



INFOCHANGE

Association for Humanistic Counseling Newsletter

2019-20

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President's Letter

The historian Plutarch recounted the legend of Theseus' ship, which remained floating in the harbor of Athens for centuries. According to the legend, the citizens of ancient Athens revered Theseus as a naval war hero, a monster slayer, and the founder of Athens. The Athenians kept the ship as a memorial to Theseus. Over the years, the Athenians replaced the rotten wood planks with new planks. The pieces were replaced until the materials were completely different. If the wood in the ship is replaced with different wood, is it the same ship 100, 500, or 1000 years later?

These are the kinds of thought experiments that

keep philosophers awake at night. But, before you yawn, roll your eyes, stop reading, and skip to the next article, consider the relevance of the ship of Theseus for humanistic counselors. Reflect on the question of identity and change in the context of counseling practice. Counselors are in the business of helping clients/students change. Individuals change practices, beliefs, perspectives, values, worldviews, ways of being, meanings, and feelings. Over the years, new characteristics replace old characteristics. If new aspects replace old aspects, is it the same person in 2, 5, or 10 years?



I may use the same name "Joel" when I introduce myself, but I am vastly different from the self that I was 10 or 20 years ago. Perhaps memory maintains continuity between these two different selves. Or, maybe I rely on others to recognize me as a similar person who grows and changes over the years. My friends and

Association for Humanistic Counseling

MISSION

We are counselors who honor human beings individually and collectively. We cultivate authentic human relationships that contribute to the actualization of individuals within cultures and communities. We foster counseling practice, education, scholarship, advocacy and mentorship emerging from the Humanistic traditions.

VISION

A global community of humanistic counselors who honor, respect and care for human rights, potential, and dignity.

Letter from the President-Continued

family members reflect back a consistent identity called “Joel.” Maybe there is a true self that remains the same despite changes in hair color, waist size, belief systems, and worldviews. How might I tell the difference between what remains unchanged and what continues to change?

Theseus’ ship is also relevant when considering the identity of the Association for Humanistic Counseling. Initially, humanistic counselors drew upon the writings of Maslow and Rogers. The members of our division integrate philosophy, phenomenology, research on climate change, ethical practices for working with diverse clients, and additional research interests. Piece by piece, plank by plank, the division replaces old aspects with new aspects. We change and yet remain a consistent identity.

This year, I hope to ponder these kinds of questions in fireside chats, webinars, podcasts, and at our annual conference in Denver, Colorado. I plan to schedule a fireside chat in the months

of September, November, January, March, and June. The final fireside chat will follow the AHC conference in May 2020. This will provide members with an opportunity to connect, share ideas, and offer suggestions after the conference. I will schedule webinars in October, December, February, and April. Brett Wilkinson will be offering a webinar on October 29th at 8PM on the topic of empathy.

In addition, committee chairs, emerging leaders, and members are doing amazing work for our division. Katie Purswell and Julie Whisenhunt posted an announcement on AHC Awards, which will be given at the AHC conference in 2020. Amanda Evans prepared an announcement on the

AHC Emerging Leaders Program. Paul Smith and the members of the conference committee developed the AHC 2020 conference poster. All of this information is provided in this Infochange. Moreover, Nate Ivers and the Wellness Center committee planned the Day of Wellness at the ACA conference in San Diego. Mark

Scholl and Judy Daniels developed several initiatives on behalf of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. Brandé Flamez is working with the Ethics and Bylaws committee to ensure that our procedures and bylaws are up to date. Fredo Palacios continues to develop innovative podcasts. Finally, Susan Foster and the Infochange committee worked hard to put together this publication.

The call for proposals for the AHC conference will be open from October 1st to November 15th. Please submit a proposal for an educational presentation, roundtable, or poster presentation. We would love to see you in Denver in 2020!

I look forward to connecting with you this year. You can always reach out to me if you have any questions or suggestions. That is, of course, if it is the same “Joel” that wrote this letter!

~Joel Givens

SHIP OF THESEUS

As the planks of Theseus’ ship needed repair, it was replaced part by part, up to a point where not a single part from the original ship remained in it, anymore. Is it, then, still the same ship?

