), and acceptance strategies from Integrative Behavioral Couple Therapy (Abu Talib et al., 2026; Christensen et al., 2020) will be explored. Participants will leave with practical tools they can immediately apply when working with couples to help them move away from reactivity and toward values. Additional resources and handouts will be provided to support continued learning.

53. Counselors Coping with Client Suicide: Evidence-informed strategies, impacts, and support for mental health practitioners, educators, and supervisors

CE Requirement Category: Supervision; General

Presenter(s): Angela Corrigan

Client suicide is consistently identified as one of the most distressing professional experiences counselors may encounter, often associated with profound grief, shock, guilt, self-doubt, trauma responses, fear of litigation, and disruption in professional confidence. Clinicians frequently describe the experience as "haunting," with lasting emotional impact and ongoing reflection about perceived responsibility and clinical decisions. Despite the frequency of exposure to suicidal crises across counseling settings, many practitioners and trainees report feeling underprepared to respond to client suicide and its aftermath. This lack of preparation can contribute to heightened anxiety, reduced self-efficacy, and increased workplace stress following suicide-related experiences. This program will provide valuable content for students, clinicians, educators, and supervisors to prepare for the event of client suicide and suicide attempts.

54. Preventing Counseling Supervisor Burnout and Promoting Self-Care

CE Requirement Category: Supervision

Presenter(s): James Holder

Burnout is a systemic crisis, with over 56% of mental health leaders reporting chronic exhaustion (Lynch & Green, 2025). Supervisors navigate a unique "parallel process," absorbing team vicarious trauma while managing administrative "gatekeeping" pressures. This program translates recent 2021–2026 findings from The Professional Counselor, JCD, and Frontiers in Psychiatry into actionable resilience strategies.

Participants will identify three dimensions of supervisor-specific burnout and explore how "middle manager strain" impacts clinical outcomes (McCormack et al., 2022). We examine evidence-based protective factors, including core self-evaluations and transformational leadership, to buffer against professional impairment. Attendees will devise a personalized self-care plan designed to model wellness for supervisees, inoculating the next generation against attrition (Litam & Hipolito-Delgado, 2021). Join us to foster a sustainable, research-backed supervisory practice that prioritizes both ethical gatekeeping and professional longevity.

55. Queer Intersectional Identity through a Trauma-Informed Expressive Arts Lens

CE Requirement Category: Cultural Diversity

Presenter(s): Michael Leshner

Queer Intersectional Identity through a Trauma-Informed Expressive Arts Lens equips counselors with culturally responsive, affirming strategies for supporting LGBTQ+ clients. Integrating trauma-informed expressive arts, somatic awareness, and experiential practices, participants strengthen clinical attunement, address intersectionality and systemic influences on mental health, and foster healing, resilience, and identity integration.

56. Stronger Together in the Sand: Strengthening Counselor Self-Efficacy in Trauma Work Through Sandtray and Symbolic Processing

CE Requirement Category: General

Presenter(s): Erika Rodriguez

Counselors working with trauma survivors can experience uncertainty about their effectiveness, particularly when clients struggle to articulate traumatic experiences. Counselor self-efficacy, the perceived belief in one's capability to effectively perform counseling tasks, plays a critical role in counselor resilience, treatment effectiveness, and professional development. Creative and experiential counseling approaches may help bridge the gap between trauma processing and counselor self-efficacy.

This experiential program explores the integration of sandtray, symbolic, and creative processing as tools for both trauma treatment and counselor professional development. Participants will examine how sandtray facilitates nonverbal trauma processing and emotional regulation while also supporting counselors' perceived capability in addressing trauma. Case examples, demonstrations, and engagement in reflective practice to enhance skill acquisition of creative strategies will be utilized. Participants will leave with creative tools to enhance trauma intervention skills, strengthen counselor self-efficacy, and foster collaborative learning in clinical practice and supervision.

57. The Counselor's Role in Healing a Divided Country

CE Requirement Category: General

Presenter(s): Derek Robertson

Daily news in the United States leaves many clients with a persistent sense of anxiety. Political divisiveness has strained—and in some cases severed—relationships with friends and family. Counselors are tasked with supporting clients through these challenges while navigating similar dynamics in their own lives. In some cases, clients may even distrust counselors they perceive as holding opposing political views. Simply waiting for conditions to improve can foster a sense of helplessness.

This program offers an alternative path that moves beyond unproductive political debates. It provides practical strategies for counselors and clients to reduce fear and frustration, critically evaluate information, and engage more constructively with others. Emphasis is placed on fostering dialogue that prioritizes relationships over political differences, helping individuals maintain connection while navigating deeply held beliefs.

58. Holding the Line at Home: Navigating Deployment, Reintegration, and Marital Resilience in Military Couples

CE Requirement Category: General; Cultural Diversity

Presenter(s): Jessica Grimes; Corbie Grimes

Military deployment introduces complex and prolonged stressors that significantly impact marital relationships, communication patterns, and overall family functioning. This program explores the lived experiences of married couples navigating deployment, including the emotional and logistical challenges faced by the at-home partner, communication barriers during separation, and the often difficult reintegration process. Attendees will gain insight into the relational and mental health implications of deployment cycles and will be introduced to practical, counseling-focused strategies to support resilience, communication, and relational repair in military couples.

59. When Consent Is Not Enough: Consensual Unwanted Sex and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Within Relationships

CE Requirement Category: General

Presenter(s): Shandra Petersen-Harris

When consent meets legal standards, does it also meet mental health standards? This program examines consensual unwanted sex (CUS) in committed relationships and explores how the frequency of these

experiences and the reasons individuals consent shape their psychological impact. The program considers how internalized expectations, cultural norms, and relational dynamics, including interdependence and perceived obligation, influence sexual decision-making, even in the absence of explicit force. It also raises critical questions about how posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is defined and assessed, and whether current frameworks fully capture clients' lived experiences. The program concludes with trauma-informed assessment and intervention strategies to improve recognition, conceptualization, and treatment of clients reporting consensual unwanted sexual experiences.

