



The European Branch of The American Counseling Association

2026 ATHENS CONFERENCE — EVENT & REGISTRATION OVERVIEW

October 21–24, 2026 | Athens, Greece

Event information sheet

Date	Doors / Registration	Conference events and activities
Wed, Oct 21	Doors open: 9:00 AM Registration: from 9:00 AM	Preconference begins: 9:30 AM. First session 9:30–10:30 AM; afternoon programming continues per session descriptions.
Thu, Oct 22	Doors open: 9:00 AM Registration: from 9:00 AM	Official Welcome to the Conference, followed by opening keynote. Master schedule: opening keynote 9:45–11:15 AM, Alba Amphitheater. Evening bus trip: 6:00–8:00 PM; bus loading begins 5:30 PM. Bus loading location: to be announced.
Fri, Oct 23	Doors / registration time: to be confirmed	Lunch & Learn with panel: within 11:40 AM–1:10 PM lunch window (master schedule lists Author Showcase / Lunch). Panel details and location: to be announced.
Sat, Oct 24	Doors / registration time: to be confirmed	International Committee Lunch & Learn panel: 11:40 AM–1:00 PM. Location: to be announced. End- of-conference business meeting and reception: 6:00–8:00 PM. Location: to be announced.



The European Branch of The American Counseling Association

Athens Conference | October 21–24, 2026

Doors open and registration: 9:00 AM | Preconference begins: 9:30 AM

Wednesday, October 21 — Preconference

From Collective Reactivity to Individual Autonomy: Ways of applying Bowen Systems Theory on Self-Differentiation in Modern Greek Society.

9:30–10:30 AM | Program

Presenter: Dr. Stamatina Stathopoulou

Bowen's concept of Differentiation of Self has been developed and explored in relation to different attributes and especially in relation to chronic anxiety for individuals and families (Kerr & Bowen, 1988, pp. 112–133; Álvarez-Hierro & Oliver, 2024). What does the concept of Self Differentiation measure? It measures the ability of people to differentiate between emotional and cognitive functioning as well as individuals' capacity to keep their interpersonal boundaries, without submitting to emotional reactivity, cutoff or fusion. Bowenian family therapy works on building a stronger Differentiation of Self through a theory and techniques which among other encourage reflection and an ability in tracing the reactivity path across generations as well as in identifying the reasons behind choices. Diminished anxiety, emotional reactivity and blame as well as higher empathy emerge from the above (Brown & Errington, 2024; Haefner, 2014).

The Societal Emotional Process constitutes an expansion of Bowen's Differentiation of Self, to the macro-level (Bowen, 1978, 269–286). According to this analogy, a differentiated group of people would be able to take calm, clear decisions, based on reflection, logic and not on emotional reactivity or panic. It would mean recognition of the shared values of its people, deep knowledge and understanding of their origin, of their historical, cultural path but at the same time connection with other groups of people, either concerning other nations or groups of citizens of the same nation. A differentiated group, as a differentiated family could stay united despite its disagreements, would tolerate differences, would take responsibility for its actions and avoid blame-shifting, emotional polarization and scapegoating, who would be led by a differentiated leader who would be able to resist emotional reactivity (Bowen, 1978, 269–286). To what extent different nations are capable of engaging into societal emotional progression and not regression?

Several studies (Capellos et al., 2022; Chaniotis, 2018; Tsekeris et al., 2015) have explored the role of emotions in the Greek society especially in face of political, economical and societal issues and a few research studies have taking place on Differentiation of Self in Greek society (Neophytou et al., 2025) but yet not a clear proposal on how the constant, intense emotional reactivity and polarity could be dealt with. A discussion of some characteristics of the current Greek society related to the concepts of self-differentiation and societal emotional process will take place in the...

54.7.25 — From Moral Injury to Belonging: Relational Pathways to Repair for Women

10:35–11:35 AM | Program

Presenter: Tanya Wellman, MA

Moral Injury occurs when individuals experience profound violations of deeply held moral beliefs, often resulting in shame, disconnection, and the loss of belonging. This presentation explores moral injury through a relational and trauma-informed lens,

with particular attention to women's experiences. Drawing from emerging moral injury research, common factors literature, attachment theory, and trauma-informed counseling practices, participants will examine evidenced-based pathways to repair through the therapeutic relationship, meaning-making, self-compassion, and restoration of connection. Practical implications for counseling, supervision, and counselor education will be discussed.

Ethical Leadership: Culture, Power, Advocacy, and Organizational Responsibility

1:30–4:30 PM | Program

Presenter: Rachael Marshall, PhD

Ethical leadership in counseling requires both adherence to professional standards and an understanding on how culture, identity, power, history, relationships, organizational systems, and experiences of adversity and privilege shape people's experiences of safety, belonging, voice, and participation. This interactive preconference session positions culturally responsive leadership as essential to trauma-informed leadership practices and examines advocacy as an expression of counselors' ethical responsibility to each other, individuals, organizations, communities, and systems.

Grounded in the ACA Code of Ethics, the Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (MSJCC), culturally responsive and socially just leadership scholarship, the Counselor–Advocate–Scholar model, and trauma-informed principles, participants will examine the relationship among ethical decision making, cultural humility, leadership, advocacy, and organizational responsibility. Particular attention will be given to critical self-reflection, cultural and historical context, power and shared decision making, relational leadership, community engagement, and the movement through multiple systems. Participants will be invited to place counseling ethics and leadership models in dialogue with their own cultural contexts, professional standards, community knowledge, and understandings of individual and collective well-being. Through reflection, case application, dialogue, and collaborative action planning, participants will:

1. Analyze an ethical leadership dilemma by identifying the influence of professional ethics, cultural identities, values, power, privilege, historical context, and potential sources of individual or collective harm.

Bloom: Analyze

2. Evaluate culturally responsive, socially just, relational, distributive, transformational, and trauma-informed leadership principles for their applicability across diverse cultural and organizational contexts.

Bloom: Analyze/Evaluate

3. Evaluate an organizational leadership practice using culturally responsive and trauma-informed principles to identify conditions that promote or undermine safety, belonging, cultural affirmation, shared power, community well-being, and social justice.

Bloom: Evaluate

Doors open and registration: 9:00 AM | Official welcome followed by opening keynote: 9:45–11:15 AM (keynote time per master schedule)

Thursday, October 22

47.7.21 — Cross Cultural Counseling: A Global Service-Learning Collaborative in Kenya

11:20 AM–12:20 PM | XN 103 (22) — Classroom

Presenter: Sommer Garrett, PhD

This presentation examines a cross-cultural, trauma-informed counseling initiative implemented over multiple years in two communities in Kenya. Attendees will explore the delivery of one culturally responsive group trauma intervention while examining host community perspectives on program relevance, sustainability, and impact. Findings from program evaluation and research demonstrate the effectiveness of culturally adapted trauma education and counseling while addressing critical gaps in trauma training and mental health responsiveness. Implications for international collaboration, cultural humility, and sustainable global mental health partnerships will be discussed.

