



# INFOCHANGE

Association for Humanistic Counseling  
Newsletter

FALL 2018

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## President's Letter

As our emerging leaders program kicks off I was just reflecting on so many of the mentors that I had in my life. I had mentors of various personalities and cultural backgrounds in various aspects of my life (i.e., professional, personal, spiritual, familial). Some of these were formal and some were less so. Some had longer term commitment implied, they conveyed they were with me for the long run, while others were able to mentor because they matched with some type of developmental need.

Openness to being mentored is an important ingredient, not just in taking feedback but being willing to step into that role. Making the effort to reach out and letting a person know you value their guidance as a mentor or elder, colleague or otherwise. Mentors are also needed and racial/ethnic and other barriers to mentorship must be addressed, especially as the field moves from one domi-

nated by white males to one that is diverse and representative. Counselors and counselor educators have to go beyond just mentoring and being mentored be those like oneself or those one has an affinity to.

Why am I mentioning mentoring? In some ways it is what many people are missing. What many children and youth in school, professionals new in our field, and new faculty members need is someone that believes in them, and sees how they shine. Humanistic counseling places emphasis on relationship, genuine relationship, as directly tied to development and growth. Was this true for you? It was for me. Many of my developmental steps were helped along or at least witnessed with subtle encouragement from my mentors. Often mentorship did not come in the form of direct teaching, but more so in encouragement and sharing their



perspective, not to mention making suggestions to go beyond internal and external barriers. I just celebrated the memorial of one of my mentors from outside the counseling realm, Kyogen Carlson. He held space for me as a person and by example, upheld wonderful values and a way of being in the world. He promoted being ok with making mistakes as life is messy. *Continued on page 2*

## Association for Humanistic Counseling

### MISSION

We value the dignity of the individual and the right for each to function as an agentic human being in the context of social and cultural milieus. We value authentic human relationships that contribute to the actualization of individuals and communities. As such, we are devoted to facilitating the client's development and becoming in the world, holding the experience and authority of the client in the highest regard.

### VISION

To accomplish this Mission, the vision of the Association for Humanistic Counseling is to: (a) promote the growing body of theoretical, empirical, and applied knowledge about human development and potential; (b) encourage philosophical reflection on counseling practices and outcomes; and (c) advocate for counseling, supervisory, and educational policies and practices that benefit individuals within their communities, environments, and cultures.



## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



## Andrea Griggs, Lamar University Graduate Student

My name is Andrea Griggs and I am in my last year at Lamar University to obtain my Master's Degree in Education with a concentration in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. Previously, I graduated from Texas A&M University where my major was in sociology and I minored in psychology. I am currently employed at The Harris Center for Mental Health and IDD as a rehab clinician. I am currently completing my practicum at FamilyTime Crisis and Counseling Center where I work with clientele ranging from children, adults, couples, and parenting groups.

As I have begun my journey as being a counselor I have been pushed and pulled in multiple directions, especially when it has come to my theoretical orientation. Am I more cognitive-behavioral, reality, person-centered, humanistic? During my theories course I almost found it overwhelming to have to choose between so many different orientations and which one I found to be most beneficial for my clients, but that also aligned with my beliefs. I found myself really reflecting on the type of counselor I would really like to be.

Honestly, I was so consumed with trying to retain everything for classes, I did not really consider which orientation I wanted to practice under until this past semester. I am sure everyone can relate to the constant reading, writing of papers, and studying for tests in their graduate program while trying to bal-

ance work and social atmospheres. One of my professors really sold me on the humanistic approach while at residency. I will never forget sitting in the back of the room thinking about how important it is to look at a person holistically and establish a relationship with the client. Now that I have begun my field-based hours, I found out I take on more of a cognitive-behavioral approach with many techniques from the humanistic approach. These techniques include assuming the client is good, treating the client as a whole person, and identifying the client's needs. I can best help my clients by looking at the complete scope of their emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual needs which made up the person they are.

The client themselves feel more empowered when they come to the realization that they have the answers already within themselves to improve their own lives and quality of life. I will say as I have begun my career in counseling, the idea that a client will reach this realization in a time frame I have created for the client is not realistic. I struggle with the process you could say. However, I need to learn to trust the process so the client themselves can trust the process as well. I look forward to learning more about how to continue to help my client's in the most effective ways as well as grow not only as a counselor, but as a person.

that's  
humanism!