60. Betting on Resilience: Harnessing the Power Within to Treat Online Gambling Disorder

CE Requirement Category: General

Presenter(s): Jesusa Jasso; Susan Lingle

The expansion of legalized sports betting and mobile gambling platforms has increased accessibility and normalization of gambling behaviors, contributing to underrecognized clinical presentations. Gambling-related harm is frequently associated with financial strain, relational conflict, and co-occurring mental health conditions, including anxiety and depression. This program provides a clinical framework for identifying and addressing gambling disorder in counseling settings. Participants will review DSM-5-TR diagnostic criteria, differentiate between traditional and technology-based gambling behaviors, and examine common presenting concerns across diverse populations. Emphasis will be placed on integrating screening into clinical assessment, including evaluation of client technology and mobile device use. Ethical considerations, guided by the ACA Code of Ethics (C.2.a), will be discussed to support practice within scope of competence. Implications for prevention and advocacy related to emerging gambling modalities will also be addressed.

61. Inclusive Training for Every Story: Preparing Counselors to Serve Diverse Texas Communities

CE Requirement Category: Ethics; Supervision

Presenter(s): Sneha Nayar-Bhalerao; Monique Rahman; Ajitha Kumaran

Diversity within Texas communities has shifted significantly from a historically majority White population to an increasingly diverse one. As a result, counselors are now called to serve clients with a wide range of cultural, linguistic, socioeconomic, and geographic backgrounds. This shift highlights the need for intentional, inclusive, and skills-based approaches in counselor training.

This program explores how counselor education programs can embed inclusive practices across curriculum, supervision, and field experiences to better prepare students for real-world practice. Emphasis will be placed on practical strategies for strengthening curriculum design, enhancing experiential learning, and building meaningful community partnerships. Through interactive discussion and applied activities, participants will identify concrete steps to redesign training programs that reflect the needs of diverse communities. The goal is to ensure counselor preparation honors every client's story while advancing equitable, culturally responsive, and effective counseling practice.

62. Executive Functioning 101: A Counselor's Guide

CE Requirement Category: General; School Counseling

Presenter(s): Jennifer Moore

Executive Functions (EFs) are the brain's management skills for self-control, planning, and focus. This program provides a clear understanding of EFs, how deficits impact daily functioning, and how EF skills can be strengthened through clinical practice and partnership with stakeholders. Attendees will gain practical, evidence-based strategies to strengthen client EFs to improve focus and master self-regulation to achieve goals more effectively.

63. Religion, Power, & Politics: Beyond Cultural Competence in Counseling Muslim Clients

CE Requirement Category: Cultural Diversity; General

Presenter(s): Anika Munshi

This program equips counselors to work more effectively with Muslim clients by moving beyond surface-level cultural competence and toward a deeper understanding of how religion, culture, power, and politics shape mental health. Participants will learn a clinically applicable framework for distinguishing between Islamic theology, culturally inherited norms, and

beliefs shaped by sociopolitical pressures such as Islamophobia, migration, discrimination, and global conflict. The program will address common clinical dilemmas involving identity conflict, stigma, family systems, fear-based religiosity, and harmful dynamics justified through religious language. Through applied teaching and case discussion, attendees will gain practical strategies for responding with both cultural humility and ethical clarity. This program is designed for counselors who want to feel more confident navigating religion in session without avoiding difficult conversations or reinforcing harmful assumptions.

64. From Burnout to Bloom: Naming Black Burnout and Reclaiming Black Joy in Clinical Practice

CE Requirement Category: General; Cultural Diversity

Presenter(s): Rebecca Opamen; Patrice Dunn

Black clients, counselors, and communities face a distinct convergence of racial trauma, systemic stress, and caregiving labor that scholars have termed “Black burnout”—a chronic depletion rooted in racial battle fatigue, hypervigilance, and the psychological toll of navigating white-dominant institutions (Smith & Mustaffa, 2023). Research documents that racial discrimination is a primary driver of unmet mental health needs and elevated burnout among Black Americans (Assari & Bazargan, 2023). Yet an equally powerful tradition of Black joy—radical, sustaining, and resistance-oriented—offers a proven clinical counterweight. Empirical work confirms that joy-centered interventions reduce racial trauma symptoms and strengthen therapeutic engagement (Hargons et al., 2023). This 90-minute program invites counseling professionals to hold both truths: to clinically name Black burnout and to actively center Black joy as a measurable therapeutic goal. Attendees leave with a culturally responsive framework and evidence-informed tools ready for immediate practice.

65. Safety Through Support: Integrating Wraparound Services into School Safety Systems

CE Requirement Category: School Counseling

Presenter(s): Rachel Franco; Lisa Vinyard; Stephanie Bautista

What if the most powerful school safety strategy isn’t security—it’s support? This program explores how integrating wraparound services into school

safety systems creates more proactive, collaborative approaches to student care. Participants will learn how school counseling programs, multidisciplinary teams, and community partnerships work together to identify concerns early, respond effectively, and support students experiencing crisis or ongoing challenges. Emphasis will be placed on practical structures such as threat assessment teams, referral processes, and coordinated intervention strategies that bridge mental health and safety efforts. Through real-world examples and guided discussion, attendees will gain insight into how information is shared, decisions are made, and teams work together to support students with complex needs. Walk away with actionable strategies to strengthen collaboration, streamline intervention systems, and build safer, more responsive schools that prioritize both prevention and student well-being.

66. Purposeful Counseling: Using Theories to Promote Change

CE Requirement Category: School Counseling; General

Presenter(s): Kristen Ascencio; Gail Roaten

Counseling students toward meaningful change requires more than conversation alone. This program explores how school counselors can draw on key counseling theories and targeted skills to transform everyday interactions into purposeful, short-term individual counseling within the school setting. While a strong counseling relationship remains essential, it is the intentional use of theory-driven strategies and practical skills that fosters student insight, growth, and change.

Because no single theoretical approach meets the needs of every student, school counselors must be equipped with a diverse range of counseling frameworks to respond effectively and support each student's unique experience.

