



**Robert E. Smith School of  
Nursing, Health, and Sciences**  
*Division of Counselor Education*

*44th* Annual F.E. Woodall  
Spring Conference  
for the Helping Professions

**Friday, March 27, 2026**

*1003 W. Sunflower Road, Ewing Hall  
Cleveland, MS 38733*

[www.deltastate.edu/woodall](http://www.deltastate.edu/woodall)  
[woodallconference@deltastate.edu](mailto:woodallconference@deltastate.edu)

# **WELCOME TO THE 44<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL F.E. WOODALL SPRING CONFERENCE FOR THE HELPING PROFESSIONS**

In 1981, Dr. Fred E. Woodall developed the Spring Conference for the Helping Professions as part of Delta State University's Division of Counselor Education & Psychology. From those beginnings, the conference has been a means of helping counseling students develop areas of expertise by providing essential information, support, and networking opportunities to helping professionals in the region. The conference offers professionals in a variety of helping fields the opportunity to attend interesting and informative workshops at a nominal cost.



***In Memoriam  
Dr. Fred E. Woodall  
1944-2005***

## **Special Thanks To:**

### **Woodall Conference Committee Members:**

Darla Poole-Coordinator, Dr. Mary Bess Pannel, Dr. Maegan Tatum,  
Dr. Kate Johnson, Dr. Maike Holleck, Dr. Jana Donahoe, and Dr. Brandy Smith

Anna Claire Winstead, Graduate Assistant

Allison Neel, Graduate Assistant

Delta Sigma Upsilon Chapter of Chi Sigma Iota Honor Society

Student Volunteers, Presenters, and Faculty

DSU Division of Counselor Education and the  
Robert E. Smith School of Nursing, Health, & Sciences

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## **Exhibitors - 3rd Floor, Ewing Hall**

[The ACT Center](#) | [Catholic Charities/Kinship Navigator](#) | [Center for Behavioral Health \(USM\)](#) | [DSU Chi Sigma Iota Honor Society](#) | [Child Health & Developmental Promotion Fellowship \(UMMC\)](#) | [College of Nursing, Health, & Sciences \(DSU\)](#) | [CompassionWorks](#) | [Disability Rights Mississippi](#) | [Gulf South Center for Community Engaged Health Research & Innovation](#) | [Megan M. Hamm, LLC](#) | [Mississippi Association for Play Therapy \(MAAPT\)](#) | [Mississippi College Graduate Admissions](#) | [Mississippi Counseling Association](#) | [MS Youth Challenge Academy](#) | [NuVisions Transformative Wellness](#) | [Our House, Inc.](#) | [Pine Belt Mental Healthcare Resources](#) | [Plan A Health](#) | [Pyscamore Psychiatric Programs](#) | [Region 6 Life Help](#) | [The Collective Feels](#) | [Youth Villages, Inc.](#)

# **Continuing Education**

Please access the links below to complete CE Request/Evaluation Forms. We recommend keeping the link and form open all day so you can continuously fill out each session you attend. Alternatively, you may write down each session title and code, and complete the form at the end of the day during the closing session.

Please note that the Conference Evaluation/CE Request form is required for all attendees to receive credit, per the NBCC Continuing Education Provider Policy. If the form is not submitted at the end of the conference, we cannot guarantee that you will be able to receive your CE credits.

## **ALL PARTICIPANTS:**

**Please submit your Conference Evaluation/CE Request  
Microsoft Form at the end of the conference!**

<https://forms.office.com/r/S9RwPyAqc3>

## **Important Information**

**Social Workers:** An additional \$25 is added to your general ticket purchase to process Social Work CEUs. Forms will be processed by the Department of Social Work and sent to Dr. Jana Donahoe for processing. Your certificate will be emailed; please make sure your email is accurate.

**School Counselors and Other School Personnel:** An additional \$15 is added to your general ticket purchase for processing MDE credits. In addition to the Conference Evaluation/CE Request form, please complete the MDE Continuing Education Application (linked below) to receive credit. Forms will be processed by the Department of Continuing Education and sent to Marilyn Read for processing. Certificates will be mailed physically.

- MDE Application for CE Credit: <https://forms.office.com/r/jwWTFZBNEL>

**All Attendees:** Please allow 6-8 weeks for all certificates to be sent.

*The DSU Division of Counselor Education has been approved by NBCC as an Approved Continuing Education Provider, ACEP No. 4306. Programs that do not qualify for NBCC credit are clearly identified. The Division of Counselor Education is solely responsible for all aspects of the programs.*

## **DSU Chi Sigma Iota Fundraiser**

Please consider contributing to the Delta Sigma Upsilon chapter of Chi Sigma Iota (CSI) Honor Society through this year's fundraiser! All proceeds directly benefit DSU CSI, its members, and professional development opportunities like the Woodall Conference.

**Counselor T-Shirts: \$25 each**



# Schedule of Sessions

**8:30 – 9:00:** Check-In – Jacob Conference Center (JCC)

- Complimentary Coffee and Water
- DSU Chi Sigma Iota Fundraiser

**9:00 – 10:00:** 6 Breakout Sessions

- JCC: NO SESSION
- 118: ACT in Action: A Practical Introduction to Psychological Flexibility for Clinicians
- 209/210: 2026 Law & Ethics for Mental Health Counselors
- 224: It Still Takes a Village: Counseling African American Males in Today's Society
- 315: The Counselor's Corner: Building Visibility, Trust, and Emotional Support Systems in Schools
- 331: Delta State Site Supervisor Training
- 334: Quality of Life Improvement: How Nurses and the Helping Professions Bridge the Gap

**10:10 – 11:40:** Keynote Session (Jacob Conference Center)

- Welcome from **President Ennis and Faculty**
- Meet the Speaker: **Dr. Jinnelle V. Powell**
- *Connection is the Intervention: The Power of Relational Healing and Brain-Based Change*

**11:40 – 1:10:** Lunch on Your Own

- For dining recommendations, visit: <https://www.visitclevelandms.com/dining>.

**1:10 – 2:10:** 7 Breakout Sessions

- JCC: Compassion Fatigue to Compassion Vitality: Our Ethical Responsibility
- 118: The "I Feel" Project and Working with African American Males
- 209/210: The Process of Reparenting Ourselves and Others
- 224: From Conflict to Collaboration: Making Parents True Partners in Treatment
- 315: Child and Adolescent Threat Assessment and Violence Risk Management for Helping Professionals
- 331: Advocacy and Leadership Within the Mississippi Delta
- 334: We Listen and We Don't Judge: Counseling Edition

**2:20 – 3:20:** 7 Breakout Sessions

- JCC: Affirmative Counseling: Toward a New Ethical Paradigm
- 118: From Burnout to Balance: Practical Tools for Helping Professionals to Sustain Impact Without Self-Sacrifice
- 209/210: Unveiling the Mask: Autism Spectrum Disorder within Multicultural and Latino Communities

- 224: Connection at a Distance: A Relational Cultural Approach to Virtual Supervision
- 315: K-12 Behavior Interventions that Work
- 331: Adulthood is Tough: How to Counsel Those Moving Towards Careers
- 334: Holding Space Without Losing Yourself: Preventing Burnout Across Helping Roles (Part 1)