## A Humanistic Counselor Travels to DC for the Institute for Leadership Training

By: Joel Givens

I wiped sweat off my brow as I trudged up the hill towards the Capitol building. Others assured me that the heat was not bad for July in Washington, DC. I wondered how the politicians tolerated the humidity in suit coats and neckties. I looked the part, but wished I could advocate in my Nietzsche t-shirt.

I wasn't exactly sure what to expect. How does one advocate for the profession with politicians? I imagined that I would be picketing or shouting political positions in front of elected officials until security escorted us off the premises. At the Institute for Leadership Training (ILT) conference, the advocacy team provided an overview of the advocacy process. I quickly learned that we, the attendees of ILT, were supporting legislation that would allow counselors to be reimbursed for services provided to individuals with Medicare. That was all that I needed to worry about: one bill in the Senate and another in the House of Representatives. We were given a one-page document that summarized the legislation. This allayed my fears of needing to develop a flamboyant and witty picket sign.

I was also relieved that the legislation seemed more or less bi-partisan. We weren't fighting the death penalty, advocating for the environment, or championing other controversial topics. The legislation was focused on the population of older adults that might benefit from seeing a counselor. Perhaps I was naïve, but I anticipated a pleasant conversation with my Senators and my Representative. I imagined being at a party and casually mentioning my interaction with our Senator: "Oh, Michael (Bennett) and I were laughing about that last summer when I was sitting in his office. He asked me to call him 'Mike.'" A guy can dream.

Actually, the Senators and Representatives are rarely available to meet with the ILT advocates. I was scheduled to meet with several Aides from the state of Colorado. The advocacy team at ILT role played possible interactions with Aides, who might express irritation, impatience, and/or lack of interest in the legislation. We were prepared for overworked Aides that might shuffle us in and out of the offices. The advocacy team also encouraged us to share our stories regarding counseling. Rather than asking us to become policy experts overnight, the team stressed the importance of articulating the story of how we became counselors, what matters to us, and why we do what we do.

We were then placed into groups by region and state. I was paired with Jaime, another counselor from Denver. We were on the schedule to meet with the Aides for our Senators, but we had separate meetings with our Representatives. I was thankful that I had an advocacy companion who seemed to know much more about Medicaid/Medicare policies. If, by any chance, one of the Aides had a question about the philosophy of Heidegger, I was prepared to jump in. Given the unlikelihood of that possibility, I was happy to have Jaime with me for the day at the Hill.

The bus pulled up in front of the Capitol and we trekked up the Hill for pictures. I kept thinking about the stifling heat and the possibility of air conditioning inside the buildings. The ILT advocates from the Western region walked towards the Senate building. Gradually, we each marched our separate ways until it was only the two of us. We wandered through the marble hallways and noticed the plaques on the doors: John McCain, Tim Kaine... The doors seemed monstrously large in a hallway with a 20-foot ceiling.

Jaime and I walked into our first meeting with the Aide. Several Aides buzzed around and looked at computer screens. We made our way across the lush blue carpet to a round table near the back of the office. After exchanging pleasantries, the Aide took notes regarding the bill that we were supporting. She asked several questions regarding mental health billing which Jaime confidently answered. After approximately 15 minutes, the Aide appeared enthusiastic about the bill. Jaime and I stopped for a coffee break in the Senate coffee shop (across from the Senate barber shop) and then we made our way to the other Senator's office. The 2nd conversation resembled the 1st: an enthusiastic Aide took vigorous notes as Jaime answered the questions and I tried to look like I knew what I was doing.

I cannot begin to count how many times we were lost in the Senate building looking for the little trolley that would take us to the House of Representatives. Jaime and I parted ways to speak with our Representatives. My representative spent at least five minutes meeting with me despite the fact that he needed to run off to be in session. I was struck with his receptivity to the legislation. After giving him the information on the bill, he hurriedly ran out of the room. Satisfied with my interactions for the day, I made my way back to the buses.

Partisan issues never surfaced. At the end of the day, the Aides and my Representative are people who care about the suffering of others. I looked into the eyes of Democrats and Republicans and noticed compassion, understanding, receptivity, and trust. Before I arrived to DC, I felt a sense of hopelessness regarding the partisan divide in our country. I experienced a restored sense of hope after my day on the Hill.



## AHC Emerging Leaders Program

The Association for Humanistic Counseling's (AHC) Emerging Leaders Program was developed to allow student and new professional leaders to participate in AHC activities, receive mentorship, and connect with opportunities that help them grow as leaders.