67. Stronger Together: The Power of Same-Race Black Dyads in Counseling Supervision

CE Requirement Category: Supervision; Cultural Diversity

Presenter(s): Tiffany Stoner-Harris; Deborah Wilson

This program examines racial identity concordance in counseling supervision, focusing on the strengths of Black supervisor-supervisee dyads. Relational-Cultural Theory explains how shared identity enhances trust, authenticity,

and connection (Jordan, 2023). The Integrated Developmental Model supports the idea that supervisees progress more effectively when supervision reduces stereotype threat and affirms cultural experience (Stoltenberg & McNeill, 2010). The Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies framework emphasizes the importance of addressing identity, power, and systemic oppression with supervision (Burkard & Knox, 2023; Sue & Sue, 2022). Critical Race Theory contextualizes the racialized dynamics supervisees often face and highlights why same-race dyads serve as validating counterspaces (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Henfield 2025). Research shows that racial matching enhances supervisory alliance and reduces cultural misattunement (Haskins et al., 2021; Hird et al., 2004). The program highlights how solidarity, cultural attunement, and shared lived experience create collaborative, empowering, and ethically grounded supervisor relationships (Watkins, 2021).

68. Addressing Transference and Countertransference in the Supervisory Alliance

CE Requirement Category: Supervision

Presenter(s): Sarah Silveus

Transference and countertransference are well-documented relational phenomena in the therapeutic relationship, yet their presence and influence within the supervisory relationship remains underexplored in counselor training. This program examines how transference and countertransference manifest within clinical supervision and impact the supervisory alliance. Using the Seven-Eyed Supervision Model (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012) as a guiding framework, attendees will explore how these dynamics operate across seven distinct relational modes of supervisory engagement, from the client's system to the broader environmental context. Through didactic presentation and structured discussion, attendees will develop practical strategies for identifying and intervening when transference and countertransference emerge in supervisory relationships. This program is designed for supervisors, supervisors-in-training, and counselor educators seeking to deepen their theoretical understanding and strengthen their clinical supervision practice.

69. Counseling Asexual, Aromantic, and Agender Clients

CE Requirement Category: Cultural Diversity General, School Counseling

Presenter(s): Rachel Allen

This program outlines the unique identity and common experiences of asexual, aromantic, and agender individuals while also providing evidence-based strategies for counseling asexual, aromantic, and agender clients. Attendees will be taught definitions, common experiences, common stressors and barriers, specific interventions and strategies, multiple resources, and affirming themes to use with asexual, aromantic, and agender individuals. Attendees will also be given the opportunity for interactive exercises, self-exploration, and a Q&A for any specific questions or clinical situations.

70. Texas Association of Marriage and Family Counselors (TAMFC) Presents: EFFT, Structural, and Parent Training in Action- A Family Therapy Implementation Panel

CE Requirement Category: Cultural; Diversity General

Presenter(s): Jayna Haney; Tricia Foster; Karina Baltazar-Duran

Family therapy creates lasting benefits and enhanced outcomes. Research shows that family therapy is significantly more effective for individual improvement than individual interventions alone, particularly among children and teens and for certain mental health conditions. This program provides information on several modalities and interventions utilized within family counseling to increase connection, reduce conflict, lower symptomology, and enrich relationships and attachment within the family. We review family theories and dive deeper into Emotion-Focused Family Therapy (EFFT- Adele Lafrance), Structural Family Therapy, and Parent Training in Behavior Management. Each presenter will provide specific interventions and effective approaches that participants can immediately begin using in counseling families. Each modality presented is inclusive, culturally adaptive, and can be tailored to any family arrangement. We invite both new and experienced therapists to join their peers and share their questions, experiences, and their own tried and true application as part of a collaborative, community conversation.

71. TCCA Presents: "Creating Psychologically Safe Spaces in Higher Education: Counseling Interventions to Promote Student Mental Health and Academic Engagement"

CE Requirement Category: Cultural Diversity; School Counseling

Presenter(s): Adachukwu Uzundu; Jarmila Gupta; Lizett LaStrape

This program explores how counselors, counselor educators, and higher education professionals can create psychologically safe spaces that enhance student mental health and academic engagement. Supported by current research, attendees will examine the core components of psychological safety, including trust, inclusivity, cultural responsiveness, and emotional validation. The program will highlight how unsafe learning environments contribute to student distress and disengagement, particularly among marginalized and underserved populations. Attendees will be introduced to practical, counseling-informed interventions such as trauma-informed approaches, culturally responsive communication, and strength-based strategies that foster supportive and affirming environments. Through interactive and creative activities, reflection, and practical examples, participants will gain tools to assess classroom/campus or counseling settings and implement strategies that promote belonging, well-being, and academic success. This program is designed to equip professionals with actionable skills to intentionally cultivate inclusive, psychologically safe learning spaces in higher education.

72. TCDA Presents: MBTI – Interpretation Strategies for the Workplace and Beyond

CE Requirement Category: General

Presenter(s): Greta Davis; Julio Quiralte

Explore advanced MBTI® interpretation strategies to deepen self-awareness and enhance effectiveness in the workplace and beyond. Participants will examine communication, leadership, responses to change, and team dynamics through a type lens while engaging in practical activities applicable to counseling, coaching, and organizational settings.

73. You Have the Degree—Now What? Becoming a Counselor Through Supervision, Identity, and Real-World Practice

CE Requirement Category: General

Presenter(s): Stacey Reicherzer

You've seen clients in practicum and internship. Then you begin your journey as an LPC Associate and realize how different it feels. Sessions drift. Interventions get muddy. You over-explain, lose the thread, or hit a moment where you don't know what to do next—and start to wonder whether you should already be doing this better. That uncertainty isn't just self-doubt; it often reflects gaps in clinical judgment that emerge when real-world complexity outpaces training. Early-career counselors frequently respond by leaning on familiar strategies, defaulting to supportive listening or relaxation techniques even when these miss the mark. This can lead to misreading client needs or unintentionally reinforcing the very patterns therapy is meant to interrupt. This program reframes those moments as essential to development, exploring how supervision helps counselors recognize patterns, strengthen decision-making, and build a more grounded, effective clinical approach.

