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ASSOCIATION OF HUMANISTIC
COUNSELING
Summer 2017



THE ASSOCIATION FOR HUMANISTIC COUNSELING 2018 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Martina Moore, Ph.D.
2017-2018 AHC President

It is my pleasure to serve the Association of Humanistic Counselors (AHC) as President this year. At the core of humanism is the value of living a life of true fulfillment for the greater good of humanity. I have seen this core value lived in the lives of many of my peers who consider themselves a part of the AHC family. They counsel from a perspective of great empathy, and they live with the highest moral values and ethical grounding. Many give effortlessly to those in need locally, nationally, and internationally. Some advocate for those who don't have a voice for themselves, while others act as servant leaders. It is my goal in this year as President to recognize and provide a platform for my colleagues who are truly humanists in action.

In this year as we showcase our humanistic colleagues, we will bring awareness to our division, and consequently will draw others who are like-minded and who are driven by the same passions. We will set a focus as a team to strategically plan our future as a division to address the ongoing needs of those we serve in a resourceful and intentional manner.

Finally, in this year I will work closely with our committees to offer support and assistance to ensure that the goals and objectives of each committee are clear and that committee members are supported in their goals.

There are many available opportunities for you to get involved in our division. Please consider joining one of our committees. I look forward to meeting many of you at ACA in Atlanta, Georgia, and at our AHC annual conference in St. Petersburg, Florida.

Sincerely,

Martina Moore, Ph.D.

AHC Member Spotlight

By Blake Sandusky, PhD



Ryan Holliman, PhD

Ryan Holliman is an assistant professor at Texas Woman's University in Denton, Texas. He teaches courses on child and adolescent counseling and testing and measurement. His research interests include impacts of child-centered play therapy. He notes he wasn't always interested in the helping professions but initially chose to work towards accounting as a career. He made other plans after he wasn't engaged in his accounting classes and continually fell asleep. We are all glad you were able to find your life's work, our bodies do give us lots of information!

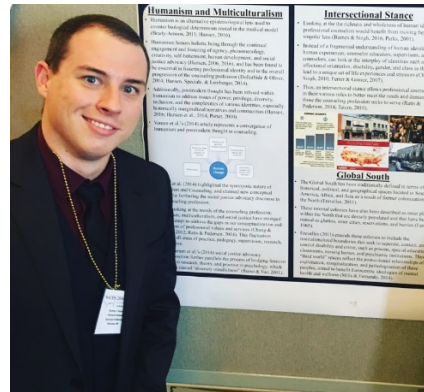
How long have you been involved with AHC? I have been involved with AHC since about 2008, as a graduate student I knew that who you surround yourself with is very important. I wanted to be connected with those who have a deep and abiding commitment to humanistic principles in counseling and in life.

How do you conceptualize or how would you define Humanistic Counseling? I think that humanistic counseling is best conceptualized by focusing on the principle of human growth. Rather than viewing persons as broken, irrational, or aberrant, I view human beings in the midst of a journey of which humanistic counselors get to share a small part. It's through helping clients while being knowledgeable traveling companion that we are able to help. I also believe that humanistic counselors fight the urge to reduce human beings down to easily understood or overly simplistic terms, and seek to fully understand the hidden depths of all clients.

What is some advice you would give to current counseling students or practicing counselors wanting to incorporate Humanistic counseling in their practice? I would say first and foremost, it involves some deep reading. Too often the first exposure a beginning counselor gets to humanistic theories is reading about it from a textbook, whose author may or may not be humanistic. Read from the masters like Carl Rogers, Rollo

Back to our Professional Roots: Utilizing Humanistic Clinical Supervision

By Harvey Peters, MS, NCC, P-LMHC



Supervision and Humanism

Despite the foundational roots of humanism within the counseling profession (Vereen, Hill, Sosa, & Kress, 2014), humanistic supervision has been less emphasized in counseling research and training (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014; Cain, 2003). Unlike developmental and process oriented supervision models, psychotherapy-based supervision models are utilized less in clinical supervision (Bernard & Goodyear 2014; Cain, 2003). Due to this, Cain (2003) indicated the need to further develop the counseling profession's research and training of humanism, including humanistic supervision. With that, this article will provide a brief synopsis of four different supervision models acknowledged for their relation to humanism, as well as a call to action to further develop humanistic supervision training and research.