Emerging Leaders will be selected to serve for the 2019-20 term (July, 2019 to July, 2020). Master's level students, doctoral level students, and new professionals are encouraged to apply.

Interested applicants should submit the Emerging Leaders application and their curriculum vitae/resume electronically to Victoria Kress at [victoriaEkress@gmail.com](mailto:victoriaEkress@gmail.com) no later than **December 1, 2018**.

Applications can be found on the AHC website: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1EM-xEJxfnR1z-jUjBLfHRPAV8Q4i8UYc/view?usp=sharing>



## The Power of the Plum

*By: Helena Stevens, PhD, LPC, LSC*

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When I was a doctoral student, the faculty expressed the importance of attending counseling conferences. The conferences were where you would get a job, and network for research and service opportunities, and add presentation lines to your CV. While the message had its premise, the reality of funding these ventures, on a doctoral assistantship, was dismal. Hotel, flight, transportation, and food costs were more than the monthly incomes many of us received. To make the dreams of attending a reality, I had to employ tactics such as staying off site, flying at odd hours, riding public transit, and searching for free food at the receptions. Due to budgeting tactics, I have been fortunate to have conference experiences that, I believe, many will never have. At the time I didn't recognize the fortune because it looked like staying at a hostel in an alley in Hawaii with drug dealers, waiting in hotel lobbies at 2am with homeless persons in Cincinnati, being escorted to and from hotels whilst walking through dangerous downtown areas in more than one city.

The experience that permeates my vision the most is when I rode the bus in Hawaii. Aside from the colorful hostel experiences, I was deeply impacted by my ride. The bus ride was over an hour to the trade center, on the other side of the island from where the conference was. The ride took us through the industrial side and the homeless camps. The trash can had a sticker on it that said "this is paradise" and was placed in front a line of tents, cardboard boxes, and homeless tenants. I will never forget thinking this exact thought, "we have how many thousands of counselors up in a Hilton by the beach, celebrating all this knowledge we have, why aren't we out here doing something with it?" I was fortunate to be able to see something beyond the walls of the hotels, deeper than an award frame, and more impacting than a conversation about research. I saw real life and the opportunity we all have when we attend these conferences to step outside and step into the world of the people we talk about in those four wall rooms.

After Hawaii I returned back to my home and program very inspired. I had a vision for motion, one in which all ACA divisions be required to engage in a human service activity at the national conference. Upon consultation with seasoned leaders I was made aware of not only the financial red tape that such a motion would bring but also the bureaucratic issue that such a motion would bring. What I am dancing around saying is, it is a hard bargain to drive to tell divisions they need to do something without much (or any) incentive. So, my idea was parked. The association, thankfully, has moved in a service direction since then and AHC continues to integrate service (i.e. empty plate project) into its conference work and division functions.

This piece has a point and it comes from a story, of course. In attending ACES Philadelphia, naturally, I stayed off-site to be able to fund my venture. Even as an assistant professor, funds were still tight. However, at this point in my endeavors I learned to buy groceries and tow food with me to ensure I not only ate but ate more than cheese and crackers. On my last day of the conference I had left over food. The conference venue was right behind the subway line. Each day I walked to the venue I walked past a vast number of homeless people. It made sense, thus, to give my food to them. The food consisted of cereal, fruit, bread, granola, and some leftover pizza. Ironically, the day I went to hand it all over, only one person was stationed outside the subway stairs. It could have been because it was 8am on a Sunday, but never the less I was happy to have someone there to give it to.

The gentleman was half asleep, seated on the ground near some bushes. When I tried to get his attention, he seemed to notice me at first. After another hello, he made eye contact with me and my 5-year old son (at that time). We exchanged pleasant hellos and I asked if he wanted my food. He didn't answer at first but his eye contact with me was sincere and intense. I pulled out a plum and explained some of the items I had in the bag. Upon doing so his eyes lit up and the color and warmth sprouted from his face. His words to me were, "I haven't had a plum in so long." You could see the joy pouring from him as he grabbed it. He thanked me, and we began to talk about what brought me out there so early in the morning. I then went to hand him a box of my leftover pizza-which my 5-year old son had refused to eat so it was intact. Upon doing that the color drained from the man's face and the face scrunched with dissatisfaction. The man thanked me and I walked away with a deep learning experience and new insights; why should I expect them to want less than what I want to eat each day? How simple would it be for all thousands of us to buy fruit for the homeless people who sit outside of our high-rise rooms?

