President’s Message

Catherine Tucker

Fall 2017

Happy autumn, ACAC members! It was wonderful to see so many of you this past July at our inaugural conference. 119 people attended the two-day event at Marymount University in Arlington, VA. We heard from two excellent keynote speakers, Gerard Lawson, professor at VA Tech and President of ACA, and Deb Del Vecchio-Scully of Newtown, CT. Both of those speakers, along with many of the speakers in breakout sessions, gave good information about helping children and adolescents recover from large-scale tragedies in our communities.

Although neither Gerard nor Deb focused on natural disasters, many of the tips they gave are appropriate now as we go back to school following hurricanes Harvey and Irma. Many counselors may also be struggling with the implications of the possible end of DACA, the Dreamers Act, which could lead to thousands of young people being deported to countries they have never seen before. Altogether,
this has been a rough start to the traditional school year.

A few resources you might find helpful in serving students or clients following hurricanes and policy changes are listed here, in no particular order. These are my personal favorites, I keep all of these bookmarked for quick access:

1. The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) has a trove of excellent free resources for parents and professionals, including information on post-hurricane responses. [www.nctsn.org](http://www.nctsn.org)

2. SAMHSA stores an enormous trove of publications about mental health, including child and adolescent issues. It can be a little overwhelming, but also very helpful. One of the best supports SAMHSA has developed recently may be the PFA (Psychological First Aid) app for smart phones. You can download it at no cost, and it has a lot of information to step you through providing assistance right after a disaster. I use the grounding exercises with adult clients all the time. [www.SAMHSA.gov](http://www.SAMHSA.gov)

3. Child Trends, an organization with a research focus, also maintains a large library of current resources, mainly for professionals. They have added new documents following Harvey and Irma. [www.childtrends.org](http://www.childtrends.org)

4. For those of you working with pk-12 schools, the site [https://traumasensitiveschools.org](https://traumasensitiveschools.org) offers an array of resources, including two free manuals on making your school trauma-sensitive for all students. Likewise, the University of Maryland’s Center for School Mental Health has a page full of links and documents to help students deal with natural disasters: [http://csmh.umaryland.edu/Resources/Resources-for-Clinicians/#d.en.104287](http://csmh.umaryland.edu/Resources/Resources-for-Clinicians/#d.en.104287)

5. DACA anxieties are addressed specifically by the National Education Association, here: [http://educationvotes.nea.org/neaedjustice/daca-resources](http://educationvotes.nea.org/neaedjustice/daca-resources)

6. Finally, students or clients who were already experiencing gender or sex-based discrimination before Harvey, Irma, and the possible end of DACA are likely having an even harder time now. A great resource for helping LGBTQIA youth is The Trevor Project, which maintains a 24/7 crisis hotline and has a library of links and documents for allies, parents, professionals, and youth: [http://www.thetrevorproject.org/](http://www.thetrevorproject.org/)

In addition to doing an excellent job of supporting young people, I sincerely hope you’re all taking some time to care for your selves—and
not just superficially. I like pedicures, too, but they aren’t deep enough self-care to remedy the assaults on
your senses that hurricanes, deportations, and general job/life stress can deliver. Treating yourself is great, but
truly caring for and repairing your exhausted inner healer takes a bit more focus and effort than just getting a
great new hairdo (not that you shouldn’t do that, too!).

One of the messages both Gerard and Deb repeated to us several times this summer was the importance of
finding support within your community. If you often work in an isolated position, in a solo private practice, or
as the only counselor in a school, for example, it’s really crucial to develop social ties with colleagues outside
of the workplace to help diffuse daily stress. Even if you have a dozen great counselors surrounding you 40
hours a week, you still may need to dig in deeper in order to feel supported and heard during hard times.

Creating a community for the purpose of mutual self-care does take work, but it can be stress-reducing in
itself. Consider making a Facebook page or use other social media to link colleagues who are in your area.
This is something I’ve recently begun working on in my little town, where it’s very easy to feel alone. In the
past 12 months, we’ve lost two seasoned therapists and it’s taken quite a toll on the rest of us. Invite some
colleagues to an event, maybe an after-work social at a local restaurant or in someone’s home, and get the ball
rolling. It’s ok to invite other counselors you haven’t met yet; expanding your network is always helpful. If
you’re feeling isolated, now is the time to start pulling in your network. Don’t wait until after the next big
thing happens, that’s when you’ll need to use that network of care the most.

ACAC 2017 Inaugural Conference
ACAC 2017 Inaugural Conference
ACAC 2017 Inaugural Conference
Positive Pieces of Me: A Self-Esteem Affirmations Activity for Adolescents

Kellie Giorgio Camelford

Erin Dugan

Krystal Vaughn

Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center—New Orleans

In the counseling field, self-esteem is viewed as an important aspect of human development. Self-esteem can be defined as an honest, accurate, appreciative opinion of oneself that can be viewed on a continuum between self-defeating shame and self-defeating pride (Schiraldi, 2001). Research suggested that self-esteem changes throughout a person's life cycle, yet there is a noticeable decline in self-esteem during adolescence (Robins & Trzesniewski, 2005).