2.6.19 — 2.6.19- No Forgiveness, No Recovery: Know Forgiveness, Know Recovery

11:20 AM–12:20 PM | XN 105 (28) — Auditorium

Presenter: W. Bryce Hagedorn, PhD

Emotional wounds are inevitable in our encounters with others. When these wounds go unaddressed, the resulting maladaptive coping mechanisms can often result in self-destructive, other-destructive, and/or self-medicating behaviors that can lead to further isolation. The active process of forgiveness of self and others is not simply a “forgive and forget” event, and in fact, many believe that sustained recovery is unattainable without engaging in the forgiveness process.

23.6.30 — Creating a Vision for Joy, Healing, and Collective Action to Support Belonging, Social Justice, and Liberation

11:20 AM–12:20 PM | XN 108 (30) — Classroom

Presenter: Regina Finan, PhD

A vision board is a visual manifestation of your goals and intentions. This creative collage of words and images can help individuals illuminate what is important and meaningful (Burton & Lent, 2016). There is documented support for the benefits and usefulness of various forms of imagery and visualization as a therapeutic intervention (Burton & Lent, 2016), career intervention (Waalkes et al., 2019), behavioral activation (Renner et al., 2017), and reflection (Bailey, 2020). This session will facilitate an actionable goal-setting, attitude-adjusting, intentions-claiming activity to promote joy, healing, and collective action in our work towards belonging, social justice, and liberation.

58.7.27 — The Stories We Carry: Exploring Ambiguous Loss, Identity, and Belonging Across the Lifespan

11:20 AM–12:20 PM | Alba Amphitheater (90)

Presenters: Claudette Brown-Smythe, PhD, LMHC, ACS, NCC; ZeVida A. Jones, EdD, LPSC, LPC, NCC; Jennifer M. Cook, PhD, LPC, NCC, ACS

In an oversaturated world where disruption, transition, and uncertainty challenge attachment, identity, and belonging across the lifespan, ambiguous loss often remains unseen and unaddressed in counseling. Unlike concrete losses, ambiguous loss lacks clarity or closure, complicating meaning-making, connection, and adaptation (Garrad-Black, 2024). Grounded in meaning-making and constructivist approaches to grief work (Neimeyer & Hooghe, 2022), this interactive presentation introduces Ambiguous Loss Narratives as a framework for helping clients identify, externalize, and reconstruct experiences of unresolved loss. Participants will engage in experiential activities, including writing their own ambiguous loss narratives, to deepen self-awareness and explore meaning-making processes.

24.6.30 — Who Defines Growth? Reimagining Posttraumatic Growth Through Identity, Belonging, and Interdisciplinary Dialogue

1:10–2:10 PM | XN 103 (22) — Classroom

Presenter: Cailen Birtles, PhD

Posttraumatic growth (PTG) has become an influential framework for understanding positive psychological change following adversity; however, conceptual definitions of PTG vary considerably across counseling, psychology, medicine, public health, and other helping professions. This lack of consensus creates challenges for interdisciplinary collaboration and may influence how counselors conceptualize healing, identity reconstruction, and belonging following trauma. Drawing from an extensive interdisciplinary literature review and an international Delphi study of published PTG scholars, this presentation examines contemporary debates surrounding PTG (Jayawickreme et al., 2021; Chen et al., 2022; Clark, 2024) and explores their implications for counseling practice. Participants will consider how trauma disrupts identity and belonging across the lifespan (Calhoun and Tedeschi, 1998), discuss the role of interdisciplinary dialogue in strengthening trauma-informed counseling, and explore strategies for fostering growth while honoring clients' lived experiences within diverse cultural contexts.

9.6.24 — Artificial Intelligence, Attachment, and Counseling Ethics

1:10–2:10 PM | XN 105 (28) — Auditorium

Presenter: Shannon Shoemaker, PhD

Artificial intelligence is increasingly shaping how clients process emotions, seek reassurance, and navigate relationships. Drawing on emerging research in mental health technology, attachment, cognitive processes, and counseling ethics, this keynote examines both the promise and clinical risks of conversational AI. Participants will explore how AI can reinforce cognitive distortions, relational conflict, and emotional dependency, while learning practical, ethically informed strategies for assessing client AI use and highlighting the unique value of human therapeutic relationships.

52.7.24 — Promoting Belonging Through Advocacy: Development of a Social Determinants of Health Adaptation Scale for School Counselors: Implications for Attachment, Identity, and Belonging

1:10–2:10 PM | XN 106 (34) — Classroom

Presenter: John McCall, PhD

School counseling track

Students' experiences of attachment, identity development, and belonging are shaped not only by interpersonal relationships but also by broader social determinants of health, including housing stability, food security, healthcare access, transportation, and community resources. School counselors are uniquely positioned to identify these barriers and advocate for supports that foster student well-being and connection. However, limited tools exist to assess school counselors' preparedness to address social determinants of health within school settings. This presentation describes the development and validation of the Social Determinants of Health Adaptation Scale for School Counselors and discusses implications for promoting equity, belonging, and student success.

12.6.25 — 12.6.25 —Held and Unheld: Attachment, Acceptance, and the Clinical Treatment of Loneliness

1:10–2:10 PM | XN 108 (30) — Classroom

Presenter: Marcial Thomas, MA

Loneliness is a public health crisis and a clinical one. Drawing on the 2023 U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory, attachment theory, and third-wave cognitive-behavioral approaches, this session examines how loneliness manifests across the developmental lifespan and presents evidence-based counseling interventions tailored to each stage. Participants will leave with practical tools to assess, conceptualize, and treat loneliness as a primary clinical concern in an increasingly disconnected world.

58.7.27 — The Stories We Carry: Exploring Ambiguous Loss, Identity, and Belonging Across the Lifespan

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14.6.27 — Impact of U.S. kinship care policies relate to the quality of attachment between custodial grandparents and their grandchildren

2:15–3:15 PM | XN 103 (22) — Classroom

Presenter: Shazia Mirza, MA

The Odyssey of Connection examines how attachment, identity, and belonging evolve across the lifespan, emphasizing differences between traditional grandparenting bonds and custodial grandparenting. An estimated 2.5 million grandparents are currently raising grandchildren (Clark et al., 2024; Kaylor Tapscott et al., 2024). Counselors must understand how shifting caregiving roles shape quality of attachment & behavioral outcomes. Most grandchildren entered kinship care following adverse events such as substance use, incarceration, deportation, abuse, neglect (Dolbin-MacNab et al., 2021). Counselors are not consistently trained in trauma informed care with grand families (Kavanagh, & Levenson, 2022). This session equips counselors to support one of the fastest growing family structures in an oversaturated, high-pressure world.