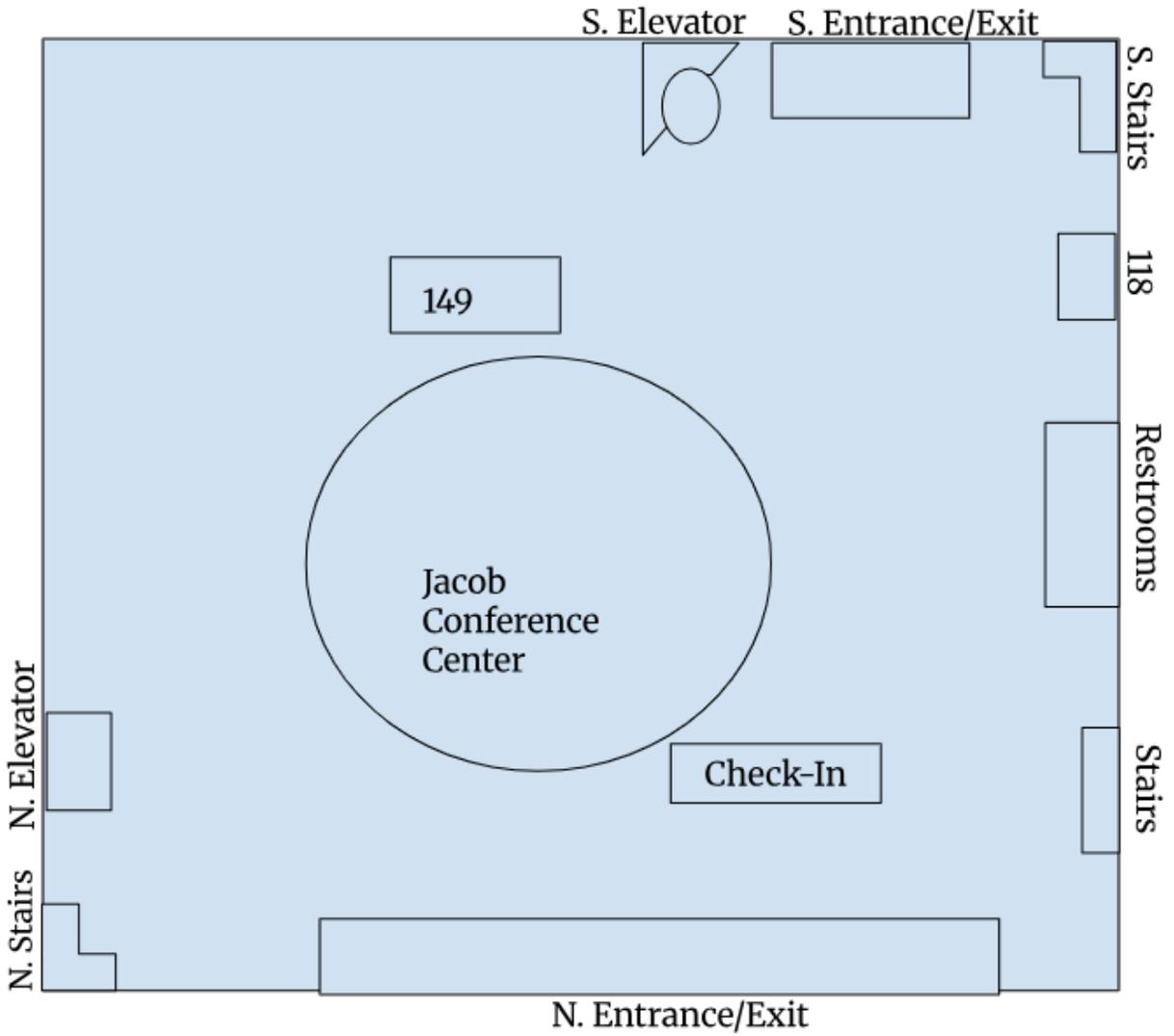
**3:30 – 4:30:** 7 Breakout Sessions

- JCC: Supervision & Ethics: P-LPC as Supervisor: What Could Go Wrong?
- 118: Inoculating Against Burnout
- 209/210: From Ethics to Action: Building Personal Wellness Plans Using the Indivisible Self Model
- 224: Cultural Diversity Theories
- 315: Counseling the Whole Child: Brain-Based Tools for Emotional Regulation
- 331: Helping Clients Understand Overspending through Fear, Desire, and Self-Connection: An Inner-Work Approach for the Helping Professions
- 334: Beyond Burnout: Nervous System-Informed Self-Care for Helping Professionals (Part 2)

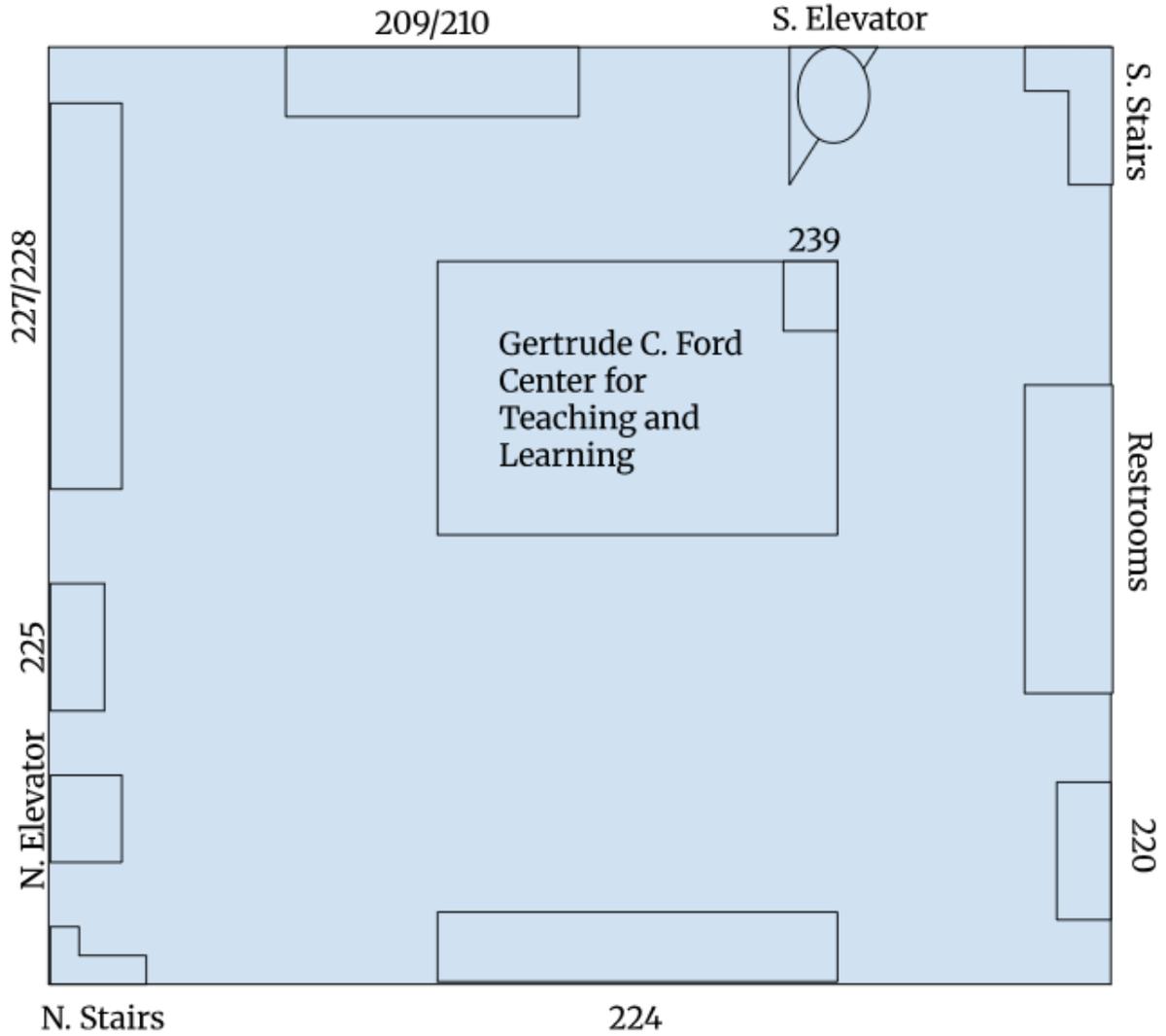
**4:30 – 5:00:** Evaluation Submission & Closing Remarks

- Meet back at the Jacob Conference Center for evaluation, CE submission, and closing remarks!

