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From the Editor

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FROM THE EDITOR

Volume 40, Issue 2 of the Michigan Journal of Counseling: Research, Theory & Practice contains research and topics from counselors and counselor educators across the United States. The authors of the three articles in 40(2) have presented their research topics and ideas related to counseling special populations. It is necessary that counselors have a solid foundation in general counseling skills in order to effectively treat and build a therapeutic relationship with many clients. At the same time, it is important that counselors have a working understanding of the special treatment requirements and obstacles they may face when working with special counseling populations. The authors in this issue clearly delineate the unique needs of three special populations and have included innovative suggestions and ideas to best work with these populations.

In the first article, Killam, Roland, and Weber focus their research on ways in which school counselors can effectively integrate violence prevention programs on school campuses. Killam, Roland, and Weber shed light on the ongoing school violence issue that many school counselors and communities across the United States face on a daily basis. The authors found those middle school students who participated in a violence prevention program reported a decrease in aggressive behaviors and an increase in healthy problem solving skills.

Ms. Smith, Ms. Michero, and Dr. Fineran present a discussion about the ethical treatment of clients struggling with eating disorders. Specifically, the authors highlight the importance of promoting autonomy and preserving the rights and dignity of clients during treatment. In this study, Smith, Michero, and Fineran examine the struggles faced by clients who have eating disorders, effective treatment models, and the ethical dilemmas faced by counselors treating this population. The authors provide a case example and detail the 10 ethical decision making steps a counselor might undergo.

Guo, Wang, Corbin-Burdick, and Statz highlight an important issue facing school counselors today: support systems for students diagnosed with Aspergers. Dr. Guo and her colleagues present an overview of Aspergers and Autism spectrum disorders and the accompanying cognitive and behavioral characteristics. Dr. Guo et al., describe the role school counselors and other mental health professionals play in creating support systems for both the students, family, and community systems.

Sincerely, Jennifer N. Bornsheuer-Boswell

Abstract

Violence in schools continues reflecting violence within society. There is a growing need for violence prevention programs within the schools that provide students with the skills needed to cope with interpersonal and relationship issues effectively. This study was conducted at a middle school and there were 345 middle school students (6th to 8th grade) who participated in the study. The students participated in a violence prevention program. In this study, the researchers used a pre-test/post-test design and the results indicated that there were some changes in attitudes towards violence that occurred after the intervention.

Violence Prevention in Middle School: A Preliminary Study

With the growing acts of incivility and violence on today’s K-12 school campuses, the need for prevention violence has never been more important. Major problems listed by schools in the United States are fighting violence and gangs (Algozzine & McGee, 2011). School violence continues to be a major problem, with numerous contributing factors which need attention from many different angles. As an example, the lack of close relationships with parents has been linked with an increase in violence in boys such as physical fighting and violence with a weapon during early adolescent years (Stoddard, et. al., 2011). This is an indication that violence prevention efforts need to address family issues as well. Often children learn behaviors at home and then exhibit those behaviors at school. The ongoing school violence issue that many school counselors and communities across the United States face on a daily basis is a serious concern and one that cannot be ignored.

Wendy K. Killam is an associate professor at Stephen F. Austin State University. She coordinates both the Mental Health Counseling Program and the Student Affairs in Higher Education Program. She is active in the Association for Adult Development and Aging. Catherine B. Roland is a professor and Department Chair of Georgia Regents University’s Department of Counselor Education, Leadership, and Research. Her research interests include adjustment issues in college students, transitions throughout the lifespan and bullying. Bill Weber is a professor at Stephen F. Austin State University. He is the coordinator of the Undergraduate Rehabilitation Services Program and Director of the Career Planning Laboratory. He has years of experience working as a rehabilitation counselor and has a strong research focus on career development and vocational assessment.