15.6.28 — Aging Into Belonging: Counseling Strategies to Combat Loneliness and Foster Connection

2:15–3:15 PM | XN 105 (28) — Auditorium

Presenter: Janelle Jones, PhD

As populations age globally, social isolation and loneliness have become pressing public health and mental health concerns. This presentation explores how counselors can foster meaningful connection in older adulthood by integrating evidence-based interventions, culturally responsive practices, and community engagement strategies. Participants will examine the role of third spaces, digital and social media communities, and advocacy in promoting belonging across diverse cultural contexts. Drawing from current research on aging, social connectedness, and counseling practice, attendees will gain practical strategies for assessing social isolation, facilitating community engagement, and supporting older adults in developing sustainable, meaningful social relationships.

55.7.25 — Beyond Borders: School Counseling Perspectives from Greece, Europe, and the United States

2:15–3:15 PM | XN 106 (34) — Classroom

Presenters: Carol Dahir, EdD — Professor, School Counseling, New York Institute of Technology; Alessandra Sax, EdD, LMSW — Associate Professor of Psychology, Psychologist and Clinical Social Worker; Manos Kougioumzoglu — K-12 Clinical Psychologist; Anna Makris — Head of Social Emotional Learning and Wellbeing, Child Safeguarding Liaison; Dimitri Pelidis — Elementary School Counselor; Colleen Puhr — Academic and College Counselor; Maria Ersi Koliris — Counselling Psychologist and Mindfulness Trainer; Pritha Mani, MA — Child, Adolescent and Young Adult Counselor, Pritha Counseling Services, Geneva, Switzerland

School counseling track

School counselors play a vital role in supporting students' academic success, social-emotional well-being, and post-secondary/life-career readiness. This panel discussion brings together perspectives from Greece, the United States, and the European community to explore how school counseling is shaped by different cultural, educational, and policy contexts. Panelists will discuss professional roles, mental health supports, student advocacy, and emerging challenges in schools. Through comparative insights and real-world examples, attendees will gain a deeper understanding of global school counseling

practices and discover innovative approaches that can inform their own work. The session will also highlight opportunities for international collaboration, professional learning, cross cultural collaboration, and advancing the profession.

17.6.29 — Assessment of Technological Wellness in a Digital World

2:15–3:15 PM | XN 108 (30) — Classroom

Presenter: Rochelle Cade, PhD, LPC-S

Technological wellness includes a healthy relationship with technology. It can be challenging for clients and counselors alike to form this relationship or have wellness in an increasingly technology saturated world. In this presentation, we will define technological wellness, discuss tech saturation across personal and professional lives as a benefit and challenge to technological wellness, discuss assessment methods of technological wellness, and explore strategies to enhance technological wellness for counselors and clients.

19.6.29 — Odysseys of Connection: Using Merge Cube Technology to Promote Identity, Belonging, and Mental Wellness Among Youth

2:15–3:15 PM | Alba Amphitheater (90)

Presenter: James Maiden, Ed.D., LPC, ACS, NCC

School counseling track

This presentation explores the use of Merge Cube technology as an innovative, evidence-informed intervention to promote identity development, belonging, and mental wellness among youth. Grounded in attachment theory, positive youth development, and social-emotional learning frameworks, participants will examine how interactive experiences foster self-exploration, peer connection, emotional expression, and resilience. Findings from the 2026 STEM Achievers Program examining the impact of immersive technologies on middle school students' engagement, confidence, and connectedness will be presented to illustrate the potential of Merge Cube activities to enhance youth well-being and social connectedness. Participants will also engage in practical applications for school, clinical, and community settings.

69.7.29 — Same Roots, Different Futures? Life and Career Expectations of Greek Students in Greece and Expatriate Students in the United States

3:20–3:35 PM | XN 103 (22) — Classroom

Presenter: Konstantina Asimakopoulou, MA

15-minute oral research presentation — No CE

Using the Future Career Autobiography, this session explores how students in Greece and Greek expatriate students in the United States imagine their lives and careers after graduation. The study compares their narratives and identifies shared and distinctive expectations. Common themes include continuous learning, study and work abroad, entrepreneurship, and work–life balance. Students in Greece emphasized establishing themselves professionally and aligning work with their studies, whereas expatriate students expressed higher ambitions, stronger international orientations, greater interest in entrepreneurship, and uncertainty about returning to Greece. The session demonstrates the value of narrative assessment for culturally responsive university career counselling.

57.7.26 — Attachment, Identity Fragmentation, and the Inner Child in Egyptian Adults Raised Across Middle Eastern Cultures In Their Childhood Years

3:20–3:35 PM | XN 108 (30) — Classroom

Presenter: Harmony Dawoud, MA student

15-minute oral research presentation — No CE

This session moves beyond visible markers of "successful" adjustment to examine what happens beneath the surface when children grow up navigating multiple cultures. Drawing on qualitative interviews with adults reflecting on their childhood acculturation, and grounded in Bowlby's attachment theory, Berry's acculturation framework, and inner-child theory (Winnicott, 1965), the presentation explores how early cross-cultural transitions can produce attachment disruptions and identity fragmentation that persist into adulthood. Attendees will leave with a clinical lens for recognizing these hidden patterns in clients with multicultural upbringings.

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School counseling track

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School Counselors' Approach to Counseling Refugee Children and Families

3:40–4:40 PM | XN 103 (22) — Classroom

Presenters: Cameka Hazel and Sherri Barrow, Ph.D., PSC, LMHC

School counseling track

This presentation explores systemic, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive approaches for school counselors supporting refugee students and their families. Thousands of refugee and migrant children are provided the opportunity to resettle globally annually (Fransen & De Haas, 2022). However, many of these children become vulnerable as they are often faced with discrimination, cultural or racial stigmatization, and xenophobia (Kasparian, 2025). This session will equip school counselors with the necessary skills to work effectively with refugee and migrant children, addressing their socio-emotional and academic needs at the K-12 level.

87.8.10 — Whose Knowledge Counts? Resisting Epistemic Injustice in Counseling and Counselor Education

3:40–4:40 PM | XN 105 (28) — Auditorium

Presenter: Claire Martin, Ph.D., LPC, NCC, ACS, BC-TMH

In times when silencing, dismissal, and censoring are increasingly becoming normalized, and even promoted (González-Rosario & Davis, 2025), counselors and counselor educators must deliberately examine ways in which they may inadvertently reproduce these dynamics in their professional roles, including clinical practice, training, supervision, and research (Washington et al., 2023).

Scholarship on epistemic injustice (Fricker, 2007) has underscored the harmful consequences of silencing individuals and communities through fear-driven and oppressive policies, creating disruption to individuals' psychological safety (Pillay, 2022). This phenomenon is referred to as epistemic injustice and is described as the harm experienced by individuals from marginalized backgrounds when their lived experiences and ways of knowing are dismissed, discredited, or distorted (Okoroji et al., 2023; Kidd et al., 2017).

This presentation will explore ways in which epistemic injustice manifests within counseling, training, supervision, and research contexts. It will examine the disempowering impact on individuals, often contributing to diminished sense of belonging. The presentation will conclude with strategies that promote inclusion and empowerment.