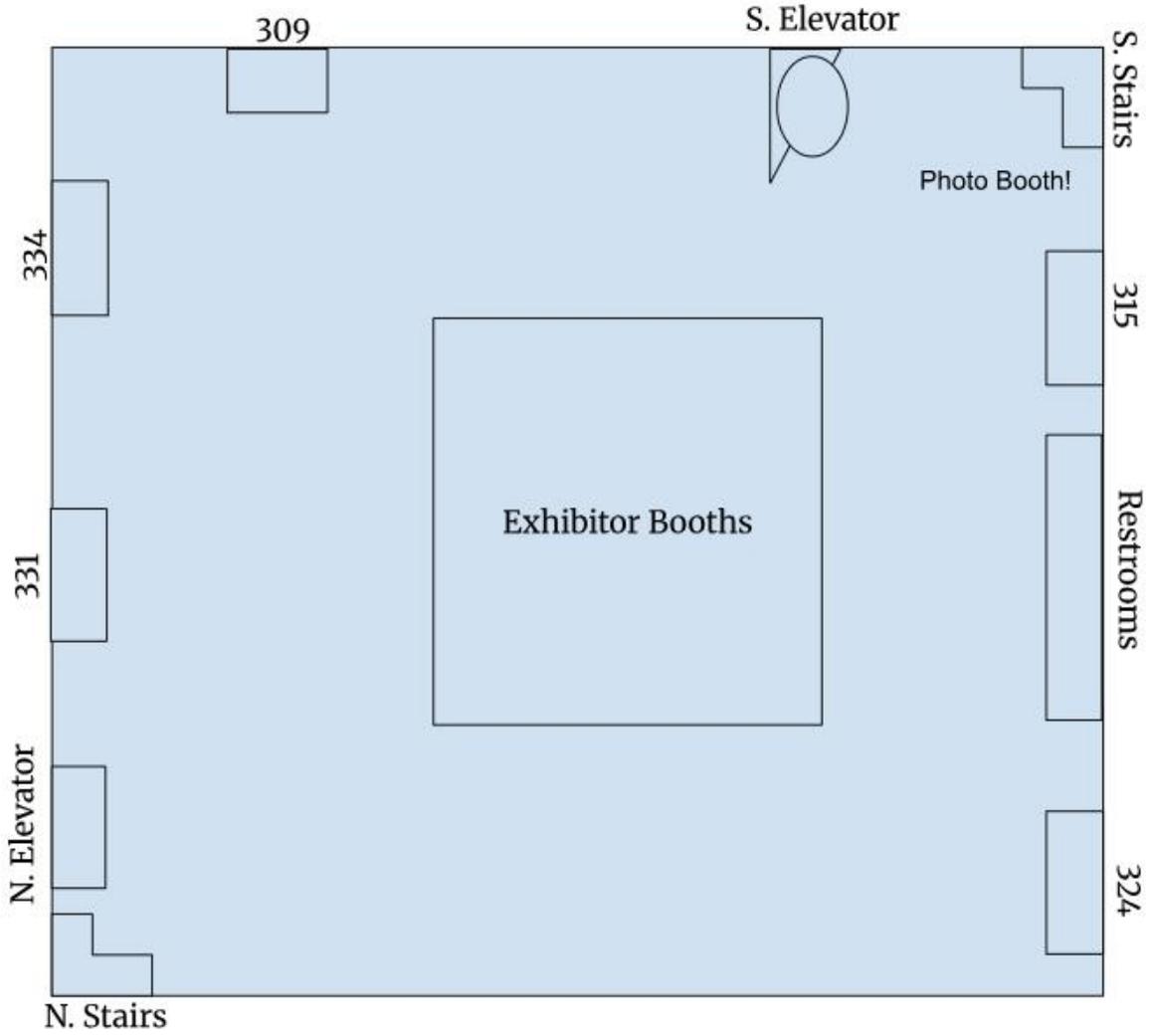
# 1st Floor of Ewing Map



# 2nd Floor of Ewing Map



# 3rd Floor of Ewing Map



# Schedule-at-a-Glance

ATTN: Please proceed to your first breakout session prior to the keynote address.								
		JCC	118	209/210	224	315	331	334
MORNING SESSIONS	9:00-10:00	NO SESSION	ACT in Action: A Practical Introduction to Psychological Flexibility for Clinicians	2026 Law & <b>Ethics</b> for Mental Health Counselors	If Still Takes a Village: Counseling African American Males in Today's Society	The Counselor's Corner: Building Visibility, Trust, and Emotional Support Systems in Schools	Delta State <b>Site Supervisor</b> Training	Quality of Life Improvement: How Nurses and the Helping Professions Bridge the Gap
	<b>Jacob Conference Center (JCC)</b>							
MORNING SESSIONS	10:10-11:40	<p>and Beyond <span style="margin-left: 100px;">Welcome from <b>President Ennis</b> and <b>Faculty</b></span></p> <p><b>Keynote Address:</b></p> <p>Connection is the Intervention: The Power of Relational Healing and Brain-Based Change  <b>Dr. Jinnelle V. Powell</b>, Assistant Professor of Counselor Education, Texas A&amp;M University                      Founder &amp; CEO, Distinctive Counseling &amp; Consulting, PLLC</p>						
	11:40-1:10	<p><b>LUNCH ON YOUR OWN</b></p> <p>Enjoy your extended lunch break!                      For dining recommendations, visit: <a href="https://www.visitclevelandms.com/dining">https://www.visitclevelandms.com/dining</a>.                      Check out the DSU Chi Sigma Iota Fundraiser throughout the day!</p>						
LUNCH								

**NEW** @ Woodall: *Brain Breaks* 🧠 | Sponsored by MCA Delta Region

**Ethics & Supervision CEs are in bold**

\*No Social Work Credit

**Supervision – Blue**

**Ethics – Red**

**School Counseling – Green**

**Telehealth – yellow**

		JCC	118	209/210	224	315	331	334
<b>AFTERNOON SESSIONS</b>	1:10-2:10	Compassion Fatigue to Compassion Vitality: Our <b>Ethical</b> Responsibility	The "I Feel" Project and Working with African American Males	The Process of Reparenting Ourselves and Others	From Conflict to Collaboration: Making Parents True Partners in Treatment	<b>Child and Adolescent Threat Assessment and Violence Risk Management for Helping Professionals</b>	Advocacy and Leadership Within the Mississippi Delta	We Listen and We Don't Judge: Counseling Edition
	2:20-3:20	Affirmative Counseling: Toward a New <b>Ethical</b> Paradigm	From Burnout to Balance: Practical Tools for Helping Professionals to Sustain Impact Without Self-Sacrifice	Unveiling the Mask: Autism Spectrum Disorder within Multicultural and Latino Communities	Connection at a Distance: A Relational Cultural Approach to <b>Virtual Supervision</b>	<b>K-12 Behavior Interventions that Work</b>	Adulting is Tough: How to Counsel Those Moving Towards Careers	Holding Space Without Losing Yourself: Preventing Burnout Across Helping Roles (Part 1)
	3:30-4:30	<b>Supervision</b> & <b>Ethics</b> : P-LPC as Supervisor: What Could Go Wrong?	Inoculating Against Burnout	From <b>Ethics</b> to Action: Building Personal Wellness Plans Using the Indivisible Self Model	Cultural Diversity Theories	<b>Counseling the Whole Child: Brain-Based Tools for Emotional Regulation</b>	Helping Clients Understand Overspending through Fear, Desire, and Self-Connection: An Inner-Work Approach for the Helping Professions	Beyond Burnout: Nervous System-Informed Self-Care for Helping Professionals (Part 2)
Meet back at the Jacob Conference Center for evaluation, CE submission, & closing remarks!								

Full-size Schedule-at-a-Glance will be included in conference gift bags!

**Ethics & Supervision CEs are in bold**

**Supervision – Blue**

**Ethics – Red**

**School Counseling – Green**

**Telehealth – yellow**

\*No Social Work Credit

# **Keynote & Breakout Sessions**

**9:00-10:00**

**Ewing 118**

## **ACT in Action: A Practical Introduction to Psychological Flexibility for Clinicians**

John Hawkins, EdS, LPC-S

Professional counselors frequently encounter clients who remain stuck despite applying evidence-based interventions. Often, the obstacle is not the therapeutic approach itself, but the client's rigid patterns of experiential avoidance—attempting to control or eliminate uncomfortable internal experiences, which paradoxically intensifies suffering. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) addresses this knowledge gap by targeting psychological inflexibility as a core transdiagnostic process underlying anxiety, depression, trauma responses, and numerous other presenting problems.

This experiential workshop introduces ACT's evidence-based framework through guided exercises and clinical demonstrations rather than traditional lecture format. Participants will directly experience key ACT processes including cognitive defusion (changing one's relationship with thoughts rather than thought content), acceptance (willingness to experience difficult emotions), and values-based committed action. The session demonstrates practical interventions including the "Hands as Thoughts" exercise, defusion techniques applicable across clinical populations, and values clarification methods that motivate behavioral change. Clinical case examples illustrate how to recognize psychological inflexibility patterns during intake and conceptualization.

Participants will leave with immediately applicable techniques for therapeutic practice, understanding of how ACT complements their current theoretical orientation, and resources for pursuing additional training. By experiencing ACT's unique approach firsthand, clinicians will gain new tools for clients stuck in avoidance patterns, expand their conceptualization framework to include psychological flexibility, and discover an evidence-based transdiagnostic approach that enhances treatment outcomes across diverse clinical presentations. This introduction is designed to demonstrate ACT's distinctive contributions and inspire further professional development in this increasingly utilized therapeutic model.

### Learning Objectives:

- 1) Demonstrate at least two cognitive defusion techniques (including the "thought labeling" and "word repetition" methods) and explain how these interventions differ from cognitive restructuring by focusing on changing one's relationship with thoughts rather than changing thought content.
- 2) Identify the six core processes of psychological inflexibility in client case presentations and distinguish between adaptive coping strategies and experiential avoidance patterns that maintain psychological distress.
- 3) Apply one ACT intervention in clinical practice and articulate how ACT's transdiagnostic approach to psychological flexibility complements existing therapeutic framework.

