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From the Editor

Perry Francis
Eastern Michigan University

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FROM THE EDITOR

When the editor of a professional journal implores the members of that profession to read the journal, or any professional journal, he or she is “preaching to the choir.” And yet, I find myself in that position. I have run into members of our organization and many other mental health providers who struggle to keep up with the ever growing body of knowledge that helps us to provide the best services possible services to our clients. I know it is difficult for me as well. At the same time, I have run into members of our organization who had no idea that we have a journal. Given the work our review board does and the work of those who format, proof, and edit the journal, I ask that you encourage your fellow members and other mental health professionals to take a look at this publication. It is, in my opinion, a quality state journal that provides the reader with thoughtful information. The three articles in the current edition are examples of good work that will inform your practice and impact your counseling students.

Joel Lane has written an excellent article that reviews the ethical implications of bartering for mental health services. Bartering has a long and difficult history in the ethics of the profession. We must also acknowledge, as Joel points out, that if we are to be sensitive to the differing needs and cultural issues of our clients, bartering for services will continue to have a place in the profession.

Our second article looks at poverty’s powerful impact on families. It limits educational opportunities, influences family safety, and impacts decisions concerning food, utilities, and shelter. This colors the view a counselor might have when working with this population. Yet, there are strengths and “treasures” to be found within the family that lives in poverty. Strengths and treasures that are often overlooked. Drs. Cholewa & Smith-Adcock present a model for conceptualizing counseling families in poverty that will improve your practice and empower your clients.

Finally, Drs. Reiner and Hernandez present a thoughtful article about the direction of professional school counseling. Are they educators with a background in counseling or professional counselors who work to impact the social/emotional, career, and educational needs of students. They seek to offer a thoughtful answer.

Finally, this is my last edition as editor. I thank the editorial board and my two graduate assistants, without whom this journal would never be published. They are simply the best! Sincerely, Perry C. Francis

Abstract

The present paper discusses literature concerning the practice of bartering for counseling, psychological, or social work services in lieu of traditional monetary payment. The author contrasts the language concerning the practice of bartering found in the respective ethical codes for each profession, and presents literature describing both risks and potential benefits of bartering arrangements. The primary risks of bartering include liability concerns and the potential for harmful or exploitive dual relationships. The primary benefits are that bartering makes mental health services available to those who cannot afford traditional fees, and allows for a culturally relevant compensation method for those whose cultural backgrounds emphasize the practice of bartering.

Across disciplines, helping professionals are charged with offering services, without discrimination, to a diverse client base with respect to gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, cultural background, and socioeconomic status (American Counseling Association, 2005; American Psychological Association, 2002; Clinical Social Work Federation, 1997; National Association of Social Workers, 1996). This obligation leads some professionals, in an effort to serve as many clients as possible, to agree to enter into unorthodox bartering agreements with some clients who either cannot afford the professional’s fees or whose cultural background emphasizes the use of barter transactions (Thomas, 2002; Zur, 2008).

With the exception of the Psychology profession (American Psychological Association, 2002), the ethical standards of the various helping professions discourage the practice of bartering because of the resulting dual relationship it creates between practitioner and client (American Counseling Association, 2005; Clinical Social Work Federation, 1997; National Association of Social Workers, 1996). These standards, however, also offer guidelines to determine when such an arrangement might be appropriate. Literature on the subject of

Joel A. Lane is a doctoral candidate in the Counselor Education program at Oakland University. Correspondence can be sent to jalane@oakland.edu.