The point I want to make from this narrative is that the opportunity for humanistic action is right in front of us every day. As we congregate annually to celebrate our work, knowledge, and accomplishments, let it be an opportunity to extend it further by going outside of the hotels and venues and taking what we know and believe in, and giving it to the communities. It is as simple as a plum and a morning conversation. It can be as simple as just being there with them.

# Association for Humanistic Counseling



## Annual Conference

May 30 - June 1, 2019  
Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN

Crown Plaza AiRE Hotel  
3 Appletree Square, Bloomington, MN 55425

*\$139/night*  
*MSP – Delta hub & direct hotel shuttle*

### Counseling in the age of climate change, international collaboration and cross-cultural action

*Presentation proposals that reflect any of the following will be considered:*

- Cross-cultural counseling and humanism
- Wellness models from global cultures
- Culturally appropriate adaptation of humanistic counseling
- Nature connection, disconnection, and ecotherapy
- Humanism, sustainability, and permaculture
- Global human rights and humanitarian efforts
- Humanistic counseling and response to natural disaster
- Humanistic approaches to migration and counseling refugees
- Humanistic counseling and client responses to climate change implication
- Humanistic counseling and global human rights movements
- Human trafficking and humanistic efforts

*Proposal link will open November 1st and close on January 15th*

## The Talk Therapy Revolution

By: Peter Ladd



As a member of AHC, I want to present a humanistic/phenomenological book that will be published this October 15th by Lexington Books that is based on client and counselor talking to each other. What I mean is that, the time has come for a talk therapy revolution in mental health. This is based on my perception that we are losing the healing power of dialogue when counseling mental health clients. It seems quite odd since we are communicating with each other even more readily in the 21st Century. However, the communication is more in the form of advice, judgment, analysis and questions than in a meaningful interchange between two individuals. Even communication emanating from technology such as, the Internet's platforms of Facebook and Twitter inform yet may not reach us at a level of humanity that only face to face dialogue can provide. Regarding talk therapy, the present position suggests domination by a medical model that lacks direction in how to

interact with client/patient experiences and combine them with their expertise — eliminating dialogue as a considerable portion of the healing process.

Within a medical model, clients/patients meet with talk therapists who diagnose them (You have ADHD.), ask questions (Have you taken your meds?), give advice (You should reconsider your behavior.), tell them what to do (We are going to try cognitive behavioral therapy.) and monitor their success (I see improvement in your attitude.), but with little investment in meaningful dialogue that can dramatically change the ultimate outcome. It seems to be a field that increasingly wants to talk “at” or “pass” clients/patients instead of talking “to” them.

This is not to say we have not learned extensive information about human behavior, personal feelings or neurological interactions through the practice of a medical model. These advancements give us a window into ourselves that was not present in the recent past. However, gathering information and knowing how to share it in a dialogue with client/patients has taken a secondary role in such areas as; psychopharmacology, psychological techniques, diagnosis and other forms of assessment.

This book is about recognizing the healing power of dialogue in talk therapy. It is my belief that the dialogue between client and therapist holds equal importance as, for example, psychotropic drugs or numerous counseling techniques. Effective dialogue is the essential ingredient that makes practices in talk therapy more than information based on professional expertise. Meaningful dialogue combines the experiences of the client and the skills of the therapist in unique ways. According to Martin Buber, (2014) genuine dialogue has three voices — yours, mine and the dialogue itself. In talk therapy the dialogue itself has its own influential power in the healing process, a concept completely abandoned by a strictly medical model of talk therapy.

Deep and meaningful dialogue in talk therapy has its own unique life force that adds another dimension to healing. In this book, it is demonstrated by researching neuroscience and personal experience — making talk therapy more than an art or a science. Dialogue helps bring client and counselor to a higher level of healing as they pursue mental health recovery. It has its own healing properties that transcend traditional counseling techniques. It allows clients and professionals to develop something unrivaled regarding healing. Something that is needed if mental health recovery is to find full meaning in a client's life. It instills confidence, motivation and resilience into a client/patient's personal narrative of their experiences.

While dialogue is often confused with other forms of discourse, it belongs in a distinctive category of its own. Unlike debate, it doesn't involve arguing for a point of view, defending a set of assumptions, or critiquing the positions of others. Unlike negotiation or consensus-building, it's not a method of reaching agreement or arriving at decisions. And unlike discussion, it can only emerge when participants trust and respect each other, suspend their judgments, and listen deeply to all points of view. The purpose is not so much to solve a problem or resolve an issue as to explore the most promising avenues for action. (London 2018).