9:00-10:00

Ewing 209/210

### **2026 Law & Ethics for Mental Health Counselors**

Hollie Moore, MEd, LPC, NCC, BC-TMH

Counseling professionals must maintain familiarity with legal rules and ethical guidelines impacting the profession so that they can aptly apply that knowledge to real world dilemmas that arise in a counseling practice. Likewise, counseling professionals should be familiar with emerging legal and ethical issues they could potentially confront in practice. Through a series of vignettes, the presenter will review hypothetical legal and ethical issues which could arise in a private counseling practice, a clinical mental health setting, or a college counseling practice. Attendees may use an interactive digital poll tool to participate in the hypothetical ethical decision-making processes provided in the vignettes. Through discussion of the vignettes and polling results, as well through use of information in a PowerPoint presentation, attendees will receive a general overview of major ethical rules and laws affecting the counseling profession, as well as how to apply ethical codes and laws to real life situations. Finally, participants will learn about emerging ethical and legal issues they could face in the counseling profession.

Learning Objectives:

- 1) Discuss vignette with legal/ethical issues involving assessment/evaluation and informed consent in a community mental health setting, and successfully apply the legal and ethical rules discussed in the session in counseling practice.
- 2) Discuss vignette with legal/ethical issues involving boundaries/inappropriate relationships and cultural competence in a private practice counseling group, and successfully apply the legal and ethical rules discussed in the session in counseling practice.
- 3) Discuss vignette with legal/ethical issues involving third party reporting/client autonomy and proper documentation in a college counseling setting, and successfully apply the legal and ethical rules discussed in the session in counseling practice.

9:00-10:00

Ewing 224

### **It Still Takes a Village: Counseling African American Males in Today's Society**

Lakitta Johnson, PhD, LPC-S; Alfonzo Haralson, PhD, LPC-S; Regina McMurtery, PhD, LPC-S;  
Student Presenters: Kimar Cain, Artiko Greer, Dmarius Jones, Matthias Wilson, Anthony Young, Jalon Redmond

African American men continue to distrust mental health therapists and underutilize counseling services. This results in many African American males living with undiagnosed mental illnesses, making it challenging for them to cope with everyday life (Hankerson, S. H., Suite, D., & Bailey, R. K., 2015). According to Lee and Butler (2024), several obstacles hinder African American men from accessing mental health services, including the stigma surrounding mental health treatment, societal norms that discourage the expression of vulnerability, and systemic racism. This presentation will highlight the need for integrated services to help raise awareness, normalize therapy, and increase access to a variety of services, enabling African American men to realize their full potential in today's society. In this session, you will gain valuable insights about African American males directly from their perspectives. We will share personal stories and practical tips

on how to support them effectively. The discussion will emphasize the importance of integrating community services, which include counseling, community organizations, schools, parents, and law enforcement.

Learning Objectives:

- 1) Discuss African American males' perspective on mental health counseling.
- 2) List a variety of resources/services to help African American males.
- 3) Demonstrate tips to help support African American males.

**9:00-10:00**

**Ewing 315**

### **The Counselor's Corner: Building Visibility, Trust, and Emotional Support Systems in Schools**

Cassandra Brower, MEd – School Counselor

School counselors play a vital role in bridging emotional, behavioral, and academic support within schools—yet their work often remains unseen or misunderstood by teachers and administrators. This presentation addresses the ongoing gap in counselor visibility and collaborative engagement across educational settings, emphasizing how strategic visibility not only enhances advocacy but also strengthens emotional support systems for both students and staff.

Through a practice-focused lens, this session integrates evidence-based strategies from the American School Counselor Association (ASCA, 2021) and recent research on counselor–teacher collaboration (Amatea & Clark, 2005; Geesa et al., 2024). Participants will explore practical methods for increasing counselor visibility through creative communication, intentional collaboration, and leadership within Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS). The session also examines the counselor's role in co-regulation and emotional support during student or teacher overload, offering real-world tools, case examples, and consultation frameworks adaptable to various school contexts.

By the end of the session, participants will understand how intentional visibility and emotional steadiness intersect to foster stronger school climates, improve consultation outcomes, and expand equitable access to services. Attendees will leave with practical templates, strategies, and renewed confidence to become both visible leaders and calm anchors within their schools.

Learning Objectives:

- 1) Identify and explain research-supported strategies for increasing school counselor visibility, including communication practices, collaborative routines, and leadership behaviors that strengthen their presence within the school community.
- 2) Apply evidence-based co-regulation and consultation strategies to support teachers and students during moments of emotional overload, using structured steps, sample scripts, and real-world scenarios.
- 3) Design a personalized visibility-and-support action plan by selecting at least one visibility strategy and one emotional-support technique to implement in their own school setting.

**9:00-10:00**

**Ewing 331**

### **Delta State Site Supervisor Training**

Dr. Maegan J. Tatum, PhD, LPC-S, NCC, BC-TMH

Site supervisors provide valuable insight to counselors-in-training through their practicum and internship experiences. However, many site supervisors are often unaware of all the requirements of being a site supervisor. This presentation will focus on the ins-and-outs of site supervision at Delta State University. Participants will review and discuss models of supervision, requirements of site supervisors and counselors-in-training, and explore use of Supervision Assist, the online program for tracking students' progress through practicum and internship. \* This presentation is for current and future DSU site supervisors ONLY.

Learning Objectives:

- 1) Review and discuss models of supervision including developmental, integrative, and orientation-specific models.
- 2) Review of site supervisor and student requirements outlined in the Field Experience Guide and the 2024 CACREP Standards.
- 3) Explore and review Supervision Assist including setting up an account, and uploading documentation.

**9:00-10:00**

**Ewing 334**

### **Quality of Life Improvement: How Nurses and the Helping Professions Bridge the Gap**

Mari Micci Shannon, DNP, APRN, FNP-C

Structured walking programs are generally implemented as the first-line treatment of symptomatic peripheral arterial disease patients (Mays et al., 2013). However, detailed recommendations and guidelines are not clearly defined. Additionally, many patients in our area are not members of gyms and therefore lack access to treadmills or tracks that measure distance, as well as pedometers or fitness watches. To appropriately determine the direct benefits of a structured walking program on pain and pain-free walking duration, an eight-week daily program based on evidence-based practice was implemented in a rural outpatient endovascular center in Mississippi. Participants were instructed to walk daily until symptom onset and then continue to walk one minute further. Data trends were monitored through participants' self-reported numeric pain scale ratings and pain-free walking duration, which were documented on a daily activity log. Data analysis was performed using a repeated-measures t-test, demonstrating a statistically significant improvement in both numeric pain scale ratings and pain-free walking duration. Patients were able to complete the walking program regardless of their living or financial situation, and the benefits of a structured walking program for symptomatic peripheral arterial disease were demonstrated. Additionally, many patients reported significant improvements in mental health and stress levels through the exercise program. Regular physical activity is associated with improved mood, reduced symptoms of anxiety and depression, and enhanced overall psychological well-being. Increased mobility and functional independence may also contribute to improved self-efficacy and perceived quality

of life. Collectively, these findings suggest that structured walking interventions may provide both physiological and psychosocial benefits for patients with peripheral arterial disease.

Learning Objectives:

- 1) Explain the negative impact peripheral arterial disease has on mental health and quality of life.
- 2) Explain the benefits of physical exercise on peripheral arterial disease symptoms, as well as mental health and quality of life.

**10:10-11:40**

**Jacob Conference Center**

## **Keynote Session**

### **Connection is the Intervention: The Power of Relational Healing and Brain-Based Change**

*Dr. Jinnelle V. Powell, PhD, LPC-S, EMDRIA Trainer & Consultant*  
Assistant Professor of Counselor Education, Texas A&M University  
Founder & CEO at Distinctive Counseling & Consulting, PLLC

This keynote centers Relational Cultural Theory as a foundational framework for understanding healing through connection, drawing on the work of Jean Baker Miller, Judith Jordan, Irene Stiver, and Carol Gilligan. Dr. Powell traces the historical roots of RCT, including Miller's early use of the term affiliation in *Toward a New Psychology of Women* and Gilligan's *In a Different Voice*, highlighting how connection emerged as a core driver of psychological growth.

Integrating Common Factors Theory, trauma-informed care, EMDR, and contemporary neuroscience, participants will explore how relational safety, mutual empathy, and cultural responsiveness function as active mechanisms of change in counseling. The session examines emerging research, including the U.S. Surgeon General's report on the epidemic of loneliness, to underscore the public health and neurobiological consequences of disconnection.

Attendees will learn how experiences of exclusion, marginalization, and otherness activate the same neural networks associated with physical pain, and how growth-fostering relationships can regulate the nervous system, support adaptive information processing, and promote resilience and hope. Through research, clinical illustration, and reflection, participants will gain insight into how relational healing reshapes both the brain and therapeutic outcomes for individuals, families, and communities.