74. The Hidden Compulsions: Identifying and Treating Mental Rituals in OCD and Anxiety

CE Requirement Category: General

Presenter(s): Saharah Shrout; Megan Pike; Abeeb Oki; Carla Wall

Many clients with OCD appear “stuck” in therapy despite insight, motivation, and consistent attendance. In many cases, the issue is not resistance, but the presence of covert compulsions such as rumination, mental reviewing, reassurance-seeking, and internal checking that go unnoticed in treatment. These behaviors are easy to miss and are often unintentionally reinforced in traditional therapy. This program focuses on helping clinicians recognize and directly target these hidden rituals using Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP) and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). Through case examples and real-world clinical scenarios, attendees will learn how to identify subtle compulsions, shift how they respond in program, and design interventions that interrupt these maintaining cycles.

75. Updates from the Texas State Board of Examiners of Marriage and Family Therapists

CE Requirement Category: Ethics

Presenter(s): Jodie Elder

Hear from members of the Texas State Board of Examiners of Marriage and Family Therapists about recent rule changes and the licensing process from initial application to upgrading to full licensure and/or supervisor. Learn about CEs, supervision requirements, and licensure mobility initiatives, as well as common ethics violations and how to avoid them. You'll leave this program equipped to practice ethically as an LMFT!

76. Unmasking What is Hidden: Reconstructing Identity with Neurodiverse Clients

CE Requirement Category: General; Cultural Diversity

Presenter(s): Alexis Croffie; Yunhan Xu

Masking, or social camouflaging, is a culturally mediated survival strategy shaped by systemic expectations and social norms. Cultural context plays a significant role in how masking develops and is maintained, as societal expectations regarding “acceptable” behavior often vary based on an individual’s appearance, background, and identity. As a result, masking can take on different forms across cultural groups, reflecting pressures to conform to dominant norms while navigating stigma, bias, or marginalization. While adaptive in the short term, research demonstrates that chronic masking is associated with significant psychological distress, burnout, and identity disruption. The program will review neurodivergence within adult populations. Additionally, the presenters will illustrate the use of psychoeducation and narrative therapy to support identity reconstruction within this population. Finally, the presenters will discuss implications related to the reduction of long-term harm within this population.

77. Can vs Should: Revisiting the Harms of "Conversion Therapy"

CE Requirement Category: Ethics; Cultural Diversity

Presenter(s): Matthew Flinchum

With the recent Supreme Court decision in *Chiles v. Salazar* and the upheaval to statutory regulations it brought, this program will offer participants a review of the research regarding the impacts of Sexual Orientation Change Efforts (e.g., Conversion or Reparative Therapy). Harms ranging from PTSD-like symptoms, internalized shame and worthlessness, to suicidality will be reviewed. Additionally, values, principles, and relevant

ethical codes, including those from the 2026 update, will be presented as they relate to SOCE and evidence-based practice.

78. Silenced No More: Black Counselor Educators Reveal Layered Realities of Navigating Compassion Fatigue to Inform Practice and Enhance Ethical Care

CE Requirement Category: Cultural Diversity; General

Presenter(s): Karen Jubert

Compassion fatigue is the emotional stress and exhaustion associated with exposure to traumatic material (secondary trauma) and overwhelming workplace stressors (burnout). Since most scholarly conversations about experiences with compassion fatigue have lacked Black counselor educators' voices and perspectives, this program will reveal the lived experiences of seven Black counselor educators, providing a cultural lens and insight into how they described, made sense of, and coped with compassion fatigue as Black academics. Through the presentation of emerging themes such as overwhelming workplace stressors, race-related stress, impacts on well-being, and pathways of coping, the program will highlight the persistence, perseverance, and resilience required for Black counselor educators to remain in this profession as counselors, teachers, supervisors, researchers, scholars, leaders, mentors, advisors, and social justice advocates.

79. With Great Power Comes Great Influence: Social Media's Impact on Youth

CE Requirement Category: School Counseling; General

Presenter(s): Lesley Casarez; Alexandra Robles

Up to 95% of youth report using a social media platform, with more than a third using it "almost constantly." The impact of social media on youth mental health is increasingly concerning. This program will focus on how social media and youth mental health intersect and strategies to mitigate its use.

80. The Clinician-Entrepreneur: Designing and Launching Your Private Practice Business Model

CE Requirement Category: General

Presenter(s): Robert Broyles; Danae Crume

This program empowers mental health clinicians with the entrepreneurial mindset and business literacy required to successfully navigate the transition into private practice. Graduate programs rigorously train clinicians in therapeutic skills but often leave a significant gap in business competencies, making the transition to private practice isolating and challenging. This program addresses that gap by exploring the pros, cons, and operational realities of four primary practice models: solo practice, 1099 independent contractor, co-op/shared suite (hybrid), and W-2 group practice. Attendees will gain crucial insights into navigating overhead costs, tax implications, clinical autonomy, and risk management. By understanding the structural mismatch between clinical training and market realities, participants will be equipped to choose a sustainable business model, defend against the market consolidation of therapy, and build a thriving, ethically sound practice while prioritizing their own wellness to prevent burnout.

81. TMHCA Presents: The Art of Ethical Supervision: Performance Techniques for Effective Counselor Growth

CE Requirement Category: Supervision

Presenter(s): Loretta Bradley; Lori Hollingsworth; Bret Hendricks

This program explores the essential role of ethics in clinical supervision, emphasizing the supervisor's responsibility to foster ethical practice, professional identity, and client welfare. Attendees will review foundational ethical principles and common dilemmas encountered in supervision. The program integrates performance techniques to enhance supervisory effectiveness and engagement. Participants will learn five user-friendly, performance-based strategies for building empathy through case conceptualization. These performance techniques are designed to create a dynamic and supportive supervisory environment, promote ethical effectiveness, and enhance supervision. In essence, this program focuses on performance techniques to enhance the effectiveness of verbal techniques in supervision. Handouts will be provided, and discussion will be encouraged.