2020-2021 AHC Emerging Leaders Program

The AHC Emerging Leaders program was developed to allow student and new professional leaders to participate in AHC activities, receive mentorship, and connect with professional networking opportunities.

Emerging Leaders will be selected to serve for the 2020-21 term (July, 2020 to July, 2021). Master's level students, doctoral level students, and new professionals (having graduated in the past year) will be selected as AHC emerging leaders. Recipients must be an AHC member at the time of application and fall into the master's, doctoral, or new professional categories. Emerging Leaders choose an area of interest within the division and receive mentoring related to that area. Emerging Leaders will provide a minimum of 50 hours of service to an AHC committee, project, or task. Emerging Leaders will also have opportunities to learn the responsibilities associated with serving in elected leadership positions within our association. They will also receive FREE conference registration for the 2021 AHC conference.

Emerging Leaders will be featured in our newsletter, Infocchange, and recognized at the AHC meeting at the American Counseling Association Conference.

- Interested applicants should submit:
 -
 - The Emerging Leaders application
 - Your Curriculum vitae
 - Two letters of reference describing your leadership skills and experiences, and your value of humanistic practices (letters cannot come from members of the AHC selection committee) to Amanda Evans at evans3am@jmu.edu no later than December 1, 2019.

The selection committee will notify applicants of the status of their application by December 23, 2019.

Applications can be found: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1leDmUMCC-6OH2hrLWuVLX6hQ9AniEG6P/view?usp=sharing>

If you have any questions, please contact the Emerging Leaders Committee chair:
Amanda Evans at evans3am@jmu.edu.



Featured Article by The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee of AHC

Humanism as the Foundation of Culturally Informed Inclusive Practice

By: Judy A. Daniels, University of Hawaii at Manoa
 Colette T. Dollarhide, The Ohio State University
 Andrea Griggs, Portland State University
 Katheryne T. Leigh, University of Montana
 Stacey A. Litam, Cleveland State University
 Marianna L. Oller, University of North Texas
 Mark B. Scholl, Wake Forest University
 Linwood Vereen, Walden University

Humanism has been proffered as the foundation of the counseling profession (Dollarhide & Oliver, 2014; Hansen, 2012; Hansen, Speciale, & Lemberger, 2014; Vereen et al., 2014). Humanism is the theoretical perspective that prioritizes the holistic, irreducible, subjective, phenomenological human experience of the world (Scholl, McGowan, & Hansen, 2012) that emphasizes the healing relationship between the counselor and client that is congruent, unconditionally positive, authentic, and empathic (Rogers, 1989). Humanistic counseling practice is highly creative (May, 1975) and focuses on agentive decision-making (Scholl et al., 2012). Humanists hold that clients have inherent will to growth, positive direction, and self-actualization (Maslow, 1970), which is the result of humans' drive to find meaning and purpose in experiences (Frankl, 1984). Using this lens, humanistic counseling has been used as the term to integrate multiple theoretical strands (e.g., Client-Centered counseling, existential counseling, Gestalt counseling) into what is termed the "third force" in counseling, arising after psychodynamism and behaviorism (Hoffman, Cleare-Hoffman, & Jackson, 2015).

Arising as humanism did with a focus on individual autonomy rather than relational and social context, it has often been perceived as promoting counseling practices that minimize the impact of oppression and perpetuate individualism, competition, and autonomy (Monk, Winslade & Sinclair, 2008). As such, humanistic counselors and psychotherapists are guilty of colluding with and condoning oppression and perpetuating White hegemony (Monk et al., 2008). Citing "humanistic microaggressions," Hoffman et al. (2015) charged that humanism de-emphasized diversity, prioritized individual experience and ignored environmental realities, and engaged in tokenism rather than self-reflection. This self-reflection and application of critical theories are mandated if humanistic counseling is to move toward liberation psychology and social justice (Chávez, Fernandez, Hipolito-Delgado, & Rivera, 2016; Watkins & Shulman, 2008).