3:40–4:40 PM | XN 106 (34) — Classroom

POSTER PRESENTATIONS | Saturday, October 24, 2026 | 4:30–4:50 PM | ALBA Amphitheater

Title: Perceived Parental Psychological Control as a Predictor of Self-Esteem and Anxiety in Greek Emerging Adults

Presenter(s): Nikol Karegli Zervou

Title: Teaching Sexuality Counseling: A Sex-Positive, Culturally Responsive Model

Presenter(s): Melodie Frick

Title: Vicarious Trauma and the School Counselor: Healing Through Self-Care and Advocacy

Presenter(s): Sherri Barrow, Ph.D., PSC, LMHC; Cameka Hazel

Lunch & Learn panel / Author Showcase lunch window: 11:40 AM–1:10 PM | Location: To be announced. Registration opening time: To be confirmed.

Friday, October 23

21.6.30 — Differentiating Pathology and Culture in Clients Reporting Paranormal Experiences

2:15–3:15 PM | XN 108 (30) — Classroom

Presenter: Andrea McGrath, PhD, LIMHP, LPC

Presentation abstract: A significant portion of the population believes in or has experienced anomalous, or paranormal, phenomena. These experiences can be transformational, confusing, or shocking; they may have a significant impact on one's sense of reality and self. Despite the significance of these experiences, many clients are reluctant to bring up or explore these experiences in counseling due to fears of judgement or pathologization. Additionally, counselors often lack training in understanding and assisting clients to process these experiences. This presentation provides counselors with information on anomalous experiences, allows participants to explore their own paranormal beliefs, and discusses the differentiation of pathology from cultural experiences. This presentation offers strategies for assisting clients in navigating, understanding, and integrating these anomalous experiences.

20.6.30 — Advancing Equitable College and Career Counseling for Students with Disabilities

9:30–10:30 AM | XN 103 (22) — Classroom

Presenter: Stuart Roe, PhD, NCC

School counseling track

Students with disabilities around the world graduate from secondary school at significantly lower rates than their nondisabled peers, reflecting global gaps in postsecondary access, employment, and underemployment—especially for students from historically marginalized communities and multilingual learners with disabilities. High-quality college and career counseling is therefore a core equity strategy, not an optional service. This session shares emerging findings from a multi-year initiative on how school counselors and special education professionals support postsecondary planning for students with disabilities. Participants will gain practical, culturally responsive, disability-affirming strategies and school-ready tools to strengthen transition and postsecondary planning across diverse international contexts.

49.7.21 — Breaking the Cycle: Creative, Trauma-Informed Approaches for Working with Children and Adolescents Exposed to Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence

9:30–10:30 AM | XN 105 (28) — Auditorium

Presenter: Pritha Mani, MA

Domestic and intimate partner violence (IPV) is a significant global public health issue with lasting effects on children and adolescents who experience or witness violence at home. Exposure to IPV is associated with anxiety, depression, trauma symptoms, emotional and behavioral difficulties, disrupted attachment, and an increased risk of future victimization or perpetration. Many young people struggle to disclose these experiences because of fear, shame, cultural expectations, and family secrecy. This experiential workshop introduces culturally responsive, developmentally appropriate interventions and creative therapeutic strategies that help counselors support healing while providing practical, evidence-informed tools that can be immediately applied in schools and private practice.

26.6.30 — An Ecological Understanding of Attachment and Abuse in Adult Relationships: Lessons from Clinical Practice with Individuals Who Use Abusive Behaviors

9:30–10:30 AM | XN 106 (34) — Classroom

Presenter: Jacqueline Robinson, PhD

This session explores attachment and abuse in adult relationships through an ecological lens, with a focus on individuals who use abusive behaviors. Drawing from clinical practice, attachment theory, trauma-informed care, intimate partner violence literature, and culturally responsive counseling, the presentation will examine how personal history, relational patterns, culture, power norms, and control may shape abusive behavior. The session emphasizes understanding these patterns without minimizing or excusing harm, while highlighting accountability, survivor safety, ethical practice, and implications for future counseling research and intervention.

27.6.30 — From Dysregulation to Digital Regulation: Using Polyvagal Theory, Artificial Intelligence, and Immersive Technology to Foster Attachment, Identity and Belonging

9:30–10:30 AM | XN 108 (30) — Classroom

Presenter: Sharon Thompson, PhD

This session equips counselors to translate polyvagal theory into practical, technology-informed interventions that support safety, attachment, identity, and belonging. Participants will examine autonomic regulation, neuroception, trauma-informed care, multicultural responsiveness, and digital stressors while exploring AI, VR, apps, telehealth tools, and wearables as adjunctive supports. Grounded in polyvagal theory, trauma-informed counseling, HRV/biofeedback research, digital mental health literature, and ethical guidance on AI use, the session emphasizes clinical discernment, informed consent, privacy, access, and human connection as the foundation of effective care..

61.7.27 — The Creative Odyssey: Intermodal Expressive Arts for Every Stage of Life

9:30–10:30 AM | Alba Amphitheater (90)

Presenters: Jill Weidknecht Van Horne, PhD, LCMHCS; Mary L. Affee, MBA, Ed.D, LCSW, RPT-S, LCAS-A; Alessandra Sax, EdD, LMSW; Charles E. Myers, Ph.D., LPC-S, RPT-S, CCPT-S, CCTP, CATP, CSTIP, DMH

This interactive session explores intermodal expressive arts across the lifespan through visual art, movement, music, play, and nature-based experiences. Participants will learn developmentally responsive, trauma-informed strategies that foster emotional expression, regulation, resilience, connection, and meaning-making. Grounded in the Expressive Therapies Continuum and research supporting creative and embodied approaches, the session offers adaptable activities for counseling, education, supervision, and group work while emphasizing cultural responsiveness, participant choice, accessibility, and psychological safety.

39.7.13 — Future Proof Your Comprehensive School Counseling Program

10:35–11:35 AM | XN 103 (22) — Classroom

Presenter: Carol Dahir, EdD

School counseling track

Generative AI is supposed to make our professional lives easier. Tools such as ChatGPT, Gemini, Co-Pilot, Claude etc. can help design a survey, generate school counseling lesson exit tickets, and data-driven practice. Participants in this interactive session will examine AI applications used by school counselors to design/revise the comprehensive school counseling program based on the ASCA or ISCA Model, exchange ideas, process concerns, and debate ethical and legal implications.

Join us to explore how to channel the power of AI to ensure its ethical use in our schools and better address student needs with fidelity and integrity. Bring a device and follow along.

88.8.12 — Strengthening Student Counselor Identity Through Intentional Course Design

10:35–11:35 AM | XN 105 (28) — Auditorium

Presenter: Courtney R. East, PhD, NCC

Counselor identity development is a foundational component to Counselor Education programs. This session presents one CMHC program's approach to centering this development through a recurring seminar, entitled Professional Identity Development (PID), that integrates counseling students across cohorts to foster mentorship, collaboration, and professional community as they explore and build professional identity together. Supported by the work and research of Auxier et al. (2003), Gibson et al. (2010), and Um et. al (2025), this seminar meets every semester throughout students' enrollment, creating

sustained opportunities for identity exploration and growth. Attendees will leave with concrete strategies for course design and teaching approaches adaptable to the unique needs and structures of their own programs.