82. From Ideas to Publications: A Guide to Authorship in the Journal of Professional Counseling.

CE Requirement Category: General

Presenter(s): Stephen Lenz

Whether you are preparing your first manuscript or seeking to increase your publication success, this program provides a behind-the-scenes look at the publication process. Participants will learn how ideas become publishable manuscripts, what editors and reviewers value most, common reasons for rejection, and opportunities to contribute to the Journal of Professional Counseling.

83. Saving Ourselves with Self-Care: The Power of Healthy Habits and Routines from a Strengths-Based Approach

CE Requirement Category: General

Presenter(s): Brian Hicks; Wendy Killam

This program examines the ethical responsibility of counselors to engage in self-care as outlined in the American Counseling Association (ACA) Code of Ethics. Counselors routinely work with clients experiencing trauma, crisis, and significant psychological distress, placing them at heightened risk for burnout, compassion fatigue, and secondary traumatic stress. Participants will explore evidence-based self-care strategies, including mindfulness, boundary setting, supervision, and structured wellness planning focusing on building healthy self-care routines through the development of a strategic individual self-care and mental wellness plan. Participants will discover the power of creating healthy routines and habits that incorporates active use of wellness resources, tools, and coping strategies. Emphasis is placed on developing individualized, proactive self-care plans that support long-term competence and resilience. Attendees will leave with practical tools and strategies to enhance their well-being while maintaining ethical, effective, and sustainable counseling practice.

84. A Million Little Scars: Using Play Therapy to Address Cultural Trauma in Counseling Practice

CE Requirement Category: Cultural Diversity; General

Presenter(s): Theresa Libios

Children impacted by cultural trauma—including racism, discrimination, and chronic exposure to microaggressions—often experience emotional and behavioral challenges that are not easily addressed through traditional counseling approaches. This program provides counselors with a framework for understanding how cultural trauma manifests in children and how play

therapy can serve as a developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive intervention.

This interactive program includes case examples, guided reflection, and experiential activities that allow participants to practice applying culturally responsive play therapy techniques. Attendees will leave with practical tools and a deeper understanding of how to support children and families navigating cultural trauma in diverse counseling settings.

85. Dirt Road Counseling: A Panel Discussing Rural Mental Health Care in Texas

CE Requirement Category: Cultural Diversity; General

Presenter(s): Tara Fox; Cortnee Wright; Kayte Galloway; Gloria Ramirez

This panel examines the unique challenges of delivering mental health care in rural Texas communities, where limited resources, geographic isolation, and cultural factors impact access and quality of care. Panelists will discuss common ethical considerations, including confidentiality and dual relationships, and share practical strategies for building community partnerships and engaging clients. The discussion will also highlight the role of supervision and consultation in supporting ethical, competent practice among LPCs working in rural and often professionally isolated settings.

86. Brave Little Hearts: Culturally Competent Therapy for Military-Connected Families

CE Requirement Category: General Cultural; Diversity

Presenter(s): Melissa Griffing

Children in military families often carry invisible burdens, including frequent moves, deployments, added responsibilities, and the uncertainty of military life. These challenges can be misunderstood, and children may be mislabeled or misdiagnosed as a result. This program explores how to support military-connected children and stay-at-home spouses throughout the different phases of deployment using play therapy. Attendees will gain an understanding of the deployment cycle, learn tools to address common concerns in military-connected families, and discover strategies to foster connection and resilience during each phase of deployment.

87. Suffering with Endo: The Mental Health Experiences of Women with Endometriosis

CE Requirement Category: General

Presenter(s): Nicole Noble; Sara Jennings; Logan Winkelman; Sara Grady

Approximately 10% of the female population has the chronic gynecological condition of endometriosis, which often causes pain and disrupts many aspects of life. Despite how disruptive the condition is to women's lives, endometriosis has been historically under-diagnosed and underrecognized. This program shares themes from a qualitative research study which interviewed 10 women with endometriosis to explore the impact of the condition on their mental health. Specifically, themes from how the condition impacts relationships and sense of belonging, self-identity and worldview, and advocacy and medical interventions will be provided. Collectively, this program will illustrate the urgent need for systemic change in society, healthcare providers, and mental health professionals to better recognize, communicate and treat the condition of endometriosis. Through understanding the mental health concerns of women with endometriosis, this program offers implications for counseling practice as well as future research.

88. Sacred Anger: Supporting Clients Who Feel Hurt, Abandoned, or Betrayed by God

CE Requirement Category: General

Presenter(s): Mentanna Campbell

Anger toward God is a common yet often under-addressed dimension of spiritual and emotional distress that underlies many presenting concerns. For many therapists, the religious nature of this pain can feel unsettling, leaving them unsure how to intervene while staying grounded in their psychological lane. This seminar aims to provide therapists with empirically based tools to address this important dimension of client distress. Drawing from the religious coping research, participants will learn how to assess for and conceptualize the pain associated with divine struggle. The interpersonal trauma field will then provide the basis for several interventions geared at reducing the distress. Participants will learn to employ tapping, guided meditations, and other experientially-oriented techniques to help clients resolve their struggles with the divine. Participants will have the opportunity

to practice these interventions, allowing them to leave with increased confidence and practical tools for working with this hurting population.

89. Peer Crisis Support Task Force Presents: Peer Crisis Support Training

CE Requirement Category: General

Presenter(s): Kimberly Lagge; Debbie Hart; Carrie Beyer; Angela Hardin; Gillian Rodriguez

The TCA Peer Crisis Support Task Force offers Peer Crisis Support Training that meets the eligibility requirements for volunteering on the Peer Crisis Support Team. Volunteers may join the TCA-managed registry, which supports counseling peers managing crisis events in their communities. Training will include relevant skills, resources, preparation, response and post-response protocols, self-care, ethical considerations, role-play and discussion.