As multiculturalism is known as the "fourth wave" in

psychotherapy and counseling (Pederson, 1991), it implies an emerging innovation, a new way of working with clients that breaks from the old third-wave humanistic traditions. Similarly, the social justice counseling paradigm known as the "fifth wave" highlighted the need for counselors to eradicate oppressive conditions using social justice advocacy (Ratts, 2009). However, reflecting on the core of humanism, we find a number of humanistic tenets that support the multicultural and social justice work of humanistic counselors (see Hansen & Scholl, 2018; Lewis, 2011; Vereen, Hill, Sosa, & Kress, 2014). For example, D'Andrea and Daniels (2012) examined how the concept of integrity in counseling means that humanistic counselors examine their biases and worldviews to ensure they are meeting all clients, and especially diverse clients, from an informed and unconditional therapeutic stance. They also explored how self-actualization within a culturally informed perspective mandated that "[c]ulturally competent counselors recognize that individuals' actualizing behaviors are significantly affected by the worldview, values, beliefs, and constructions of appropriate behavior that characterize the culture within which people are situated and identify" (p. 47). Finally, D'Andrea and Daniels outlined how the concept of holism and irreducibility contributed to humanistic practice when counselors infused their work with awareness of the environmental, cultural, and identity-based contexts of human existence. Further, when we examine humanistic traditions under a lens devoted to diversity, social justice, and inclusivity, we find a variety of ways that humanistic practice meets rigorous multicultural and social justice standards (see Ratts, Singh, Nassar-McMillan, Butler, & McCullough, 2016). Phenomenological perspectives of humanism are congruent with social constructionism, which highlights the importance of empathic understanding of social realities (Hoffman et al., 2015). The core value of humanism, the unconditional focus on the subjective phenomenology of the client, would mandate that counselors engage the client in a holistic life discussion, including experiences arising from the intersectionality of diverse identities held by the client. Contemporary humanists value authentic, equitable, collaborative, and dialogical relationships that take into account the contextualized complexities and culture of each individual (Task Force, 2014). Likewise, contemporary humanists encourage creative, unique counseling techniques (Scholl et al., 2012) that reduce focus on European-centric counseling

(Continued on page 5)

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strategies in the talking-cure tradition, and embrace African, Asian, and Indigenous healing traditions that are congruent with the cultural identity and preferred healing modalities of the client.

When humanism is coupled with ecological (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), social-cultural, and critical identity perspectives, humanistic practice becomes culturally informed, culturally affirming, and inclusive of the identities of the client. Lemberger and Lemberger-Truelove (2016) professed an example of a more socially just humanistic praxis, which necessitates practitioners eradicate privilege and inequity, critically evaluate all philosophies and practices, regulate injustice and inequity, magnify the humanity of marginalized individuals, and provide empathy and compassion towards all individuals. These practices along with contemporary humanistic ideologies, expound growth and development, equity, relationships, social justice advocacy, and client empowerment (Vereen et al., 2014). To embody social justice advocacy in every motivation and action as a counselor would be an aspirational goal at the heart of humanism (Vereen et al., 2014). However, scholars have postulated that humanism may not be fully actualized (Hansen et al., 2014).

Would you like to share your response to this article? The members of the AHC Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee invite all AHC members to join the AHC Division Community discussion titled "Humanism and Diversity." We sincerely hope you will join the discussion. We look forward to your thoughts and questions.

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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

The Humanization of the Oppressed from a Humanistic Practitioner's Perspective

By Dr. Christopher B. Townsend, MA, LPC, LCAS, AADC, CCS, NCC

"It is a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others. One ever feels his twoness—An American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder."

W.E.B. DuBois

I read this profound depiction of the African American experience, as a counseling student, struggling to conceptualize the work with people that look like me. This passage spoke to my soul as I opened myself to learn about the methods of healing talk. DuBois spoke to the humanity and the dignity of a people living a bi-cultural experience. I'm yet working through the question, what is it to be human and African American?

It's difficult to be available and effective with an oppressed person when the therapist is struggling with the same battle as a member of that group. It's even more difficult for a therapist outside the experience (Black lives) to understand or empathize with the foreign concept. The battle to be authentically you without apology. To elicit an organic and true interaction without rehearsing your words before spoken, contemplating how you might be perceived, all before you respond. Why, because there are landmines in the maze of living "black" in America while chasing the elusive dream.