**Speaker Bio:** Dr. Jinnelle V. Powell brings nearly two decades of experience serving Texas child welfare agencies, community mental health centers, and families navigating the complex effects of trauma. Her work is grounded in an integration of neuroscience and Relational Cultural Theory, highlighting how healing unfolds through connection, mutual empathy, and the steady presence of growth-fostering relationships. As an EMDR Trainer, Consultant, and Certified Therapist, she specializes in supporting trauma survivors, especially those living with chronic and developmental trauma, and she helps emerging counselors strengthen trauma-responsive skills rooted in both brain-based science and relational compassion. As the Founder and CEO of Distinctive Counseling & Consulting, Dr. Powell leads a multidisciplinary team of twenty clinicians offering EMDR therapy, play therapy, individual, couples, and family counseling for children, adolescents, and adults. Her leadership continues to advance community well-being through innovative, accessible services. In 2024, she received a

\$70,000 grant from Heart Galleries of Texas to expand free EMDR and play therapy services for families formed through kinship care or adoption. Thanks to this work, eight clinicians received specialized EMDR training to serve these families. Building on this momentum, Distinctive Counseling & Consulting was awarded an additional \$95,000 Heart Galleries of Texas grant in 2025, allowing Dr. Powell to further broaden trauma-informed support, strengthen family stability, and deepen the agency's commitment to accessible mental health care.

Dr. Powell's doctoral training in Counselor Education and Supervision shapes her scholarship, supervision, and program development. Her work emphasizes the interconnectedness of relational healing, nervous system regulation, and cultural humility within the counseling process. Through the Distinctive Collective, Inc., her nonprofit organization dedicated to expanding access to mental health services, she champions research, free counseling, advocacy, and professional support for mental health providers across Texas.

## LUNCH BREAK 11:40-1:10

For dining recommendations, visit: <https://www.visitclevelandms.com/dining>.

1:10-2:10

Jacob Conference Center

### Compassion Fatigue to Compassion Vitality: Our Ethical Responsibility

George R. Beals, PhD, LPC-S (S), LPC (AL), BC-TMH; Miki Christy, MS, LPC-S, BC-TMH; HCHT

Helping professionals routinely hold space for the pain, trauma, and complexity of others, yet we often underestimate how profoundly our own nervous system state shapes the therapeutic encounter. Research in interpersonal neurobiology demonstrates that a clinician's dysregulated state—fatigue, overwhelm, or subtle stress—directly influences client perception, decision-making, and emotional regulation. Even when practitioners believe they are “holding it together,” clients still experience the therapist's internal state through nonverbal cues, micro-attunements, and the implicit nervous-system-to-nervous-system exchange. This reality carries ethical implications related to impairment, competence, and client welfare across counseling, social work, and allied helping professions.

This presentation reframes compassion fatigue not as a personal deficit but as a predictable physiological response that can be transformed into compassion vitality through intentional awareness and regulation. Participants will learn an Awareness Framework that maps the shift from survival-based functioning (“the basement”) to a state of creation, health, and possibility (“the penthouse”). Through breath-based nervous system regulation and a guided meditation, attendees will directly experience how their internal state influences presence, attunement, and therapeutic effectiveness. The session emphasizes that cultivating compassion vitality is not optional self-care—it is an ethical responsibility that protects clients, strengthens outcomes, and restores the practitioner's sense of purpose, clarity, and possibility.

Learning Objectives:

- 1) Describe how a provider's nervous system state influences client perception, decision-making, and the therapeutic process, including related ethical standards on practitioner impairment.
- 2) Differentiate between survival/stress functioning and creation/health functioning using the Awareness Framework.
- 3) Apply breath-based regulation and guided meditation practices to shift into a grounded, attuned therapeutic presence.

**1:10-2:10**

**Ewing 118**

### **The "I Feel" Project and Working with African American Males**

Dr. D'Lessia Wedley-McKenney, DMFT, LMFT

African American males have suffered in silence due to toxic masculinity, socialization, and life adversities (McAllister, Callaghan, & Fellin, 2019). As a result, many African American males have difficulty or even fear of expressing feelings, with some potentially even meeting the criteria for alexithymia (Jansen, 2020). Within the African American community, a mental health stigma prevents individuals from seeking treatment, causing them to "suffer in silence." This academic presentation will present the "I Feel Project, a thirteen-week program targeting the presence of alexithymia within African American males. The audience will be educated on the following concepts: feeling identification, masculinity, familial and behavioral patterns, communication, trauma, and attachment, and their systemic impact on the African American male population. The goal is for the audience to have a clear understanding of how generational trauma and a lack of cultural competence are reinforced in current psychotherapy methods, as well as the power and effectiveness of cultural components and responsive interventions.

Learning Objectives:

- 1) Discuss how masculinity norms, familial patterns, trauma, and attachment shape emotional expression among African American males.
- 2) Develop culturally responsive strategies that enhance emotional identification and communication within this population.
- 3) Identify key takeaways, clarify remaining questions, and locate relevant resources to support continued learning and application in clinical practice.

**1:10-2:10**

**Ewing 209/210**

### **The Process of Reparenting Ourselves and Others**

Lauren Simpson, MEd, P-LPC, NCC

A common issue recurring in counseling is the experience of complex childhood trauma. As professionals, we are not exempt from this reality and our past can serve as the key fueling our passion. Our work includes healing the inner child of ourselves and others. The inner child is a part of one's self that when unhealed and dysregulated can cause havoc in one's life. On the other hand, the inner child also provides a gateway to creativity, imagination, and connection.

Based on research and clinical experience from Pete Walker, Mark Brackett, and the Nagoski Sisters (Emily & Amelia) to name a few, this session will be used to explore how clinicians can

work within themselves as well as with clients on healing their inner child through the process of reparenting. While this work is aimed at healing the inner child, applications can be made to work with children, couples, and families through a variety of counseling modalities.

Learning Objectives:

- 1) Identify and discuss the process of reparenting.
- 2) Provide examples of strategies to be used at each stage of the reparenting model, including examples from one's own practice and experience.
- 3) Describe the role of the inner child in therapeutic healing from trauma, shame, and unmet attachment needs.

**1:10-2:10**

**Ewing 224**

### **From Conflict to Collaboration: Making Parents True Partners in Treatment**

Megan M. Hamm, EdS, LPC-S, Registered Play Therapist

Let's be honest — hard conversations with parents are one of the most emotionally charged parts of our work. Even experienced clinicians can find themselves feeling stuck, defensive, or quietly questioning their effectiveness when parents seem resistant, disengaged, or openly frustrated. When these moments go unaddressed, the cost is high: strained alliances, stalled progress, and families leaving treatment before real change has a chance to take hold. Yet many helping professionals enter practice with far more training in child interventions than in how to partner effectively with the adults who shape a child's world.

This practice-focused session offers a compassionate, trauma-informed approach to transforming difficult parent conversations into collaborative partnerships. Grounded in clinical experience and the GRACE framework, this presentation explores how trauma, power dynamics, and our own nervous systems influence what happens in high-conflict sessions. Through real-world case examples, brief demonstrations, and simple, usable language, participants will learn how to shift from managing resistance to building trust, curiosity, and shared ownership in treatment.

Participants will leave with practical tools they can use immediately. They will learn how to recognize patterns that escalate conflict, apply trauma-responsive communication strategies that reduce defensiveness, and reframe resistance as meaningful information rather than opposition. By the end of this session, participants will be able to identify key barriers to collaboration, implement specific strategies for navigating high-stakes conversations, and invite parents into authentic partnership.

This session is designed to strengthen therapeutic alliances, improve engagement and follow-through, and help helping professionals feel more confident, grounded, and effective in their work with children and families.

Learning Objectives:

- 1) Identify at least three common relational and trauma-related factors that contribute to conflict and resistance in parent sessions.
- 2) Apply trauma-informed communication strategies from the GRACE framework to de-escalate high-conflict conversations and strengthen collaboration with parents.
- 3) Reframe parent resistance as meaningful information and use it to build shared understanding, partnership, and more effective treatment planning.

**1:10-2:10**

**Ewing 315**

### **Child and Adolescent Threat Assessment and Violence Risk Management for Helping Professionals**

Mike Skirius, PhD, LPC-MHSP, CCMHC, NCC

Counselors and other helping professionals are increasingly encountering children and adolescents who express threats of violence or engage in concerning behaviors, yet many receive limited formal training in behavioral threat assessment and violence risk management. Counseling assessment practices have historically emphasized wellness, development, and the broader context of a client's functioning. Although these perspectives share important commonalities with threat assessment, they remain conceptually and functionally distinct from the prevention-oriented, behaviorally focused processes used in behavioral threat assessment. This presentation addresses this critical training gap by introducing evidence-informed principles of child and adolescent threat assessment tailored for school counselors and clinical mental health counselors.

Drawing on structured professional judgment frameworks and contemporary threat assessment literature, the session will differentiate behavioral threat assessment from traditional assessment practices commonly used in counseling. Participants will be guided through empirically supported warning behaviors associated with threats and targeted violence and will examine how these indicators inform clinical decision-making, consultation, and referral processes. The presentation will also address ethical and legal considerations central to counseling practice, including confidentiality, duty to protect, documentation, and information sharing within multidisciplinary threat assessment teams.