90. AI in Counseling: Ethical Considerations and Practical Applications

CE Requirement Category: Ethics; General

Presenter(s): Amanda Davison

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly present in counseling practice and in clients' everyday lives, yet many clinicians lack clear guidance on how to use these tools ethically and responsibly. This focused, practical program introduces counselors to the ethical considerations of AI use in clinical settings and provides actionable strategies for safe implementation.

Participants will explore common applications of AI in counseling, including documentation support and client engagement tools, while examining risks related to confidentiality, bias, and informed consent. Through case examples and guided discussion, attendees will learn how to apply ethical decision-making frameworks and develop basic strategies to integrate AI into practice without compromising client care.

91. Affirming Neurodivergence in Transgender Clients: Clinical Skills, Risk Identification, and Advocacy in a Challenging Sociopolitical Climate

CE Requirement Category: General

Presenter(s): Katherine Mcdougall-Pillai

This program explores the intersection between gender identify and neurodivergence, with a focus on the prevalence of autism with transgender and gender-diverse populations.

Participants will review current research on co-occurring autism and gender diversity and examine how these identities shape clinical presentation engagement and treatment planning.

Attendees will learn to recognize high risk indicators, including masking, social vulnerability, and suicidality and barriers to care that impact neurodivergent transgender clients. The program will also address the impact of ongoing sociopolitical stressors on mental health outcomes and access to affirming services.

Through clinical examples and practical strategies, participants will gain tools to provide neurodiversity affirming and gender affirming care that supports safety reduces harm and strengthens resilience. This program is designed for mental health professional seeking to deepen their competence and confidence in working with transgender and neurodivergent clients in today's complex practice environment.

92. Ethics in the Lone Star State: Honoring Every Story

CE Requirement Category: Ethics; General

Presenter(s): Zuzi Gomez-Chang; Michael Schmit; Jenna Rhoades

Ethics is the foundation of effective counseling, especially when serving diverse Texans. This interactive program explores the unique ethical challenges and responsibilities that Texas counselors face as they serve every community, in every setting, across the state. We will examine Texas-specific laws (19 TAC, 22 TAC, Texas Family Code), board rules, and case scenarios that highlight multicultural competence, dual relationships in rural/urban areas, digital ethics, and the handling of undocumented clients' stories. Attendees will engage in real-world vignettes, small-group discussions, and self-reflection to strengthen ethical decision-making. We will highlight how honoring every power-the voice of each counselor and client alike- sustains the integrity of our profession as we uplift every person's story. Attendees will leave with improved resources and confidence for ethical practice.

93. Raising the Standard: Compassionate Gatekeeping Across the Professional Lifespan

CE Requirement Category: Supervision; General

Presenter(s): Tara Fox; Rikki Collier

This program explores compassionate gatekeeping as an ethical responsibility in counseling, emphasizing the balance between protecting client welfare and supporting counselor development. It examines how gatekeeping applies across training levels from students to licensed professionals, while highlighting the critical roles of supervisors and leaders. Participants will learn practical strategies for delivering constructive feedback, addressing impairment, and making fair, ethically grounded decisions about remediation and professional progression within a supportive, growth-oriented framework.

94. Included or Overlooked: The Impact of Texas House Bill 2 on Professional School Counselors

CE Requirement Category: School Counseling; General

Presenter(s): Danelle Flores; Alexia Florentin; Diane Smedley; Elizabeth Rogers

Recent policy changes, including Texas House Bill 2 (HB2), have introduced significant shifts in educator compensation structures, with unintended consequences for professional school counselors. This program examines findings from a statewide survey of over 1,600 school counselors and administrators across Texas Education Service Center (ESC) regions. Results highlight critical concerns related to compensation inequities, increased workload demands, declining job satisfaction, and elevated risk of counselor attrition.

Participants will explore key “fast facts” and regional trends that illustrate how HB2 is impacting school counselors differently across geographic contexts. The program will also address broader implications for student access to mental health services and the effectiveness of school counseling programs.

Through data-informed discussion and practical application, attendees will gain strategies for translating research into advocacy efforts, equipping them

to effectively communicate with stakeholders and policymakers to support equitable and sustainable school counseling practices.

95. Scrolling, Stress, and Split-Second Decisions: Suicide Prevention in the Age of Social Media and Impulsivity

CE Requirement Category: General

Presenter(s): Hope Mesler

Adolescents experience intense emotions in a fast-moving digital world where impulsive reactions and online interactions can amplify distress. This program explores how adolescent brain development, impulsivity, and social media intersect to influence suicide risk. Participants will learn to recognize early warning signs, understand how emotional escalation can occur rapidly, and apply practical prevention strategies that support youth in moments of crisis.

Through real-world examples and an interactive practice exercise, attendees will explore the use of a simple 1–10 safety check-in tool that helps professionals assess risk, open meaningful conversations, and guide adolescents toward safer outcomes. This program emphasizes the power of early intervention, calm presence, and connection as key protective factors. Participants will leave with practical language and tools they can immediately use in schools, counseling settings, and community mental health work.

96. Ethical Failures Are Formation Failures: Supervision Skills That Develop Counselors and Strengthen Gatekeeping

CE Requirement Category: Supervision

Presenter(s): Dawn Brunkenhoefer; Kate Walker

This program reframes supervision as a formative process that shapes counselor development rather than solely an evaluative task. Ethical challenges are explored as emerging from underlying issues such as limited self-awareness, emotional reactivity, and difficulty assuming responsibility. Participants are introduced to a structured framework for identifying key drivers of supervisee behavior, including skill, awareness, and regulation concerns. The program emphasizes application through targeted micro-interventions that supervisors can use in real time to increase insight, support regulation, and promote accountability. Attention is given to balancing counselor development with ethical gatekeeping, highlighting

these as integrated responsibilities. Common supervisory pitfalls, such as avoidance, over-accommodation, and unclear feedback, are addressed alongside more effective strategies. Participants engage in case-based practice to refine responses and build confidence. Delivered through brief instruction, modeling, and interactive exercises, the program equips attendees with specific language, tools, and a framework they can immediately apply in supervision.

