



SPRING 2021



President's Column

Spring Has Sprung

Dr. Victoria Kress, AHC President

Here in Ohio, Spring has sprung and it feels like things are looking up: the Covid-19 vaccine is being widely distributed, our state is reopening, and we are hopeful that we will soon be able to spend time creating warm connections with others. My hope is this message finds you all safe, well, and hopeful about a brighter future as well.

We at AHC have been busy working hard to grow our association and best meet your needs. We are happy to report that our association is experiencing tremendous growth with 625+ members! Our new members bring a wealth of perspective and experience to our association that we welcome.

Our virtual conference is going to be a very successful event as we have already doubled our usual conference attendance. We know that virtual conferences can feel lonely so we are striving to create a virtual conference space that has many opportunities for connection. As examples, we will have various interactive activities basked in such as speed mentoring sessions, interactive games and social opportunities, and, unlike many virtual conferences, our sessions will be LIVE so that you can interact with presenters and other attendees.

View the President's Welcome video: <https://youtu.be/D-AIAWJ3K08>

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Emerging Leaders Spotlight



Doctoral Student at Minnesota State Mankato - Rosebeth Halama

Why did you want to become an AHC emerging leader? I really appreciate and love the mission and values of AHC. The

emphasis is on the holistic joining with the client, where they are at, with unconditional regard, seeing them for who they are and joining them in their own walk, and supporting their growth instead of just a focus on techniques. AHC is immersed in a Rogerian theoretical orientation which is near and dear to my heart. That is the kind of counselor I hope to be one day.

How do you want to grow as a leader within AHC? When I think of leadership, I think of not success but of failures because failures serve as a teacher. Failures remind us of not knowing everything and they lead us to connect with others. As an emerging leader in AHC, I am looking forward to connecting with others and learning about their experiences to inform my experiences as a novice counselor. I look forward to growing and developing and collaborating and learning from others; as a human being who makes mistakes, who doesn't have all the answers, and works in partnership to come to a solution.

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Humanism in a Complex World

Humanism, Humanitarianism, and Human Rights

Dr. Claire Openshaw and Dr. Judy Daniels

The news headlines are a constant reminder of the many critical and complex issues that we currently face. Some of these issues include raging wildfires, drought, and other disasters resulting from climate change; racism and numerous other systemic injustices; and of course the Covid-19 public health crisis which is causing global turmoil. The unemployment rate within the United States is currently at 6.7%, with a total of 21 million people unemployed. These social problems impact psychological stability, individual and community wellbeing, and the future economic viability of many communities. Looming large-scale concerns like these can easily become overwhelming for our clients, and the resulting psychological distress can manifest and impact our communities in multiple ways.

Humanistic counselors are needed, now more than ever, as they are in a pivotal position to help clients and communities face these psychological hardships and uncertain economic times. By focusing on authenticity, dignity, and the gifts of human potential, counselors can help clients deal with isolation, anxiety, depression and the struggles that have plagued humans since our existence. Exploring with clients' the human rights issues and contextual barriers that are contributing to their distress can help them find strategies for empowerment and understand how larger issues are impacting their lives.

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Member Highlight



Being the Love You Wish to See: Lessons I Learned from John Harrichand About Humanism

Dr. Helena Stevens

I asked John to fill in the sentence blank: "humanism is..." His answer was, and is, love. I was less surprised by the answer, but still enchanted by it because John absolutely embodies the spirit of love in everything he does. I have been privileged to work with him in leadership capacities and when I was considering who to spotlight for this piece, as I came across his name in a spreadsheet, I instantly knew he was the person I wanted to interview. I have witnessed this love of his first-hand via his email inscriptions, compassionate interactions in Zoom meetings, and through all of his warmth that he continues to authentically give in whichever platform he is present in. We had an amazing conversation over Zoom that unfortunately did not save the transcript of our conversation. Albeit the technology woes, the lessons I learned from him have permeated my heart.

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Play Therapy

Supporting Positive Relationships and Building Resilience in Challenging Times

Alexandra Norton

The prevalence of mental health challenges in children is increasing at an alarming rate. With the current pandemic, the number of mental health challenges is only going to continue secondary to forced isolations and minimal social contact with the external world. Numerous studies are being performed on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), such as this pandemic, and the psychological, physical and biological, long-term effects on children, adolescents and adults. For children, it is difficult to process and conceptualize these experiences. Play is the language of children. Play therapy interventions are appropriate for supporting children throughout the healing, and self-discovery process. To quote Albert Einstein: "play is the highest form of research." Play within the therapeutic environment offers children a safe, supportive space to explore themselves, others and their surrounding world. When approaching the child through a holistic lens, a counselor considers all intersecting systems (i.e., siblings, parents, educators) that can support the healing and resiliency of the child, as well as their family.

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Learning Collective

Birthing the Counseling Experiential Learning Collective

Dr. Sarah Stewart-Spencer and Dr. April Crable

The Coronavirus-19 pandemic ushered in global challenges that forced creative adjustments in most areas of society. These adjustments rippled through academic programs across the world. Traditional counselor education programs encountered the immediate need to transform into distance training. However, all counselor education, both tradition, and distance, faced new obstacles regarding practicum and internship experiences.

Agencies, hospitals, community centers, and private practices closed their doors worldwide for in-office face-to-face therapy. It left many practitioners worried about client wellbeing, continuity of care, and the ability to transition to telemental health services. At the same time, many counselors-in-training lost the ability to obtain needed clinical, direct hours with clients to satisfy their masters-level criteria for graduation. Dr. Donna Sheperis of Palo Alto University explained, "When the counties around my university shut down early in the pandemic, my first concern was for students who were preparing to graduate.

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Preparing Counselors

Preparing Counselors-in-Training to Provide Humanistic Counseling to Children

Dr. Jonathan R. Ricks

At the beginning of all the classes I teach in our master's level professional school counseling and clinical mental health counseling programs, I share several definitions and charges for the counseling profession. One very important statement I share is the purpose of the Association of Humanistic Counseling (AHC) to "honor human beings both individually and collectively. We support the cultivation of authentic human relationships that contribute to the actualization of individuals within and across diverse cultures and communities. We foster counseling practice, education, scholarship, advocacy, and mentorship emerging from the humanistic traditions" (Association of Humanistic Counseling, n. d., para. 1). Using this mission, my students and I explore the important components outlined by Carl Rogers (1951) such as congruence, genuineness, and authenticity; unconditional positive regard; and empathic understanding. I like to engage my students in a discussion of this mission to gauge their thoughts and opinions around the importance of relationships in counseling. For the most part, after our discussion, students generally see the importance of the counseling relationship as essential to any success in counseling.

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Upcoming Webinars

We are expanding our webinar program and we are excited to share news about upcoming webinars with you:

A Humanistic Conceptualization of Suicide Protective Factors
Thursday, July 1, 2021 from 12:00pm to 1:30pm EST
Presented by Jenny L. Cureton, Ph.D. and Alfredo Palacios, Ph.D.

Using Hip-Hop and Spoken Word in Counseling Practice
Wednesday, July 21, 2021 from 9am to 10:30am EST
Presented by Ian Levy, Ph.D.

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