Through applied examples and case-based discussion, participants will learn how to integrate threat assessment concepts into their existing counseling roles without assuming forensic or law enforcement functions. The session emphasizes collaboration, prevention, and ethical boundary management, equipping helping professionals with practical strategies to enhance safety while maintaining therapeutic integrity. This presentation offers immediate applicability for counselors working in schools, community agencies, and clinical settings who seek to respond competently and ethically to threats of violence involving youth.

#### Learning Objectives:

- 1) Define behavioral threat assessment and violence risk assessment and differentiate these approaches from traditional assessment practices commonly used in counseling.
- 2) Identify and apply empirically supporting warning behaviors associated with threats and violence to clinical decision-making, consultation, and referral processes using structured professional judgment frameworks.

- 3) Demonstrate ethically and legally sound strategies for information sharing and collaboration with schools and multidisciplinary threat assessment teams while maintaining appropriate counseling boundaries.

**1:10-2:10**

**Ewing 331**

### **Advocacy and Leadership Within the Mississippi Delta**

Lamisha Johnson, EdS, NCC, NCSC – MCA Delta Region President; RobDreka Shaw-Shields, LPC-S, NCC, BC-TMH, CCTP; Mary Bess Pannel, PhD, LPC, NCC; Katie Jones, LPC, BC-TMH; Cleveland Phinisee, Jr., P-LPC, NCC

This presentation aims to encourage, empower, and motivate counselors working in rural communities to become effective leaders and advocates in the subject areas of mental and emotional health. There exist both strengths and limitations in rural counseling and it is vital to create amongst clinicians an atmosphere of cohesion, networking, and support all while exploring collaborative approaches for continual progression in advocacy and leadership opportunities.

A group discussion will encompass rural counselor needs, challenges, and concerns which will help advise the MCA Delta Region Board on how to tailor workshop opportunities for networking, learning, and education. This group discussion is also intended to provide counselors with insight that will help them to understand the benefits of joining professional communities, such as the Mississippi Counseling Association.

Learning Objectives:

- 1) Share experiences in the unique challenges of working in rural mental health.
- 2) Discuss leadership opportunities and share positive leadership experiences.
- 3) Share advocacy issues specific to rural mental health and tools and strategies to engage in advocacy efforts within communities.

**1:10-2:10**

**Ewing 334**

### **We Listen and We Don't Judge: Counseling Edition**

DaNyria Allison, BS; LaQuita E. Bedfor, MS; Erica N. Blackbourn, MA; Nikki Lipe, BA; Abigail Taylor, BA; Jacob M. Thomas, BA, CPSS (MS)

*Faculty Sponsor:* Maegan J. Tatum, PhD, LPC-S, NCC, BC-TMH

Listening to a client without judgment is a cornerstone of effective counseling. Active listening and creating a safe, judgment-free environment are essential for fostering growth and healing. This presentation will introduce the person-centered approach, highlighting what makes it unique for each client, the roles of both counselor and client in the process, and practical strategies for applying these techniques in real-world counseling. Attendees will gain actionable insights to enhance their effectiveness, build stronger, more empathetic therapeutic relationships, and better understand common misconceptions or myths about counseling. The

presentation will also explore the approach's strengths and areas for improvement, offering guidance for future counselors seeking to grow in their practice.

Learning Objectives:

- 1) Define person-centered approach
- 2) Discuss different areas where person-centered approaches can be beneficial.
- 3) Demonstrate how person-centered approaches can be used in future counseling.

**2:20-3:20**

**Jacob Conference Center**

### **Affirmative Counseling: Toward a New Ethical Paradigm**

Dr. Christopher Todd, CRC, LPSC, LAC; Dr. Stephen Zanskas, PhD, CRC, LPC

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are essential to counseling practice, ensuring ethical and effective care for diverse clients. Yet recent U.S. policy changes restricting DEI initiatives pose challenges for counselors seeking to uphold the ACA Code of Ethics, particularly in areas of cultural competence, client advocacy, and social justice. This presentation explores the impact of these shifts on counseling practice, examines alignment with professional ethics, and offers a vision for a more affirmative counseling paradigm.

Learning Objectives:

- 1) Explain how recent US policy changes restricting DEI initiatives impact ethical responsibilities and day-to-day counseling practice.
- 2) Learn practical strategies for addressing ethical issues while navigating restrictive policy environments.
- 3) Identify integrating an affirmative counseling ethic into their practice and advocacy.

**2:20-3:20**

**Ewing 118**

### **From Burnout to Balance: Practical Tools for Helping Professionals to Sustain Impact without Self-Sacrifice**

Nicole Miller, MSW

Helping professionals—including social workers, counselors, psychologists, and educators—are experiencing increasing levels of stress, compassion fatigue, and burnout as emotional demands and systemic pressures continue to rise. While self-care is frequently promoted as a solution, many professionals report that common recommendations feel unrealistic, time-consuming, or disconnected from the realities of their work. This gap leaves helpers vulnerable to chronic dysregulation, reduced effectiveness, and premature exit from the field.

This practice-focused session introduces a trauma-informed, nervous-system-based approach to sustainability in the helping professions. Drawing from real-world experience in school and community settings, the presentation will explore how chronic stress impacts emotional regulation, decision-making, and professional boundaries. Participants will be guided through practical micro-interventions—including brief regulation strategies, boundary-setting techniques, and self-compassion practices—that can be implemented during the workday without adding

to existing workload demands. Experiential exercises and reflective prompts will be used to model how these strategies can support both professionals and, when appropriate, the individuals they serve.

Participants will leave with a clearer understanding of burnout as a systemic and biological response rather than a personal failure, along with concrete tools to support emotional resilience and ethical practice. The session's significance lies in its emphasis on sustainability: equipping helping professionals with realistic strategies to maintain effectiveness, improve client outcomes, and remain engaged in their work without sacrificing their well-being.

Learning Objectives:

- 1) Identify common signs of burnout and compassion fatigue in helping professionals and explain how chronic stress impacts emotional regulation and professional effectiveness.
- 2) Apply at least three brief, evidence-informed nervous system regulation strategies that can be used during the workday to reduce stress and prevent burnout.
- 3) Implement one realistic boundary or self-compassion practice to support ethical, sustainable engagement in helping roles.

**2:20-3:20**

**Ewing 209/210**

### **Unveiling the Mask: Autism Spectrum Disorder within Multicultural and Latino Communities**

Ivan Araujo, BS; Rosanne Nunnery, PhD, LPC-S, NCC, BC-TMH, CGP, C-DBT

While Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a universal neurodevelopmental condition, the experience of diagnosis and intervention is deeply mediated by cultural contexts. For multicultural clients, the path to support is often obstructed by a "double disadvantage" involving both the complexities of the disorder and systemic barriers related to language, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. This presentation will address ASD prevalence and diagnostic disparities across cultural groups. Then, evaluate the diagnostic process for ASD, systemic barriers of multicultural ASD populations along with a real-life case example of ASD within the Latino community, and then address ethical and legal considerations as well as resources that are available.

Learning Objectives:

- 1) Describe ASD prevalence and diagnostic disparities across cultural groups.
- 2) Evaluate the diagnostic process for ASD, systemic barriers of multicultural ASD populations along with a real-life case example of ASD within the Latino Community.
- 3) Explore ethical and legal issues affecting multicultural ASD populations and resources.

**2:20-3:20**

**Ewing 224**

### **Connection at a Distance: A Relational Cultural Approach to Virtual Supervision**

RobDreka Shaw-Shields, LPC-S, NCC, BC-TMH

Distance supervision continues to grow across counselor education and clinical practice, yet supervising virtually introduces unique relational and cultural challenges. This presentation draws from my dissertation research on the experiences of supervisors who provide distance

supervision. The session will introduce Relational Cultural Theory, define its core concepts, and show how these ideas can guide meaningful supervision in virtual settings. We will explore how mutual empathy, authenticity, and growth-fostering relationships can be intentionally cultivated through a screen, even when connection feels harder to access. The session will highlight themes emerging from research, practical strategies for strengthening supervisory relationships online, and tools for supporting supervisees' growth, confidence, and cultural awareness in virtual environments. Attendees will leave with actionable practices they can use immediately in their own supervision work.

Learning Objectives:

- 1) Define Relational Cultural Theory and its core concepts such as mutual empathy, authenticity, and growth-fostering relationships, and explain how these principles apply to clinical supervision.
- 2) Identify unique challenges that arise in distance supervision and connect these challenges to RCT concepts that support relational effectiveness in virtual environments.
- 3) Apply RCT-informed strategies to strengthen the supervisory working alliance, enhance cultural responsiveness, and improve supervisee growth in distance supervision settings.