97. Between Need and Capacity: Navigating Challenges in Mental Health Care

CE Requirement Category: General

Presenter(s): Megan Guidry; Misti Till

This program explores the evolving challenges within rural mental health care and the realities practitioners face across clinical, school, and community-based settings. This program offers a practical and reflective space to examine systemic, ethical, and clinical barriers that impact service delivery.

Participants will engage in guided discussion and case-based reflection to better understand how challenges such as access to care, high acuity, burnout, scope of practice, and fragmented systems influence both client outcomes and clinician sustainability. This program emphasizes realistic, actionable strategies to navigate these complexities while maintaining ethical and effective care.

Attendees will leave with a clearer framework for decision-making, increased awareness of common system-level challenges, and practical tools to support both client care and professional resilience.

98. Collective Care in Action: Enhancing Caregiver Support for LGBTQIA+ Youth

CE Requirement Category: Cultural Diversity; General

Presenter(s): Rachael Longoria; Jane Bernick

This program focuses on the collaboration between counselors and caregivers as a framework for supporting LGBTQIA+ youth. This population often navigates fear, stigma, and external pressures related to identity while facing harmful rhetoric that impacts their well-being. Participants will explore

how affirming, informed, and connected support systems reduce risks such as suicidality, self-harm, and adverse mental health outcomes in LGBTQIA+ youth. Designed for counselors, counselor educators, and supervisors, this program emphasizes collaboration with caregivers and allies to cultivate environments based in safety, trust, and affirmation. Attendees will deepen their understanding of LGBTQIA+ identities and terminology while gaining strategies to guide caregivers in creating spaces where youth feel secure, respected, and supported. Rather than focusing on encouraging youth to “come out,” this program reframes the goal as equipping caregivers to become safe, affirming figures, so that when youth share their identities, they are instead choosing to let caregivers in.

99. To PhD or Not to PhD: That Is the Question

CE Requirement Category: General

Presenter(s): Zandra Rutledge; Tanisha Guy

The decision to pursue a PhD in Counselor Education and Supervision (CES) significantly impacts personal and

professional growth. A doctoral degree prepares counselors for leadership in education, research, advocacy, and supervision while advancing diversity and ethical practice. CACREP standards emphasize five core roles—teaching, supervision, research, leadership, and clinical practice—ensuring high training standards. However, a regional imbalance in CACREP-accredited doctoral programs limits faculty availability. Additionally, the 2016 CACREP standards require core faculty to hold CES doctorates, reinforcing counseling identity. This program explores the benefits and challenges of a PhD and its role in shaping the counseling profession.

100. Counselor Mesolevel Advocacy Competence: Application in a Rural Texas school

CE Requirement Category: General

Presenter(s): Jamie Ho; Taite DeVoe; Juliette Gonzalez; Katherine McVay

The purpose of this program is to provide systematic interventions for mental health practitioners partnering with rural school districts. We will first review the challenges and opportunities of support for rural schools. To promote changes in rural schools, we will utilize ACA Advocacy Competence (Toporek & Daniels, 2018) to identify how practitioners may engage in

system advocacy to collaborate with school counselors. Lastly, we will discuss how practitioners can utilize program evaluation to evaluate the impact of interventions and sustain lasting change.

101. Recognizing Acute Mental Illness: How Counselors Evaluate Institutional Care

CE Requirement Category: General

Presenter(s): Jasper Gates; Tyler Ringrose

This program will describe what the hospitalization process and institutional care for clients who may experience chronic suicidal ideations, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, personality disorders, and delusions; the problems and issues that come with institutional care and how clinicians can improve upon these processes. The participants will learn the difficulties, lack of treatment, signs of when to send clients to get care, and ways to improve on institutional care for clients experiencing these disorders.

102. Language, Suicide Risk, and Resilience: Practical Implications for Counselors

CE Requirement Category: General

Presenter(s): Priscilla Prasath; Seth Robinson

Suicide theory has advanced significantly in the last two decades, with novel ideation-to-action models clarifying distinctions between suicidal ideation and suicidal behavior. This program offers a comparative evaluation of these models and introduces a practice-oriented integration of dialectics, structural linguistics, and Lacanian theory. This integration provides counselors with a deeper understanding of how language shapes subjectivity and influences suicidal desire, capability, and action. This program outlines how linguistic markers such as contradictions, shifts in self-positioning, and symbolic representations—can enhance crisis assessment and intervention. This program also highlights how this approach strengthens multicultural and social justice competence in suicide prevention. Counselors will leave with a more robust theoretical and empirical grounding to support ethical, culturally responsive crisis work with diverse populations.

103. Uncomfortable Spaces in Counseling: Navigating Tension and Uncertainty

CE Requirement Category: General

Presenter(s): Tamara Hinojosa; Bryce Wilson

Aligned with the conference theme, Stronger Together, this program integrates Carl G. Jung's concept of the union of opposites and Winnicott's theory of transitional space to present a depth-oriented counseling approach centered on clients' unique journeys and the opposing forces within them. These opposing forces may manifest as conflicting emotions or thoughts—such as fear and excitement—which can create tension that feels overwhelming. Rather than viewing these tensions as problems to resolve quickly, this program frames them as meaningful opportunities for insight and psychological growth. The presenters will examine how clients cope with the discomfort of holding opposing forces within and outside of counseling programs, and explore the counseling relationship as a transitional space where clients can safely engage these tensions. Clinical implications include fostering therapeutic rapport that can endure moments of uncertainty.

Poster Sessions

Thursday and Friday • Noon

No CE Hours Awarded

P1. You're Grounded! Physical and Mental Grounding Techniques for Anxiety

Presenter(s): Amy Simpson

Anxiety in students and clients often leads to overwhelming thoughts, emotional dysregulation, and difficulty staying present. This poster session provides school counselors and mental health professionals with a practical toolkit of grounding techniques to help interrupt cycles of overthinking and reduce anxiety in the moment. Participants will learn nearly 20 simple, effective physical and cognitive grounding strategies that can be easily integrated into individual counseling sessions across a variety of settings.