36.7.10 — The Social Determinants-Based Counseling Model: Best Practices for Addressing the Social Determinants of Mental Health within Professional Counseling

10:35–11:35 AM | XN 106 (34) — Classroom

Presenter: Danielle Boyd, PhD

Effectively broaching the Social Determinants of Mental Health (SDMH) throughout the counseling process provides a number of potential benefits to clinical practice and outcomes. Counselors perceive that in the short term, broaching the SDMH strengthens the therapeutic relationship while fostering the Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (Authors, 2025; Ratts et al., 2016). These early benefits can give way to enhanced client empowerment and improved access to interprofessional resources and services leading to better treatment outcomes. Long-term, effectively broaching the SDMH can result in improved health of the client overall, improved community health, and decreased marginalization.

38.7.13 — From Clinician to Leader: Navigating Career Growth Without Losing Your Clinical Identity

10:35–11:35 AM | XN 108 (30) — Classroom

Presenter: Lynnsey Vandeventer, MEd

As behavioral health professionals advance in their careers, many encounter the challenge of balancing leadership responsibilities with their clinical identity. This presentation explores strategies for navigating career transitions, cultivating leadership skills before assuming formal leadership roles, and building professional credibility through scholarship, consultation, and service. Participants will gain practical tools to address imposter syndrome, foster intentional professional growth, and develop a personalized leadership plan that promotes ethical, authentic, and sustainable career advancement.

37.7.10 — Supporting the Whole Child: Trauma-Informed, Culturally Responsive Mental Health Practices Across School Settings

1:10–2:10 PM | XN 103 (22) — Classroom

Presenter: Austin Ferrell, Ed.D. / ZeVida A. Jones, EdD, LPSC, LPC, NCC

School counseling track

This interactive session explores trauma-informed, culturally responsive mental health practices that support the academic, social, and emotional well-being of students across school settings. Participants will examine the impact of trauma, culture, and social determinants of health on student outcomes while learning evidence-based strategies grounded in Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), trauma-informed care, and culturally responsive practice. Emphasizing interdisciplinary collaboration among counselors, social workers, educators, and families, the session equips participants with practical tools to promote resilience, advocate for equitable mental health services, and create inclusive, supportive learning environments.

51.7.22 — “I Belong to Me”: Culturally-Informed Strategies to Support Identity Reclamation for Adoptees in Mid-Life and Beyond

1:10–2:10 PM | XN 105 (28) — Auditorium

Presenter: Sara W Bailey, PhD

Adoption is not a discrete event; the impact of relinquishment and adoption is lifelong. As adoptees approach midlife, a confluence of factors (e.g., death of adopted parents, grandparenthood, health changes, the dwindling possibility of reunion with biological families) may retrigger early relinquishment trauma and unearth entrenched disenfranchised grief and identity confusion. In this session, led by a reunited adoptee, we will explore the intersection of aging, identity development, and adoption-informed care using a four-part conceptual framework. Participants will leave with greater awareness and actionable strategies to provide culturally-responsive care to diverse adoptees across the lifespan.

32.7.2 — The Post-Deployment "Odyssey" & Veteran Belonging

1:10–2:10 PM | XN 106 (34) — Classroom

Presenter: Cynthia Briggs, PhD

The transition from military to civilian life is a modern-day odyssey. For many veterans, the psychological wounds of military trauma and moral injury go unacknowledged. In the military, attachment is forged through team structures, shared missions, and institutional trust. Upon discharge, the abrupt severing of these bonds, paired with a perceived lack of cultural understanding from civilian society, can induce a crisis of belonging.

This presentation explores the intersection of military trauma and relational attachment theory, providing practical frameworks to help counselors assist veterans in re-creating a secure sense of identity and belonging as they complete the journey “home”.

4.6.19 — The Unseen Fracture: Institutional Betrayal and the Attachment Roots of Burnout

1:10–2:10 PM | XN 108 (30) — Classroom

Presenter: Baylee Leazer, M.Ed, LPC; Co-presenter: Sarah Dixon, PhD

When clinicians feel exploited by their institutions, prescribing “self-care” becomes an act of dismissal. This session re-frames counselor burnout not solely as individual exhaustion, but as an attachment wound driven by institutional betrayal. Integrating research from attachment theory, trauma, burnout, and Relational-Cultural Theory, this session illustrates how systemic fractures inflict wounds mirroring interpersonal injuries. Attendees will analyze how organizational dismissiveness forces clinicians into a state of relational detachment, directly compromising client care. Finally, we outline actionable steps to cultivate a “secure base,” repairing systemic trauma and fostering sustainable counselor retention.

45.7.20 — Belonging in the Screen Age: Cultivating Secure Attachment and Community in an Oversaturated World

1:10–2:10 PM | Alba Amphitheater (90)

Presenter: Linda Foster, PhD, LPC, LCMHC, PPC, N.C.C., BC-TMH

In an increasingly oversaturated digital world, social media plays a powerful role in shaping attachment, identity, belonging, and relationship development across the lifespan. This presentation examines how online environments influence self-concept, social connection, and interpersonal relationships while affecting psychological well-being. Drawing on research from psychology, communication, and counselor education, the session explores how digital spaces foster connection and community while also contributing to loneliness, relational strain, and disconnection. Participants will gain practical insights into fostering healthier digital engagement, promoting secure attachment, and strengthening meaningful connections in an increasingly oversaturated and technologically mediated world.

67.7.29 — Moving Toward Belonging: Embodied Connection and Professional Identity in Indian Dance Movement Therapy

2:15–3:15 PM | XN 103 (22) — Classroom

Presenter: Nausheen Fatma Khan, MS

This research-informed educational session explores how five dance movement therapists practising in India integrate embodied and verbal psychotherapy while negotiating client readiness, therapist attunement, cultural expectations, and professional legitimacy. Drawing on interpretative phenomenological analysis, the session follows four interconnected movements: Self, Therapist, Context, and Identity in Motion. Participants will examine how embodied approaches can support connection when words feel insufficient, while considering pacing, consent, cultural adaptation, reflexivity, and the advocacy labour required when a therapeutic modality remains unfamiliar within mental health systems.

51.7.22 — “I Belong to Me”: Culturally-Informed Strategies to Support Identity Reclamation for Adoptees in Mid-Life and Beyond

2:15–3:15 PM | XN 105 (28) — Auditorium

Presenter: Sara W Bailey, PhD

Adoption is not a discrete event; the impact of relinquishment and adoption is lifelong. As adoptees approach midlife, a confluence of factors (e.g., death of adopted parents, grandparenthood, health changes, the dwindling possibility of reunion with biological families) may retrigger early relinquishment trauma and unearth entrenched disenfranchised grief and identity confusion. In this session, led by a reunited adoptee, we will explore the intersection of aging, identity development, and adoption-informed care using a four-part conceptual framework. Participants will leave with greater awareness and actionable strategies to provide culturally-responsive care to diverse adoptees across the lifespan.