Humanistic Supervision

The use of humanistic supervision has been acknowledged for its ability to co-construct a space that allows a supervisor and supervisee to explore the phenomenologically constructed world of a supervisee (Dollarhide & Granello, 2012). Through the humanistic supervisor's commitment to the supervisory relationship as well as the supervisee's growth and development, humanistic supervision can enhance a supervisee's agency, reflexivity, creativity, genuineness, unconditional positive regard, and professional identity (Dollarhide & Granello, 2012; Hamilton & Williams, 2007; Farber, 2012). Thus, not only developing a supervisee's intrapersonal skills, but fostering their clinical skills, conceptualizations, and use of theory (Gergen, 2015; Scholl, McGowan, & Hansen, 2012).

Gestalt/Experiential Supervision

Experiential and gestalt supervision has been noted for its ability to assist supervisors in (a) working in the here-and-now; (b) the curative process of experiences, play, and playfulness in the supervisory process; (c) the function of metaphors, imagery, and experiments in guiding the development of a supervisee; (d) the importance of sharing intuitive ways of knowing as well as observations; and (e) the phenomenological and existential focus in exploring issues and concerns (Altfeld, 1999; Farber, 2012). Thus, a supervisor working from this theoretical lens attempts to facilitate a process, in which, supervisees develop their ability to be aware, creative, and present with their clients. In doing so, the supervisor seeks to work with the supervisee

by trusting in the supervisee's ability to be authentic, present, and engaged in the comparable experiences of supervision and counseling. (Resnick & Estrup, 2000; Starak, 2001). With the awareness that supervisees possess the ability and knowledge to enhance their abilities, the supervisor's role is to assist the supervisee towards awareness, in hopes that supervisees come into contact with what was once in the background (Mintz, 1983; Perls, Hefferline, & Goodman, 1951; Resnick & Estrup, 2000; Starak, 2001).

Person-Centered Supervision

Much like person-centered counseling theory, person-centered supervision parallels its focus on relationality, here-and now, the method of practice, and in the importance of trust in the supervisee's process (Arbuckle, 1972; Rice, 1980). Thus, a supervisor using a person-centered framework would emphasize the use of respect, empathic understanding, genuineness, unconditional positive regard, and concreteness to provide a foundational support for the relational process rooted in person-centered supervision (Hamilton & Williams, 2007). This model of supervision centers around assisting supervisees in becoming well-rounded and competent in their abilities as a professional counselor, without indirectly providing counseling services to the supervisee's client (Patterson, 1964).

Constructivist Supervision

Guiffrida (2015) purported that there are many similarities between humanism and constructivism. Guiffrida identified various positive attributes of constructivism, such as, (a) its ability to facilitate the varied roles of a supervisor; (b) its applicability to assist supervisors in the innate responsibilities of teaching and mentorship; (c) providing a space that engenders reflexivity, self-awareness, autonomy, and creativity; (d) the ability to explore and expand on a supervisee's knowledge and utilization of counseling theory (Guiffrida, 2005); and (e) its effectiveness as a tool to explore and develop personhood, identity, and multicultural competencies for supervisees (Dressel, Consoli, Kim, & Atkinson, 2007; Hansen, 2010).

In addition, Mahoney (2003) posited that constructivism supports human beings as active agents in creating meaning from the world. Supervisees are agents with the ability to create meaning from developing their experiences and relationships. This is demonstrated through continual acts of construction, in which the supervisee creates, organizes, and reflects on their experiences and relationships within the context of supervision (Mahoney, 2003; Sexton & Griffin, 1997).