Particularly, in adolescence, self-esteem is affected by age, race, ethnicity, puberty, body weight, and involvement in activities (Myers, Willse, & Villalba, 2011). In addition, Myers, Willse, and Villalba (2011) concluded low self-esteem was linked to poor health and social relationships. Such affects may cause future implications into adulthood. Erol and Orth (2011) found low self-esteem was correlated to lower economic well-being and higher levels of criminal activity in young adults. Based on these risk factors, counselors need to consider how to incorporate therapeutic work focused on self-esteem so that adolescents can develop a healthy self-esteem and portrayal of self. Additionally, Myers, Willse, and Villalba (2011) believed interventions regarding self-esteem should focus on early adolescents because in later adolescence or adulthood, self-esteem levels have already normalized. This article will highlight a creative arts activity counselors can use with adolescents in individual, group, or school counseling related to developing positive self-esteem.

Often times it is hard for adolescent clients to state positive qualities about themselves; therefore, a common activity for self-esteem building is the usage of positive affirmations. Positive affirmations are words or statements that help adolescents to rewire their brains by breaking the cycle of negative thoughts and
replacing them with positive or rational beliefs from a cognitive behavioral perspective (McKay & Fanning, 2000). Examples of affirmations include words, such as “radiant,” “powerful,” or “graceful;” or phrases, such as “I’m healthy and safe,” “I’m beautiful,” “I can handle anything that comes my way.”

One creative activity utilized for self-esteem building with adolescents is entitled “Positive Pieces of Me” that allows clients to create their own puzzle with each puzzle piece or clusters of puzzle pieces denoting a positive word, symbol, or affirmation. Blank puzzles may be purchased or printed online. Depending on the setting or client, the activity is used based on the directive approach, but can be varied on the conscious or unconscious dimensions depending on whether the therapist is focused on accessing the client’s insight or awareness. From a directive approach using the conscious dimension, the counselor gives the client specific prompts to write or draw about on each puzzle piece. For example, “Square one write your favorite quality about yourself…square 12 write something you are good at…square 23 write your favorite thing.” From a directive approach using the unconscious dimension, the counselor gives the client the blank puzzle pieces and assigns the overall task for the client to write or draw something positive on each puzzle piece. Once each puzzle piece or cluster has a positive affirmation, the client can then assemble the puzzle to see how these different qualities create self-esteem. The client is encouraged to bring the puzzle home and reflect on it by reassembling the puzzle on different days or times.

To make the puzzle activity more engaging, the counselor should consider the following materials to use for the activity. Counselors may purchase blank puzzles from stores, such as Oriental Trading, for a low cost (24 blank puzzles for $9.99) or may create blank puzzles from office supplies or recycled materials such as blank cardstock, cardboard, or foam poster board using a puzzle template you can print from online. The client will need crayons, colored pencils, or markers to write or draw their symbols, words, and affirmations. In addition, having materials such as glitter, stickers, or magazines are beneficial for those clients who may be creatively inhibited. For some clients who do not like to write or draw, these materials allow for them to make a collage of positive thoughts from magazine clippings or stickers.
In adolescence, increased developmental changes regarding self-esteem occur based on many variables, including physical, environmental, and social changes. Through practicing positive affirmations, adolescents can build their self-esteem so that they can develop a positive and confident self-outlook. The activity shared in this article gives clinicians just one example of how to incorporate positive affirmations into counseling with adolescents with a more hands-on approach to engage the younger client.

References


Creativity in cross-cultural supervision is the need of the day with an increasing number of
international students who choose to study in the United States demands counseling supervisors to be
culturally aware and insightful (Gaskell, 2006). U.S. Census Bureau (2015) predicts a rise of minority
population to 56 percent of the total in 2060 as compared with 38 percent in 2014. It is expected by 2060, the
foreign-born population of the nation would reach approximately 19 percent of the total population. Due to
increase number of diverse population in counseling and supervision, there will be an increase in cross-
cultural supervision too, where one of the member of supervision is from a different ethnicity.

Researchers have sought to understand the reasons for conflicts in cross-cultural supervision,
especially in terms of verbal and non-verbal communication patterns. Scarce suggestions have been made so
far to implement creative interventions as a way to improve communication, self-awareness, and supervisory
relationships in cross-cultural supervision. Literature searches generate no articles in perceptions of
supervisors or supervisees who participate in creative supervision and the influence creative supervision has
on counselor development. Alternatively, most research studies, qualitative in nature, have focused on
understanding traditional approaches (like review video recordings, role plays, etc.) that may enhance
supervisory relationships. Hence, it is necessary to study the need for different creative interventions that are
non-traditional and non-threatening in nature that facilitates communication process between supervisors and
supervisees and facilitates supervisory alliance in cross-cultural supervision. Studying how supervisors use
creative approaches in cross-cultural supervision would help the supervisors become insightful and broaden
horizons. Also, creative supervisors consider to be helpful and useful in their supervisory experiences to
provide more culturally responsive services in cross-cultural supervision.

Therefore, it becomes imperative that appropriate creative intervention is used in cross-cultural
supervision.
Call for Papers

We invite the submission of articles for the 2018 Spring ACAC Newsletter. Articles are due by March 26th, 2018. Articles should be 1-2 pages in length and use recent scholarly sources. Due to confidentiality constraints, we do not accept case studies. If you wish to submit an article that is in case study format, please submit hypothetical cases only and include a statement that describes the case as such. Submit articles as an attachment with the heading 2018 Spring ACAC Newsletter to mayfield.peggyc@gmail.com.