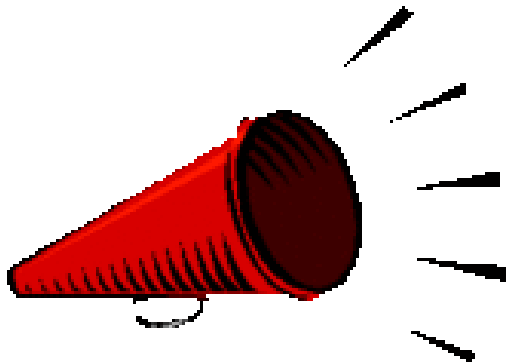
The ideal that "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. Contrary to this promissory note, this hope is riddled and dashed by hate crime assaults, police brutality, and inequalities that infringe upon civil rights. For those without voices, these realities diminish the endowed unalienable Rights that waiver under the oppression of dehumanization. As a counselor who facilitate change processes, I conceptualize the humanistic framework foundationally integrating into the Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling models. It is critical that the Humanistic Counselor understand the tenets of their theoretical constructs to address the individual and systemic barriers of life. To understand the condition is to know that the problem is not simply an intrapsychic conflict but a fight for dignity and humanity, with trauma implications.

The 21st century Humanistic Counselor must comprehend the subjected conditions of targeted cultural groups. As a Humanistic Counselor, I'm called to "fearless advocacy in action." This is the type of counseling that addresses the problem from an ecological perspective, addressing hinderances to growth and development. This advocacy is one that goes outside of the counseling room and addresses policies, practices, and people that assault any person's wellbeing in hidden or open platforms. This work begins with a willingness to know and understand. Ignoring or turning your head away from a people's truth and reality is an ethical violation or contradiction to who we say we are. Let's be true to our professional call for all people.

Interested in the attending or Presenting at A Webinar?

For more information on the AHC Webinar series or if you are interested in presenting a webinar, please contact Alicia Hall, AHC webinar coordinator @ akhall@kent.edu.





InfoChange Call for Awards

AHC members are doing exciting things in the field of counseling, and we like to acknowledge their outstanding work. Please consider nominating yourself or someone else for one of our many awards. The awards deadline is December 1, 2019 and recipients will be recognized at the 2020 AHC Annual Conference. (Please note: This is a change from previous years.) Award categories include:

Humanistic Leadership

Humanistic Clinician

Humanistic Impact

Humanistic Educator/Supervisor

Humanistic Advocacy and Social Justice

Humanistic Dissertation

Joe and Lucille Hollis Publication Award

Make a Difference Grant

Past President

Past Editor

Distinguished Journal Reviewer

Please see the awards webpage <http://afhc.camp9.org/Awards-&-Grants> for a description of each award and additional information. If you have questions, please contact the Awards Committee co-chairs, Katie Purswell and Julie Whisenhunt, ahcawardsandgrant@gmail.com.

Association for Humanistic Counseling



2020 Annual Conference

**Raising the Question of the Meaning of Being
Human in Humanistic Counseling**

**Thursday, May 28th – Sunday, May 31st, 2020
Denver, Colorado**



Hyatt Regency Aurora
13200 E 14th Place, Aurora, CO 80011
\$139/Night



**Keynote Speaker:
Dr. Fred Hanna**

Featured Panel Presentation

Psych-Social Liaison Team from the University of Colorado Hospital

“Crisis Mental Health and Humanistic Counseling” – Saturday, May 30th



VOICES FROM THE FIELD

Humanism in a Virtual Environment

By: Katie Kesterson, MA,

Virtual therapy, distance counseling, telebehavioral health all have the same implication that individuals meet far apart from one another and behind a screen. So often a virtual environment is portrayed as a level of disconnect and follows with the belief that an individual can hide behind their screen. Even the language speaks to a disconnect, rather than when referring to a client coming to an office which is referenced as in person, or in the same room. The idea of a virtual environment can seem so far from the humanist perspective, but it has more in common than one would think.