Feminist Supervision

Unlike the aforementioned models of clinical supervision, feminist supervision emerged from postmodern epistemology. Despite its later emergence as a supervision model, authors have highlighted the connections between humanism and feminism (Degges-White et al., 2013; Kahn, 2011; Serlin & Criswell, 2001). Authors such as Russo and Vaz (2001), situated feminist supervision as a practice that "incorporates the feminist values of diversity, egalitarianism, and inclusiveness into critical analyses. It also recognizes the need for complex, context-based viewpoints" (p. 280). Porter (2010) furthers this by asserting that feminist approaches to supervision have the potential to empower supervisees, while unpacking social, political, historical issues in supervision. Thus, feminist supervisors are encouraged to foster trust, attend to diversity, model vulnerability, to examine biases related to marginalized identities (e.g., race, ethnicity, affectional orientation, gender, disability, class, religion), and address power and privilege in the supervision process (Degges-White, Colon, Borzumato-Gainey, 2013; Gentile, Ballou, Roffman, & Ritchie, 2010).

Conclusion

While humanistic supervision receives minimal attention in comparison to the other forms of process, developmental, and psychotherapy-based supervision models (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014; Cain, 2003), documented in the literature is the potentiality and benefits of humanistic supervision (Cain, 2003; Farber, 2012). Due to this, researchers have called upon humanistic counselors and supervisors to reinvest in the continuation of humanistic-based research and practice, particularly in supervision (Cain, 2003; Farber, 2012). Thus, counselors must continue to invest in furthering humanistic supervision through continued efforts to expand current new forms of humanistic research, training, and practice.

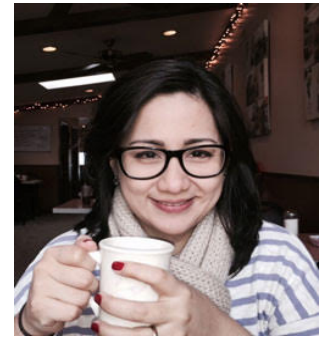
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Diversity-Mindful Humanism: A Personal Approach to Counseling and Supervision

Michele Rivas, doctoral candidate

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Tweed (2006) positions theories as wayfaring sightings from changing sites and warns the wanderer to be aware of blind spots generated from their own positionality given that theory is mediated by culture. In my own process of becoming a professional counselor and an emerging counselor educator, my journey has entailed turns and learning moments related to my training in different countries, languages, and ways of knowing. These turns have shifted and informed my theoretical positionality. For the purpose of this entry, I will organize my arguments according to Vereen et al.'s (2014) Humanistic presuppositions of counseling, and will add a Feminist component to amplify the importance of the social justice.

Diversity-Mindful Humanism Through the Use of a Metaphor

As a learner, I have always operated under the power of images or metaphors in my brain, and counseling theory is not different for me. When I think of the infinity, warmth, and depth of the therapeutic work, I situate in my mind the vastness of the ocean as the ground of my work as a counselor and clinical supervisor. Thus, as a professional counselor/supervisor philosophically grounded in humanism, I align with the presupposition of the therapeutic relationship as the (immense) space to cultivate and exhibit humanistic core conditions with my clients and supervisees, and consider it a catalyst for development, wellness, empowerment, and social justice (Vereen et al., 2014). In other words, I believe in the “competency in using the psychotherapy relationship to engender changes based on the psychotherapist’s capacities for genuineness and acceptance as well as the psychotherapist’s presence in encountering the client” (Farber, 2010, p. 30).

The space for possibilities represented by the therapeutic relationship in my work as a counselor and supervisor also connects with the idea that persons have the capacity to heal, adapt, create, and develop in meaningful ways. Vereen et al. (2014) situate counseling as a the humanist space for the process of making meaning about life transitions, and position development and growth as always possible in people’s lives. In the immense potential of the therapeutic relationship, I understand this natural tendency for health and growth as the moving force that propels our individual boats or watercrafts. In my work as a supervisor, I enact this value by keeping present my firm belief that my supervisees possess inner conditions that will make them develop their full potential as emerging counselors.

