

Continuing Education Credit Program Descriptions

Navigating Challenging Staff Dynamics as a TD/TC

National, political, and technological changes in the past decade have changed the culture and rhythms of university counseling center work and staff dynamics. Impacts from these shifts include: strains on recruitment and retention; increased burnout and stress; and increased crisis and risk management. Counseling Center departments have also had shifts in the work format amidst the rise of hybrid work, electronic medical records, integration with health settings, and the advent of AI (AUCCCD, 2022).

Training Directors and Coordinators hold a unique role in functioning as members of departmental leadership, as they often manage both staff and trainees, as well as participate in strategic planning for their departments. As shepherds for future generations of counseling center professionals, they narrate the culture and expectations of counseling work to trainees and engage staff to participate in similar leadership (i.e. via modeling and supervision). At the same time, Training Directors often do not receive specific training on how to serve as effective leaders within broader systems, while attending to the competing demands of individuals in different roles. Given the dynamism of their roles, how can Training Directors/Coordinators respond to challenging staff dynamics more effectively?

Learning Objectives: At the end of this panel discussion, participants will be able to:

1. Describe key challenges counseling centers face that contribute to challenges in staff dynamics.
2. Identify factors that help determine counseling staff satisfaction.
3. Discuss effective ways of increasing staff accountability in supporting departmental climate.

Passages

Passages is an ACCTA tradition at the annual conference. The passages program is offered to provide Training Directors an opportunity to engage in small-group discussions related to professional development topics. Traditionally, Training Directors self-identify with one of six developmental stages: Entry, Identity/Immersion, Doubt, ReImmersion, Continuously Evolving, or Exit. More detailed descriptions of each stage and related prompting questions can be viewed on the ACCTA website.

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will identify the stage that is most relevant to them using the Passages stage model for Training Directors.
2. Participants will discuss experiences and factors associated with a particular stage with others who self-identify as being in that same stage.
3. Participants will discuss experiences and factors that would contribute to remaining in the same stage or moving into another stage.

Is This Real Life...or AI Talking? Ethical Considerations on the Use of Artificial Intelligence in Training

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools have become increasingly ubiquitous in the last few years. These tools are regularly accepted as ways to reduce workload, interpret content, provide ideas, or serve as personal confidants. However, these tools are being used uncritically by a population that may not understand what can reasonably be expected from them. This, in turn, presents an array of ethical complications when applied to the context of therapy and mental health. Training directors are increasingly called on to be conversant in AI use in their centers, and in how to prepare trainees to use it appropriately as they become independent practitioners. This presentation will provide basic technical explanations of generative AI, explore ethical considerations in the use of AI, explore guidelines regarding the use of AI in therapist training, and make recommendations for assisting trainees to develop AI literacy.

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will be able to describe differences between generative AI (Large Language Models) and other technologies (Google, spellcheck, etc)
2. Participants will be able to identify ethical considerations in the use of AI in training and therapy.
3. Participants will be able to create a plan for developing appropriate guidelines about the use of AI in the training program.
4. Participants will be able to identify recommendations for assisting trainees in developing AI literacy.

Affinity Group Roundtables

This presentation invites participants to engage in structured affinity group dialogue with fellow training directors to explore common experiences, critically examine shared challenges, and cultivate mutual support, with the aim of strengthening culturally informed practices and professional development in their roles as training directors. In this presentation participants will divide into several affinity groups. Groups will discuss common experiences among group members, common challenges and difficulties, and offer mutual support. Group members will be encouraged to reflect on shared and differing cultural experiences and ways in which identity shapes values and behavior. Group members will reflect on culturally responsive practice, develop strategies to address challenges in training director roles, and generate new and creative solutions to current difficulties.

Learning Objectives: Participants in the CE will be able to:

1. Analyze the diversity of experiences within identity-based affinity groups through dialogue in order to challenge assumptions about within-group homogeneity
2. Generate strategies to address identified difficulties related to creating more inclusive and supportive training environments for trainees and trainers
3. Identify the influence of personal and cultural identities on values, leadership, and decision-making in training roles
4. Identify shared strengths among affinity group members that support self-esteem and self-confidence related to the training director role