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62.7.28 — Career Counseling Interventions as Catalysts for Change in University Students’ Future Life and Career Narratives

3:20–3:35 PM | XN 103 (22) — Classroom

Presenter: Andronikos Kaliris, PhD

15-minute oral research presentation — No CE

Career interventions may influence occupational choices and students’ narratives about their future lives. This study examined pre–post Future Career Autobiographies of 19 Greek university students who completed test interpretation-based, narrative-based, or integrative online group interventions. Deductive coding used Rehfuß’s (2009) eight change categories, followed by inductive analysis. Occupational expectations changed for 18 participants and personal expectations for 9. While all students in the test-based and integrative groups showed occupational change, the narrative group showed the greatest personal change. Narratives became more specific, focused, hopeful, open, action-oriented, integrated, realistic, and agentic. Findings offer implications for university career counseling practice.

Elite Identity: Understanding Perfectionism, Self-Worth and Attachment in Professional Tennis Players

3:20–3:35 PM | XN 105 (28) — Auditorium

Presenter: Martin Blaho, PhD

15-minute oral research presentation — No CE

In today's high-visibility, achievement-saturated culture, athletes' sense of self is increasingly forged through relentless performance evaluation. This session presents an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis study of five former professional Slovak tennis players, examining how early attachment relationships shaped identity, belonging, and self-worth across their competitive lifespan. Grounded in Bowlby's attachment theory and Hewitt and Flett's model of perfectionism, five themes emerged, revealing perfectionism as a relational structure rooted in early bonds rather than a personality trait. Findings offer practical implications for attachment-informed coaching, parenting, and therapeutic work with performers navigating identity in high-pressure environments.

Exploring the Role of Peer Observation as a Collaborative Professional Development Practice in a Greek Primary School

3:20–3:35 PM | XN 106 (34) — Classroom

Presenter: Eirini Melpomeni Kakoura, PhD

15-minute oral research presentation — No CE

This study explores peer observation as a collaborative professional development practice in a Greek primary school. Classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and reflective discussions will be used to examine teachers' verbal and non-verbal instructional behaviours, as well as their experiences of professional dialogue and collaboration. Observation data will be summarised descriptively, while qualitative findings will provide an in-depth understanding of teachers' experiences. The study aims to contribute to the limited literature on collaborative professional learning in Greek primary education.

65.7.29 — From Broken Bonds to Recovery: Attachment Narratives of Individuals in Recovery from Substance Use

3:20–3:35 PM | XN 108 (30) — Classroom

Presenter: Eleni Chrysovalantou Dimitrakopoulou, MS

15-minute oral research presentation — No CE

This presentation explores the role of early attachment experiences in the development of substance use disorders and the recovery process among individuals in Greece. Based on qualitative interviews with 10 adults in long-term recovery, the study examines family relationships, attachment patterns, emotional regulation, and the influence of Greek cultural values on addiction and recovery. Using thematic analysis, the findings highlight the enduring impact of early caregiving experiences while demonstrating recovery as a process of identity reconstruction and relational change. The presentation discusses implications for attachment-informed, culturally sensitive counseling interventions that strengthen therapeutic relationships and support long-term recovery outcomes.

70.7.29 — From Supervision Gap to Best Practice: Emerging Models for Clinical Supervision in School Counseling

3:40–4:40 PM | XN 103 (22) — Classroom

Presenter: Kenya Bledsoe, PhD

School counseling track

Although clinical supervision is increasingly recognized as fundamental to ethical school counseling practice, many K–12 school counselors continue to receive limited or no formal clinical supervision. This session synthesizes recent literature on school counselor supervision, encompassing school counselors' experiences and emerging supervision models. The session traces the field's progression from documenting persistent supervision gaps to developing models tailored to the specific contexts of K–12 practice. Additionally, the session highlights evidence-informed benefits of clinical supervision, including its role in strengthening professional identity, self-efficacy, and counseling effectiveness.

25.6.30 — Trauma informed gatekeeping and counselor identity development: A framework for community advocacy through counselor education and supervision

3:40–4:40 PM | XN 105 (28) — Auditorium

Presenter: Jacqueline Robinson, PhD

This session will focus on trauma-informed gatekeeping in counselor education and supervision. I will discuss how counselor educators can support students who may be struggling while still protecting clients, the profession, and program standards. The presentation will explore counselor identity development, student-of-concern processes, remediation, documentation, and culturally responsive support. The goal is to offer a practical framework that allows educators and supervisors to hold students accountable while also considering trauma, context, growth, and advocacy.

44.7.17 — Integrating Career and Mental Health Interventions: Evidence and Implications

3:40–4:40 PM | XN 106 (34) — Classroom

Presenter: Seth Hayden, PhD, LCMHC

There is substantial evidence of a connection between career development and mental health, which has implications for career development theory, research, and practice. Cognitive Information Processing theory (Sampson, Lenz, et al., 2023; Sampson, Osborn, et al., 2020) accounts for dimensions of career and mental health within the approach's structure. This workshop will include information on the connection between career development and mental health, a detailed overview of Cognitive Information Processing theory, and an examination of associated interventions. Relevant research and resources will be shared.

59.7.27 — Everyone Loses Something: Ambiguous Loss Associated with Substance Use Disorder

3:40–4:40 PM | XN 108 (30) — Classroom

Presenters: Jennifer M. Cook, PhD, LPC, NCC, ACS; Claudette Brown-Smythe, PhD, LMHC, ACS, NCC

Substance use disorder (SUD) is ubiquitous. While SUD itself tends to be apparent in those who live with it, the grief and loss both clients with SUD and their loved ones often experience mostly goes unacknowledged and unaddressed. In this session, we will define ambiguous loss related to SUD, explore the underlying causes, enumerate the impacts, and suggest interventions clinicians can use to help clients process ambiguous loss experiences, both from the perspective of the person with SUD and those who have a loved one living with SUD.

76.7.30 — Neurodiversity-Affirming School Counseling: What Is It and Where Do I Begin?

3:40–4:40 PM | XN 108 (30) — Classroom

Presenter: Emily Goodman-Scott, PhD

School counseling track — second presentation approved as an exception to the one-presentation policy because of previously communicated information.

Abstract: Original submitted abstract pending verification.

International Committee Lunch & Learn panel: 11:40 AM–1:00 PM | Location: To be announced. Registration opening time: To be confirmed.