**2:20-3:20**

**Ewing 315**

### **K-12 Behavior Interventions that Work**

Karla Weir, PhD, LPC-S, NCC, NCSC

This comprehensive professional development session equips school counselors with essential skills and knowledge to effectively support students through systematic intervention strategies. Designed specifically for K-12 educational environments, the program addresses the critical need for data-driven approaches to student mental health and academic support. A key strength of this program lies in its emphasis on practical implementation.

Learning Objectives:

- 1) Recognize warning signs, interpret behavioral patterns, and utilize data to reveal underlying student needs.
- 2) Synthesize multiple components of the intervention process, creating seamless workflow from the initial intervention through ongoing progress monitoring.
- 3) Possess the skills to develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate comprehensive interventions that address diverse student needs across K-12 settings.

**2:20-3:20**

**Ewing 331**

### **Adulthood is Tough: How to Counsel Those Moving Towards Careers**

Anna Claire Winstead, BS; Bianca Epton, MA; Naseera Mays, BA; Sarah Watson, MS; Kristi Ray, BA; Riley Childs, BS

*Faculty Sponsor:* Maike Holleck, PhD, LPC (TX), CCTP

Young adulthood (ages 18–30) represents a critical developmental stage characterized by identity exploration, autonomy, relational commitment, and career establishment (Golchaa,

etal., 2024). Research indicates a significant relationship between identity formation and mental health outcomes, with individuals who achieve a coherent and stable sense of identity reporting stronger psychological well-being and lower levels of distress (Golchha et al., 2024). As emerging adults transition from structured academic environments into professional and relational independence, many experience anxiety, role confusion, and difficulty setting boundaries (Yang, 2025). These developmental challenges underscore the need for counselors to apply developmentally responsive and evidence of informed interventions.

While understanding that structural influences and shifting societal conditions often create uncertainty for young adults navigating the transition from education to the workforce (Schoon & Heckhausen, 2019), this presentation aims to equip counselors with a deeper understanding of young adult development and practical therapeutic approaches tailored to this population. Emphasis will be placed on Narrative Therapy to facilitate identity exploration and re-authoring of maladaptive self-narratives. Additionally, Solution-Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) will be presented as a strengths-based framework to support goal setting, boundary development, and structured forward movement. Lastly, Social Cognitive Theory will be used to conceptualize success, build self-efficacy, and tailor career choices (Sharf, 2013). By integrating identity focused and future oriented interventions, counselors can enhance resilience, agency, and long-term mental health outcomes among young adults navigating this pivotal life stage (Golchha et al., 2024).

Through this presentation, counselors will learn how to work with college students transitioning to the adult world through learning about their life stage, counseling theories that work for them, as well as counseling interventions. This aspect is significant because student populations need support so that they can provide the highest quality of service.

The significance of this presentation is that it will help provide counselors with practical tools to care for and understand any clients in this stage of life. The presenters will provide education and theoretical frameworks specifically for this stage. Therefore, this presentation is intended to improve client outcomes as well as prepare counselors and improve their self-efficacy when working with young adults.

Learning Objectives:

- 1) Identify three developmentally appropriate interventions to support young adults transitioning from college into the workforce to strengthen resilience and career identity.
- 2) Apply interventions, including assessments, to young adult clients to identify short-term and long-term goals.
- 3) Create a goal-oriented counseling plan using an integrated therapy approach.

**2:20-3:20**

**Ewing 334**

### **Holding Space Without Losing Yourself: Preventing Burnout Across Helping Roles (Part 1)**

Erica Towers, DPC, P-LPC, NCC, NCSC

Helping professionals are often trained to hold space for others while minimizing their own needs, a pattern that can contribute to emotional exhaustion, boundary erosion, and burnout over

time. When individuals occupy multiple helping roles or experience sustained emotional labor without adequate recovery, their effectiveness and well-being may be compromised. This session explores how burnout develops across helping professions, with particular attention to the cumulative impact of chronic availability, role strain, and insufficient restorative practices.

Participants will examine common indicators of burnout and compassion fatigue, including emotional, cognitive, and behavioral signs that often emerge before individuals recognize a problem. The session will also address how emotional labor and blurred boundaries contribute to nervous system overload and diminished professional presence. Through applied examples, reflective discussion, and experiential strategies, participants will learn practical ways to remain emotionally engaged with those they serve while protecting their personal capacity.

By the end of the session, participants will be equipped with actionable strategies to support sustainability in their professional roles, fostering greater balance, resilience, and effectiveness across helping contexts.

Learning Objectives:

- 1) Identify common emotional, cognitive, and behavioral indicators of burnout and role strain across helping professions.
- 2) Explain how chronic emotional labor, over-availability, and inadequate recovery time contribute to burnout and reduced professional effectiveness.
- 3) Apply practical strategies to maintain emotional presence while protecting personal capacity and professional boundaries.

**3:30-4:30**

**Jacob Conference Center**

### **Supervision & Ethics: P-LPC as Supervisor: What Could Go Wrong?**

Katie Andreacchio, MS, P-LPC, BC-TMH; Jeremy Chase, MS, P-LPC, BC-TMH; Rosanne Nunnery, PhD, LPC-S, NCC, BC-TMH, C-DBT, CGP

Provisionally licensed counselors (P-LPCs) often occupy a unique and vulnerable ethical position, they are expected to practice independently while also remaining under supervision, navigating power dynamics, agency pressure, and unclear boundaries. This presentation will explore ethical dilemmas in supervision that are rarely discussed, including non-obvious violations, value conflicts, documentation culture, and ethical burnout from the P-LPC and S-LPC's perspective. By exploring real-world case vignettes and practical decision-making models, participants will strengthen ethical decision-making, supervisory roles, and develop strategies to protect both clients and them while maintaining professional integrity.

Learning Objectives:

- 1) Identify and analyze ethical and legal risks associated with inadequate supervision, apply accountability strategies, and evaluate implications for client welfare and clinician protection.
- 2) Differentiate ethical discomfort from ethical violations, apply an ethical decision-making model to supervision dilemmas, and evaluate resulting clinical and supervisory actions.
- 3) Examine how power dynamics, agency pressures, and provisional licensure influence ethical decision-making, analyze associated risks, and identify strategies that support ethical supervisory practice.

**Inoculating Against Burnout**

Larry L. Lambert, MEd, LPC-S; Glen R. Waller, PhD, LPC-S

Helping another person desperately struggling to find a successful and satisfying way forward with his or her life can be heartbreakingly difficult. As satisfying as the work may be sometimes, the seriousness and weight of a client's situation and the choices to be faced can take a toll on the counselor. Moreover, when the client leaves there is still work to be done on the client's behalf, other responsibilities to be addressed, and the next client to see. The word "overwhelming" comes to mind as well as a thought "I can't keep doing this." In 1974, a clinical researcher observed that over time staff in his work situation and left feeling defeated and exhausted, he named his observation the "burnout c. syndrome" a situation with chronically high levels of stress that is not successfully handled by those doing the work.

This presentation discusses high stress work situations and the personal characteristics that make counselors susceptible to burning out. Our focus will recognize and address unrealistic expectations, work pressures, adopting new responses, and self-care practices that retain and restore resilience. The intent is to provide counselors an awareness of the environmental conditions that create a high stress counseling environment, responses and habits that predispose counselors to burnout, and discuss different ways to prevent or reduce burnout.

Learning Objectives:

- 1) Describe the circumstances (work setting and relationships) that predispose counselors to the experience of burnout.
- 2) Examine the personal dispositions, relation practices, and communication responses that increase the likelihood of experiencing burnout and alternative responses that can reduce the likelihood of experiencing it.
- 3) Identify agency practices and processes that can depressurize the work environment.

**From Ethics to Action: Building Personal Wellness Plans Using the Indivisible Self Model**

John Hawkins, LPC-S

The 2014 ACA Code of Ethics establishes personal wellness as a professional responsibility, requiring counselors to monitor and address distress, avoid impairment, and model healthy self-care to clients. Despite this ethical mandate, many helping professionals lack structured frameworks for assessing and maintaining their own wellness. This gap between knowing wellness is important and implementing effective wellness practices leaves counselors vulnerable to burnout, compassion fatigue, and ethical drift.

This interactive workshop bridges the gap between ethical obligation and practical implementation by introducing Myers and Sweeney's evidence-based wellness models—the Wheel of Wellness and the Indivisible Self. Participants will explore how these holistic frameworks

conceptualize wellness across multiple interconnected dimensions and learn to apply them to their own lives. Through guided self-assessment activities, attendees will identify specific wellness dimensions or behaviors requiring attention and develop concrete, workable action plans tailored to their individual needs and contexts.