A virtual environment can seem isolating, but it does not have to be. My entire graduate education was based in a virtual environment much of which began with writing posts back and forth between fellow students. When we began to connect live via video conference names became faces and the power of consistency led to the belief that meeting remote can be just as impactful as being in the same physical space. This led to the completion of my fieldwork being done in a virtual environment and what I found was that nothing is more intimate than meeting individuals within their own environment even if I was only appear on a screen. All the details that can be lacking from having a client step into your office and into your own space are brought to light.

Throughout my experience I was amazed at the reach and opportunity that a virtual connection created and the many ways that on-site counseling may be too challenging to schedule. For those with no transportation scheduling rides or using limited public transportation may be a huge barrier to services but they can meet without relying on others. An individual in a rural community who may only have access to clinicians at a far distance or with a clinician who is within their social circle can meet with someone new within their own home. Those experiencing a transitional time due to homelessness can meet regardless of their housing status and create a connection with someone throughout their process. Those with safety concerns such as those who have experienced domestic violence can stay within the safety of their own walls or remain with one clinician while they go through relocation. Those who fear social stigma from friends, family, or even fans for seeking mental health services can keep their privacy. New mothers unable to drive after giving birth suffering postpartum depression can connect with a therapist while their baby sleeps or feeds. An individual working though what it means for them to be transgender can present in the way that aligns with their gender identity without being out to the world. Individuals who are sick, injured, or even traveling can find and access support. Virtual connection allows for the elimination to so many barriers to services and sends a message that any individual can access help at any time.

But to just connect to the internet and sit on screen is not enough, the same basic tenants are necessary but without the

added protection of sharing a physical space. Finding a deep connection and a strong rapport are just as important but you cannot simply rely on reading the room. It requires being more in tune to the individual's tone and facial expressions since you are only seeing half the picture. The ability to be present with the individual can become far more challenging but even more necessary since there all the added distractions of having no control of the client's environment or even the internet connection at times. Success relies on some of the core conditions of humanism genuineness, positive regard, and empathy which need to be felt beyond the screen.

When considering the principles of humanism, a virtual connection promotes a space that meets someone where they are at, literally. Technology provides the opportunity to sit with someone in their room talking about their toughest times without the need for them to face the rest of the world. When I think of my own family I am reminded of my grandmother's grief after my grandfather passed away. She had never driven a car; she found no need with him present but upon his passing she found a new type of isolation. Unable to seek services and deathly afraid of public transit she suffered an insurmountable level of grief and to admit that grief to her children seemed like an even worse alternative. But she could have found connection, she did not have to suffer alone. A virtual world would have allowed her connection and allows for nearly anyone to find connection. It provides the ability to reach beyond barriers and stigma to form a connection.

When I meet from behind a screen in a virtual environment, I am reminded that I have the opportunity to be creative in my approach in a way that an on-site meeting does not allow. I can create the same rapport and be just as genuine as when I am meeting in person but with the benefit of being invited into a person's space which can transcend the façade that can come from having to interact with the outside world.

All of this is not to say that a virtual environment is not without its faults and limitations. The Pew Research Center (2019) reports there is still 10% of the United States population that does not access the internet who would be unwilling or unable to access this form of connection. This number could potentially grow even more when asking about reliable internet access or access to a consistent means to access the internet. But when it comes down to it virtual environment is a true metaphor for the humanism philosophy. In a virtual environment each person has the tools they need within their self and space to find knowledge and promote self-growth and a clinician is a tool to aid in the process and they need not leave their own world to find the things they need to find hope, meaning, or fulfillment.

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Humanistic Thought of the Edition



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:

- ◆ Insights related to human freedom vs. determinism
- ◆ Insights related to of altruism vs. egoism
- ◆ Insights related to Individualistic vs. collectivistic models of being a person
- ◆ Insights related to Biological essentialism vs. social constructionism
- ◆ Modern vs. postmodern views of the self
- ◆ The intersection of trauma research and views of the self
- ◆ The question of being a person and the problem of suicide
- ◆ The “self” that is taken for granted in self-esteem, self-confidence, self-efficacy, etc.
- ◆ The question of human nature vs. culture

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

	Publication Date	Submission Due Date
FALL	November 15	September 15
SPRING	March 1	February 15
SUMMER	July 1	June 15

Please send submissions and inquiries to: AHCINFOCHANGE@gmail.com