Saturday, October 24

63.7.28 — LGBTQ+ Grief Across the Lifespan: Strategies for Belonging, Development, and Healing

9:30–10:30 AM | XN 103 (22) — Classroom

Presenter: Nancy Thacker Darrow, PhD

LGBTQ+ individuals experience ambiguous losses of identity, safety, and belonging throughout identity development, particularly as they encounter oppressive environments. As development persists throughout the lifespan, so does one's experience of loss and grief. This presentation will review findings from a qualitative inquiry that explored how LGBTQ+ people developed through identity-based losses. Strategies for helping professionals to support LGBTQ+ clients will be provided. The presenter will also offer educational strategies to prepare counselors-in-training to provide affirming grief counseling. Implications for further research will be included as well.

For women in midlife and older who are trying to manage the multiple life transitions of changing family dynamics, rebalancing work, health issues, and ageism; the trauma of infidelity and stress of divorce can create psychological, physiological, financial, and social strains. The initial traumatic event (infidelity), combined with the exposure of stressors (life transitions, divorce) becomes a complex posttraumatic stress disorder (C-PTSD). Developing a clear understanding of the interconnections of the physical and psychological processes could inform the collaboration of care through well-informed medical and mental health care systems for proper care and support of women in midlife and older.

Presenter: Lois T. Curry-Catanese, LPC

9:30–10:30 AM | XN 106 (34) — Classroom

Women's Trauma and Stress due to Infidelity and Grey Divorce

Abstract: For women in midlife and older who are trying to manage the multiple life transitions of changing family dynamics, rebalancing work, health issues, and ageism; the trauma of infidelity and stress of divorce can create psychological, physiological, financial, and social strains. The initial traumatic event (infidelity), combined with the exposure of stressors (life transitions, divorce) becomes a complex posttraumatic stress disorder (C-PTSD). Developing a clear understanding of the interconnections of the physical and psychological processes could inform the collaboration of care through well-informed medical and mental health care systems for proper care and support of women in midlife and older.

42.7.16 — Grief in Motion: Using Play, Story, and Connection to Support Grieving Students

9:30–10:30 AM | Alba Amphitheater (90)

Presenter: Jennifer Money-Brady, EdD

School counseling track

Grief in children often shows up in behavior, silence, or overwhelm—not always in words. As school counselors, we are often the first to notice the signs and hold space for the pain students carry into the classroom. Yet, traditional talk-based interventions may not always meet students where they are developmentally or emotionally. Grief in Motion: Using Play, Story, and Connection to Support Grieving Students introduces action-based and creative counseling techniques that allow students to explore grief in ways that feel safe and developmentally appropriate with tools grounded in play therapy, narrative practices, and movement, tailored for use in school counseling.

71.7.29 — Borrowed Voices, Digital Scripts, and Authentic Professional Identity Development: Intentional Supervision and Training Strategies in the Age of AI and Social Media

10:35–11:35 AM | XN 103 (22) — Classroom

Presenter: Shanice Armstrong, PhD, LPC, LCMHC, PPC

Counselors-in-training increasingly report "performing counseling" rather than becoming counselors, as professional identity is shaped by social media portrayals, AI-generated content, and external expectations before authentic integration can occur. This experiential session helps supervisors and counselor educators recognize performed competence as a developmental signal and respond with intentional strategy. Grounded in professional identity development research (Dollarhide et al., 2023; Gibson et al., 2010; Cruikshanks & Burns, 2017) and emerging scholarship on identity in technologically mediated practice (Mifsud & Herlihy, 2026; Crofford et al., 2026), participants will engage in reflective and applied activities to support supervisee voice, self-efficacy, and congruence between personal values and professional roles.

79.7.31 — The Reentry Experience of Returning Citizens from Prison

10:35–11:35 AM | XN 105 (28) — Auditorium

Presenter: Christina Kadelski, PhD

The session uses qualitative research and an intersectionality framework to examine how returning citizens navigate reentry, with particular attention to how intersecting identities shape barriers, strengths, and mental health outcomes. Participants will explore evidence-based counseling interventions, advocacy strategies, and community-based supports that address structural barriers such as housing, employment, stigma, and trauma. Emphasis is placed on developing culturally responsive, identity-affirming counseling practices aligned with the Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (MSJCC)

82.7.31 — Identifying and Customizing Ritual to Support Bereavement

10:35–11:35 AM | XN 106 (34) — Classroom

Presenter: Marlise Lonn, PhD

Across the lifespan, people experience bereavement related loss. Rituals are a meaningful way to process grief. This presentation explores the power of creativity and culturally centered grief rituals as tools to enhance the therapeutic process. Participants will identify the role of ritual in their identities, be introduced to a variety of individual and communal grief rituals, and an arts-based adaptation of ritual. Additionally, participants will have an opportunity to describe rituals around death and grief based in their cultural context. Participants will leave with a deeper understanding of how to integrate individualized, creative, culturally grounded grief rituals into counseling.

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INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE LUNCH & LEARN — Between Worlds: Immigration, Identity, and the Human Need for Connection

11:40 AM–1:00 PM | XN 103 (22) — Classroom

Panelists: David Augustin, LMHC; Claudette Brown-Smythe, PhD, LMHC, ACS, NCC; Jennifer M. Cook, PhD, LPC, NCC, ACS; ZeVida A. Jones, EdD, LPSC, LPC, NCC

This panel, presented by the International Committee, explores immigration as a lifelong journey of attachment, identity development, resilience, and belonging. Using selected clips from *Rise* as catalysts for dialogue, participants will examine how migration experiences shape development across the lifespan and influence mental health through family separation, displacement, discrimination, and cultural transition (Adkison-Johnson & Johnson, 2019). Drawing on attachment theory, multicultural counseling, trauma-informed care, and resilience research (Gil-González et al., 2015; Wylie et al., 2020), panelists

will integrate personal narratives and professional perspectives to deepen understanding of immigrant, refugee, asylum seeker, and Third Culture Kid experiences. Attendees will identify culturally responsive counseling strategies that foster resilience, community connection, advocacy, and belonging, while challenging counselors to actively create spaces where all individuals are seen, valued, and empowered to thrive.

73.7.30 — A Cross-Disciplinary Model for Enhancing Medical School Students' Basic Counseling Skills

1:00–2:00 PM | XN 103 (22) — Classroom

Presenter: Daniel Cinotti, PhD

School counseling track

The purpose of this presentation is to describe the effectiveness of a cross-disciplinary model in which counselor educators collaborated with faculty in a college of osteopathic medicine. The primary goal of the project was to enhance the basic skills of attending and active listening in future osteopathic physicians by applying them to everyday work with patients. A description of the experiential learning activities used in the training (eg., role plays of realistic scenarios of patient interaction) will be included in this presentation. The data used to evaluate the effectiveness of this project will also be discussed.