This form of dialogue-centered talk therapy challenges the medical model form of therapy and can be seen in the following chapters where what is presented are those capabilities that are needed to produce avenues of action that support psychological healing. Insight, intuitive decision making, attunement, empathy, momentum, selfless acts and hope are just a few of what is covered in the following pages. The purpose is to raise dialogue to the same level of importance as medical model oriented psychotropic drugs or mental health counseling techniques when working and talking with mental health patients or clients.

We live in a current mental health culture that has accumulated vast amounts of information. Yet, when therapists talk about it with their client/patients through a culture dominated by a medical model, some may have difficulty in allowing meaningful dialogue between expert and lay person to take place. It is time for a talk therapy revolution that takes on current mental health culture in positive ways. That gives equal value to human interaction and experience along with medical advancements.

Here is a review by one of my good friends and AHC member:

“In *The Talk Therapy Revolution*, Peter D. Ladd masterfully blends the experiential orientation of phenomenology with insights from contemporary neuroscience to provide powerful support for core elements of relational helping, including intuition, attunement, and empathy. Challenging the limitations of the culturally dominant medical model, Ladd conjoins neuroscience and phenomenology to advocate for a remarkably effective, authentic, and thoroughly relational approach to counseling and psychotherapy. I highly recommend this outstanding book to all talk therapists, who will greatly benefit from its clear, engaging style, numerous case examples, and revolutionary vision of the therapeutic process.” —James T. Hansen, Oakland University

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## ***Call for Conference Volunteers***

Planning has begun for the 2019 AHC Conference in Minneapolis, MN. There is lots of work to be done before and at the actual conference. Areas in which we are seeking volunteers include: Schedule and Program, Proposal Review, Registration, Sponsorship, Technology, and Volunteer Coordination. If you are interested in being involved with the 2019 conference, please email:

Amy Barth at [ahc2019conference@gmail.com](mailto:ahc2019conference@gmail.com).



**OCTOBER****Oct. 10th @ 8 PM EST**

“Fresh off the Boat”: The Influence of Internalized Stereotypes and Intraethnic-othering on Asian American Adult Identity

Development and Wellness.

Stacey Litam, Ph.D., LPC, NCC

Monica Band, Ed.D., CRC, NCC

Ramya Avadhanam, Ph.D.

Christian Chan, Ph.D., NCC

**NOVEMBER****Nov. 8th @ 8PM EST**

Opening Doors: Using Story and Communication to Move from Prejudice to Inclusion.

Nina Spadaro, Ed.D.

Rives Thornton, MS

Paul Englesberg, Ed.D.

Andrea Beilner, MS.

**UPCOMING WEBINARS****AHC Facebook Group**

Check out our new AHC Facebook Group and join the conversation!

Find the group at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/AssociationforHumanisticCounseling/>



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## AHC @ 2019 ACA Conference

We loved to see members representing AHC by attending and stopping by the AHC exhibit booth at the 2018 ACA Conference. AHC will have an exhibit booth again this year at the 2019 ACA Conference in New Orleans on March 27-31. If you are planning to attend ACA and would like to volunteer an hour or two of your time hosting the AHC exhibit booth, email Alyssa Swan at [alymswan2@gmail.com](mailto:alymswan2@gmail.com).



## SUBMISSIONS FOR INFOCHANGE NEWSLETTER

We would love to hear more about you and your experiences. We accept articles specifically related to you, your practice, your teaching, and your advocacy. Here are some prompts that may inspire you:

- ⇒ How are you putting Humanism in Action?
- ⇒ Maybe you have seen others (individuals, organizations, or communities) put Humanism in Action and would like to share their story with us.
- ⇒ How has humanism impacted you personally?
- ⇒ How has humanism impacted you professionally (your counseling practice, teaching, or experience as a student)?
- ⇒ How do you incorporate service and advocacy into your work?
- ⇒ Are there any aspects of humanism that you struggle with? If so, how do you manage these struggles?

Below you will find the annual schedule of newsletters and submission dates.

	Publication Date	Submission Due Date
FALL	October 15	September 15
SPRING	April 15	March 15
SUMMER	June 15	May 15

Please send submissions and inquiries to: [AHCINFOCHANGE@gmail.com](mailto:AHCINFOCHANGE@gmail.com)