In my theoretical conceptualization of the work as a counselor and supervisor, notions of wellness and empowerment fuel our natural tendency for growth and development that propels individual “boats”. According to Vereen et al. (2014), wellness as a dimension of the counseling work informs interdependence, prevention, and holism in clients. I firmly believe that our potential to hold our own determinations and drive our individual boats are grounded in the possibility to enjoy the interconnection of all areas of our human lives. Wellness not only colors our individual boats, but the capacity for wellness also informs the functionality of our own embarkations in life. Moreover, in direct relation to wellness, the potential for empowerment is

facilitated by the therapeutic relationship and is fueled through the counselor/supervisor's honoring of the uniqueness, dignity, and others' self-determination to grow. Vereen et al. (2014) situate empowerment as "the central tenet of humanistic counseling that has been championed by professional counselors since the inception of the profession" (p. 196), and in my personal journey as a counselor and clinical supervisor, empowerment has become a platform for encouragement of others' internal and community change inasmuch as they are holistic beings bearers of the full potential for self-actualization and liberation (Kirschenbaum, 2004; Vereen et al., 2014). In my ocean metaphor, the empowerment and resiliency in the work as a counselor and clinical supervisor is represented by the boat's inner resources to venture into turbulent waters that might represent discomfort, unfamiliarity, and risk.

Finally, from the synergy afforded by previous professional counseling presuppositions (Vereen et al., 2014) of relationship, development, wellness, and empowerment; social justice is situated in counseling as the vehicle to articulate these values by understanding the client in context as well as attending community. In terms of Vereen et al.'s (2014) presupposition of social justice, several scholars have stressed its importance within the counseling profession (i.e., Alsup, 2009; Hill, 2003); however, the applicability of these constructs has resulted in difficulties for humanist counselors (Gergen, 2015). Gergen considers that the focus in counseling is usually individual while failing to consider the broader cultural and historical circumstances that inform those realities. In my ocean metaphor, the power of social justice and advocacy in professional counseling represents the directionality of the journey to a place of dignity and deconstruction of institutional systems that oppress those in the margins.

Several authors have highlighted the ties between humanism and feminism (i.e., Degges-White et al., 2013; Kahn, 2011; Serlin & Criswell, 2001). Moreover, Vereen et al.'s (2014) counseling presupposition of social justice advocacy parallels the process of bridging feminist notions to research, theory, and practice in psychology, which has been named "diversity mindfulness" (Russo & Vaz, 2001). According to Russo and Vaz (2001), it "incorporates the feminist values of diversity, egalitarianism, and inclusiveness into critical analyses. It also recognizes the need or complex, context-based viewpoints" (p. 280). This postmodern approach to counseling has helped me understand the egalitarian nature of the counseling relationship where the client/supervisee, impacted by social, political, cultural, and historical factors, becomes the expert in their own reality (Hansen, 2002, 2006; Rigazio-Digilio, 2001). Moreover, it affords me the opportunity to push against the boundaries of a seemingly modernist discipline that medicalizes and pathologizes experiences by privileging singular truths (Givens & Lamberger, 2015; Hansen, 2014), and further overcome the individualistic emphasis of counseling and supervision by integrating larger systems where others are situated and which determine their material conditions (Givens & Lamberger, 2015; Hansen et al., 2014).

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THANK YOU INFOCHANGE READERS!!

IT HAS BEEN AN HONOR TO BE THE CO-EDITOR FOR THE PAST FOUR YEARS. I WOULD LIKE TO THANK MATTHEW LEMBERGER-TRUELOVE FOR INVITING ME TO BE THE EDITOR IN 2014. I WAS FORTUNATE TO CO-EDIT THE NEWSLETTER WITH RUSSELL PYLE IN 2014-2015 AND HANNAH BOWERS FOR THE LAST THREE YEARS. WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL OF THE INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE INFOCHANGE OVER THE YEARS.

WE WOULD LIKE TO INTRODUCE THE NEW

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We accept articles and personal expressions related to your humanistic practice, personal growth, service, as well as other humanistic counseling related issues.

Please submit to: InfochangeAHC@gmail.com

Submissions should be no more than 1000 words