The poster session will also highlight the research and neuroscience supporting grounding techniques and their role in promoting emotional regulation and preventing escalation into panic. Attendees will leave with ready-to-use interventions, increased confidence in teaching grounding skills, and resources to support students and clients in developing greater self-awareness and present-moment focus.

P2. Delphi Process for the Initial Psychometric Evaluation of the Counselor Self-Efficacy Sources Scale – Client Trauma (CSESS-CT)

Presenter(s): Erika Rodriguez

This poster session presents findings from the Delphi portion of a current dissertation on the initial psychometric evaluation of a newly developed scale. The dissertation examines counselor self-efficacy in addressing trauma, and the poster will present the Delphi process, expert consensus criteria, and relevant items aligned with Bandura's sources of self-efficacy for counselors working with trauma-exposed clients. Building on these Delphi-derived items, the study is currently collecting data from a large sample of CACREP-accredited counseling interns and licensed counselors (provisional and fully licensed) for an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to determine the underlying factor structure of the trauma counseling self-efficacy construct. The goal is to inform the development of a measurement instrument for targeted training interventions in counselor education programs and to inform counseling supervision approaches.

P3. Cultural Humility: Creating Culturally Safe Communication Spaces between Counselors and Clients

Presenter(s): Brian Hicks

This poster session highlights key strategies for counseling professionals to enhance clinical effectiveness through the integration of cultural humility, awareness of microaggressions, and intentional development of the therapeutic alliance. Attendees will gain a concise understanding of how these interconnected concepts influence client engagement, trust, and treatment outcomes across diverse populations. The poster outlines practical approaches for increasing self-awareness, recognizing and addressing microaggressions, and strengthening relational skills that support effective counseling. Emphasis is placed on identifying relational ruptures and implementing repair strategies to maintain and restore the therapeutic alliance. Ethical considerations grounded in the American Counseling Association (ACA) Code of Ethics are also highlighted. Designed for quick reference and application, this poster session provides actionable insights and evidence-based strategies that counselors can immediately integrate into practice to promote culturally responsive, ethical, and client-centered care.

P4. "Chat, are we Ethical?": Applying an Ethical Decision Making Model to Counseling Clients in Relationships with Artificial Intelligence

Presenter(s): Diana Rodriguez; Ceyda Haggan; Cristina Granados; Mikaela Bullari

As artificial intelligence (AI) becomes more prevalent, counselors have an ethical responsibility to help clients navigate perceived relationships with AI. While counselors may have their own biases and interpretations of AI, it is imperative that they remain neutral as clients bring their unique lived experiences into the counseling space, including AI. This poster session will explore the application of an ethical decision making model as it pertains to client engagement in relationship with AI, alongside considerations for the Texas counselor. AI may be a key component in the stories of many clients, and this poster session will empower counselors to apply ethical decision making as it relates to client AI use. This poster session encourages counselors to grow stronger together to ethically and effectively serve clients by adapting as our collective story unfolds.

P5. The Power of Expressive Arts: Exploring Counselors' Lived Experiences of Expressive Arts in Practicum Clinical Supervision

Presenter(s): Madison Walker

This poster session highlights a recent qualitative study exploring the lived experiences of counselors-in-training who participated in expressive arts activities as part of their practicum clinical supervision. Seven master's level counselors-in-training shared their encounters with expressive arts in their practicum supervision uncovering six themes: (a) the supervision process, (b) safety and vulnerability, (c) counselor development, (d) previous experiences with expressive arts, (e) post practicum, and (f) perceived impact on client. The findings from this study support previous research on the use of expressive arts in supervision with counselors-in-training while also offering new insights into student experiences. This poster session will discuss the implications for counselor educators and supervisors utilizing expressive arts in their supervision practice in addition to suggestions for future research on using expressive arts in supervision with practicum supervisees.

P6. Suicidality Among Adolescents Involved with the Juvenile Justice System Through the Lens of the Bioecological Model

Presenter(s): James Ikononopoulos; Jessica Blakeslee

Persistent mental health challenges among adolescents raise concerns, especially considering risks for suicidality for adolescents today. Using Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological model, the study reviews individual, interpersonal, and institutional factors to gain insight into systems that negatively impact adolescent mental health. The study includes results from 160 participants in a post-adjudication facility who provided MACI-II responses and psychosocial data. Data was analyzed using t-tests, logistic regression, and chi-square tests. History of suicidality was higher for Temperamentally Fickle scores and lower for Gregarious Self-Image and Attention-Seeking. Temperamentally Fickle traits significantly predicted suicidality. Implications highlight trauma-informed care; limitations include statistical assumptions and sample constraints.

P7. Training School Counselors in Integrated Care: Preparing them for Interdisciplinary Collaboration

Presenter(s): Malvika Behl; Heather Trepal; Peggy Ceballos

The number of children and adolescents experiencing mental health challenges continues to rise, yet access to counseling services remains limited. Integrated care, which emphasizes collaboration among behavioral health, medical, social, and educational systems, has emerged as a promising framework for addressing the multifaceted needs of youth. Within schools, effective collaboration among professionals has been associated with improved academic outcomes, expanded access to prevention and intervention services, and reduced disparities in care. However, training in integrated care for school counselors remains limited. In response, this poster session presents a comprehensive training framework designed to prepare school counselors for active participation in integrated care teams. The model integrates conceptual knowledge, applied skill development, interprofessional collaboration, and reflective practice to ensure that school counselors are well-equipped to contribute meaningfully to school-based integrated care in their professional roles.

P8. Responding to Self Harm with Special Populations

Presenter(s): Priscilla Vomero

Self Harm is an epidemic among teens and children. Counselors, therapists, and professionals must learn best practices on how to respond to these outcries, crisis, or attempts as it can make the difference in the treatment response of those clients. In this poster session we will discuss common assumptions of self harm and discuss easy to digest materials on the subject to share with families, school personnel, or counselors to use in practice. The response from the adults in that child's life is one of the most tender and important ones on their road to recovery and relapse prevention.