Participants will leave with: (1) a clear understanding of wellness as an ethical imperative, (2) familiarity with evidence-based wellness assessment frameworks, and (3) a personalized wellness plan they can implement immediately. This practical approach transforms abstract ethical principles into sustainable professional practice, ultimately enhancing counselor resilience, effectiveness, and the quality of care provided to clients.

Learning Objectives:

- 1) Identify specific provisions in the 2014 ACA Code of Ethics that mandate counselor wellness and explain how personal wellness directly impacts ethical practice, client care, and professional effectiveness.
- 2) Describe the key components of Myers and Sweeney's Wheel of Wellness and Indivisible Self Model, including the five second-order factors (Creative, Coping, Social, Essential, and Physical Selves) and their interconnected relationship to holistic wellness.
- 3) Assess current wellness across multiple dimensions using evidence-based frameworks and develop a specific, actionable wellness improvement plan targeting at least one identified area of need or growth.

**3:30-4:30**

**Ewing 224**

### **Cultural Diversity Theories**

Karen Linstrum, PhD, LPC-S, CRC

This presentation will teach the participants the various theories/concepts regarding racism and ableism. Critical Race Theory, Critical Disability Theory, Social Determinants of Health, and "Crip Theory" will be the major points of learning. These theories have been developing over time. Acceptance and inclusion are major themes. A Handout asking cultural awareness concepts will be used. Participants will learn why these theories/concepts are important in counseling/mental health.

Learning Objectives:

- 1) Recognize ableism in practice and among clients by reviewing the tenets of Critical Disability Theory (DisCrit).
- 2) Identify racism in practice by becoming aware of the tenets of Critical Race Theory.
- 3) Become aware of the social determinants of health, as one's clients may live in a certain part of town where these items are important to them.

**3:30-4:30**

**Ewing 315**

### **Counseling the Whole Child: Brain-Based Tools for Emotional Regulation**

Michelle Campbell, Abigail Cockerill, Katie Krauss, Kimberly Liston

*Faculty Sponsor:* Mary Bess Pannel, PhD, LPC, NCC

This group presentation offers school counselors practical psychoeducation on brain integration and its role in supporting student emotional regulation, behavior, and learning. Participants will gain a clear understanding of how different parts of the brain interact and how these concepts apply to the daily work of school counselors across individual, group, and classroom-based interventions. The session emphasizes translating neuroscience concepts into developmentally appropriate, school-friendly practices. Attendees will learn concrete techniques and tools that can be immediately implemented with students or clients to promote self-awareness and regulation.

Learning Objectives:

- 1) Identify and explain the key brain parts involved in emotional regulation (e.g., thinking brain vs. emotional brain) and describe how integration supports student behavior and learning.
- 2) Demonstrate how to incorporate brain-integration concepts into at least two school counseling practices (e.g., individual counseling, classroom lessons, crisis response, or behavior interventions).
- 3) Practice and select at least three developmentally appropriate techniques or tools (e.g., grounding exercises, mindfulness strategies, visual brain models, regulation scripts) that can immediately be used with students to support emotional regulation and self-awareness.

**3:30-4:30**

**Ewing 331**

### **Helping Clients Understand Overspending through Fear, Desire, and Self-Connection: An Inner-Work Approach for the Helping Professions**

Becky Smith, PhD, Financial Fitness Coach; Courtney Jones Swan, LCSW

Clients across the helping professions frequently report “overspending” money, time, energy, or emotional resources, even when they express strong motivation to change. Traditional behavior-change strategies—such as budgeting, goal setting, or self-control techniques—often fail to produce lasting change when underlying fears, desires, trauma responses, or unmet psychological needs remain unexamined. This represents a critical practice gap for social workers, counselors, and other helping professionals who support clients experiencing burnout, financial stress, people-pleasing, or chronic overextension.

This practice-focused, experiential session introduces a set of compassionate inner-work exercises designed to help clients become more conscious of the internal drivers that shape external spending behaviors. Drawing from financial therapy, social work, counseling, behavioral

economics, and depth psychology, presenters will demonstrate a structured reflective model that explores how fear and desire create vulnerability to self-abandonment and misalignment between values and behavior. Participants will experience the exercise from a client perspective and learn how it can be ethically and safely adapted for use in diverse helping-profession contexts.

Participants will learn how to identify psychological patterns that contribute to overspending across multiple life domains; apply a guided reflective exercise to increase client self-awareness and self-connection; and integrate trauma-aware, nonjudgmental language that supports values-based decision-making rather than willpower-based change. The session's significance lies in its practical application: attendees will leave with concrete tools, facilitation guidance, and language that can immediately enhance practice, strengthen client insight, and support sustainable behavior change while honoring professional scope and ethical boundaries.

Learning Objectives:

- 1) Identify psychological and emotional factors such as fear, desire, and unmet needs that increase vulnerability to overspending and overextension in clients.
- 2) Apply an experiential reflective exercise that supports client insight, self-connection, and values-based decision-making.
- 3) Explain how compassionate curiosity and trauma-informed facilitation can enhance ethical practice and reduce reliance on willpower-based behavior change strategies.

**3:30-4:30**

**Ewing 334**

### **Beyond Burnout: Nervous System-Informed Self-Care for Helping Professionals (Part 2)**

Erica Towers, DPC, P-LPC, NCC, NCSC

Burnout among helping professionals is frequently framed as a problem of workload, time management, or insufficient self-care; however, this perspective often overlooks the role of chronic nervous system dysregulation and sustained emotional labor inherent in helping roles. Professionals in counseling, social work, education, and healthcare are routinely required to remain emotionally available while suppressing their own physiological and emotional cues, increasing vulnerability to exhaustion, compassion fatigue, and reduced professional effectiveness.

This practice-focused presentation introduces a nervous system-informed framework for understanding and addressing burnout in the helping professions. Drawing from applied clinical and educational leadership experience, the session examines how chronic stress impacts autonomic nervous system functioning, emotional regulation, boundary-setting, and professional presence. Participants will explore how over-availability, role overload, and inadequate recovery time contribute to cumulative dysregulation and burnout.

Through accessible psychoeducation, reflective exercises, and practical strategies, attendees will learn how to recognize early and less-visible signs of burnout, distinguish traditional self-care from nervous system-supportive practices, and implement realistic regulation strategies within

demanding work environments. Emphasis is placed on sustainable care, ethical professional functioning, and maintaining effectiveness across multiple helping roles. The content is applicable across helping disciplines and supports improved professional longevity, emotional well-being, and quality of care.

Learning Objectives:

- 1) Identify early and overt signs of burnout and nervous system dysregulation commonly experienced by helping professionals, including subtle emotional and psychological indicators.
- 2) Explain the relationship between chronic stress, emotional labor, and autonomic nervous system functioning, and how this contributes to professional burnout.
- 3) Apply at least three nervous system-informed strategies to support regulation, maintain boundaries, and promote sustainable professional functioning in clinical work.

## **Thank you to our sponsors!**



Delta Sigma Upsilon Chapter,  
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Chi Sigma Iota (CSI) is an international academic and professional honor society. It focuses on academic achievement and exceptional service within the counseling profession. A core goal of CSI is to provide opportunities for students and professionals to share with one another and serve their communities through chapter service projects like the Toys for Tots donation drive our chapter, Delta Sigma Upsilon, led in December. Along with opportunities like mentoring and access to continuing education, members also can be nominated for awards, grants, and fellowships. Delta Sigma Upsilon also works with DSU's Counselor Education faculty and staff to organize the annual F. E. Woodall Conference as part of our mission to support the helping professions.



The mission of the MS Youth Challenge Academy is to intervene in and reclaim the lives of 16 to 18 year old youth who are at risk of or who have already dropped out of school, producing program graduates with the values, life coping skills, education, employment potential and self-discipline necessary to succeed as productive citizens.

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The Woodall Conference values the professional development and time of all participants. Registration fees are refundable according to the following schedule:

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The Woodall Conference strives to maintain an environment that reflects the professional, ethical, and respectful standards consistent with the counseling profession. If you have a concern about any aspect of the conference (e.g., program content, presenter conduct, accessibility, or other conference-related issues), you are encouraged to follow this process:

- **Submit the Complaint in Writing:** Email your written complaint to [woodallconference@deltastate.edu](mailto:woodallconference@deltastate.edu) with "Conference Complaint" in the subject line. Include:
  - Your name and contact information.
  - A detailed description of the concern.
  - Any relevant dates, session titles, or individuals involved.
- **Acknowledgement:** Complaints will be acknowledged within 3 business days of receipt. (Please note that the Woodall office is closed during university summer and winter breaks, causing potential delays in correspondence.)
- **Review & Follow-Up:** The Woodall Conference leadership will review the concern and may request further details. A response or proposed resolution will be provided within 10 business days when feasible.
- **Confidentiality & Respect:** All complaints will be handled confidentially and respectfully. Retaliation against individuals who raise genuine concerns in good faith is not permitted.

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