85.7.31 — When Procrastination Protects: Reframing ADHD in Women and Girls Through Identity Development and Belonging

1:00–2:00 PM | XN 105 (28) — Auditorium

Presenter: LeAnn M. Morgan, PhD

Girls and women with ADHD frequently internalize messages that they are lazy, unmotivated, or incapable, contributing to shame and disrupted identity development across the lifespan. While procrastination is commonly viewed as a maladaptive behavior, this presentation introduces a strengths-based clinical framework that conceptualizes procrastination as an adaptive strategy for managing executive functioning demands until sufficient motivation, urgency, or interest activates sustained attention. Using a developmental lens spanning childhood through menopause, the presenters will examine how ADHD influences identity, belonging, wellness, and resilience while providing evidence-informed counseling interventions to help clients intentionally direct hyperfocus, reduce burnout, and cultivate self-understanding.

83.7.31 — Healing in Motion: Using Dance in Therapy for Black Girls with Anxiety

1:00–2:00 PM | XN 106 (34) — Classroom

Presenter: Amanda Gilbert, MA

Among adolescents, Black girls exhibit more severe and prominent symptoms of anxiety than their male counterparts and seek treatment at lower levels than their peers due to concerns, such as a lack of culturally responsive treatment options (Pickering et al., 2019; Opara et al., 2021). Dance is a culturally responsive community intervention that is embodied, creative, and relevant to black adolescents (Levy et al., 2020). This presentation will present research about the efficacy of a dance intervention for increasing positive mental health outcomes in Black girls with anxiety.

75.7.30 — Partnering for Youth Mental Health During War: Supporting Ukrainian Youth Comprehensively

2:05–3:05 PM | XN 103 (22) — Classroom

Presenter: Emily Goodman-Scott, PhD

School counseling track

The ongoing Russian-Ukrainian war has resulted in profound psychological trauma and disruption for Ukrainian youth, schools, and families. In this session, we share our partnership between a Ukrainian mental health organization and a U.S. university collaborating to address the complex needs of war-affected Ukrainian youth, including psychological rehabilitation intensives and trauma-informed MTSS efforts in schools. As we strive for Attachment, Identity, and Belonging in an Oversaturated World,

learn about this partnership and evidence-based practices to comprehensively support the next generation of Ukrainian youth. We will consider implications for Ukraine as well as youth impacted by war and conflict across the globe.

86.8.7 — What Happened Before the Substance? Trauma, Systems, and Pathways to Substance Use

2:05–3:05 PM | XN 106 (34) — Classroom

Presenter: Kelley R. Holladay, PhD, LMHC, NCC, MAC, QCS

Substance use rarely occurs in isolation. This session examines substance use through a trauma-informed, contextual lens, exploring how childhood adversity, interpersonal violence, sexual trauma, technology-facilitated abuse, sex work, and broader social and systemic factors can shape substance use and recovery. Drawing from current trauma and substance use research, including the presenter's scholarship, participants will examine substance use as a potentially adaptive response to complex experiences rather than simply a maladaptive behavior. Evidence-based, trauma-informed strategies for assessment, conceptualization, and intervention will be discussed.

13.6.26 — Integrating Gestalt and Expressive Arts Techniques in Trauma-Informed Addiction Supervision: An Ethical Framework for Clinical Supervisors

2:05–3:05 PM | XN 108 (30) — Classroom

Presenter: Christina M Rosen, EdD

With co-occurrence rates for trauma and substance use disorders ranging from 25% to 76%, clinical supervisors must address these deeply rooted somatic and non-verbal experiences. This presentation introduces an experiential framework integrating Gestalt techniques and Expressive Arts Therapies into trauma-informed addiction supervision. Combining "here-and-now" awareness with creative media allows supervisees to safely externalize countertransference and vicarious trauma. Attendees will explore critical ethical considerations, including navigating boundaries between experiential supervision and personal therapy, managing informed consent for non-traditional modalities, and upholding supervisor gatekeeping responsibilities. Participants gain practical, ethically sound tools to enhance supervisee competence and protect client welfare.

Finding Home: Supporting Attachment, Identity, and Belonging in Immigrant and Cross-Cultural Communities

3:10–4:40 PM | XN 103 (22) — Classroom

Presenter: Claudette Brown-Smythe, PhD, LMHC, ACS, NCC

Immigration, migration, and cross-cultural transitions shape attachment, identity, and belonging across the lifespan, influencing mental health, resilience, and community connection. This interactive breakout session engages participants through reflective activities, small-group discussions, and case-based learning focused on the experiences of immigrants, refugees, first-generation individuals, and Third Culture Kids. Attendees will examine the impacts of family separation, acculturation stress, discrimination, and cultural adaptation through developmental, multicultural, and trauma-informed lenses. Participants will leave with practical counseling interventions, discussion tools, and advocacy strategies to foster resilience, belonging, and inclusive support within diverse communities.

80.7.31 — Technology, Mental Health, and Human Flourishing

3:10–4:40 PM | XN 106 (34) — Classroom

Presenter: Caroline Cecile Perjessy, PhD

In an increasingly technology-saturated world, counselors are navigating new questions about how humans experience connection, identity, and belonging. Artificial intelligence and digital technologies offer opportunities to expand access to mental health support, enhance counselor education, and support clinical practice; however, emerging research also highlights the importance of preserving empathy, relational presence, and authentic human connection as central mechanisms of healing (Norcross & Lambert, 2019; APA, 2023). Grounded in humanistic counseling, attachment theory, and positive psychology, this interactive presentation explores how technology influences the ways individuals seek connection and meaning. Through experiential activities, case exploration, and reflective dialogue, participants will examine how counselors can integrate technology while fostering attachment, belonging, and human flourishing across the lifespan.

74.7.30 — Decolonizing Global Mental Health: Indigenous Healing Practices to Address Mental Health Inequities Among Multi-Marginalized Youth

3:10–4:40 PM | XN 108 (30) — Classroom

Presenter: T'Airra Belcher, PhD

This presentation examines how Indigenous healing practices can inform more equitable and culturally responsive approaches to addressing the global youth mental health crisis. Drawing from a meta-analysis of literature published between 2006 and 2026, the study explores how Western mental health frameworks, rooted in colonial paradigms, often fail to meet the needs of Indigenous and multi-marginalized youth. Guided by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit), and Indigenous Determinants of Health, the presentation highlights evidence supporting community-centered, land-based, relational, and spiritually grounded healing practices. Findings demonstrate that integrating Indigenous knowledge systems into mental health interventions may improve accessibility, cultural relevance, and treatment effectiveness while addressing historical trauma and systemic inequities. The session concludes with recommendations for researchers, counselors, counselor educators, and policymakers to incorporate Indigenous Traditional Knowledge through community-engaged and participatory research approaches that promote decolonized, holistic, and sustainable models of mental health care.

B 33.7.3 — Beyond the Passport: Cultivating Multicultural Competence Through International Service-Learning

3:10–4:40 PM | Alba Amphitheater (90)

Presenter: Heather Summers, PhD

As counselors, standards of multicultural competence are something ingrained in our work daily. This presentation will provide an overview of an autoethnography study conducted as a counselor educator, aligning ethnographic considerations with multicultural competence and how those lessons can be incorporated in the classroom. Many counselor education programs task students with some type of “cultural immersion” or advocacy project. This material will also be presented as the first step in a related study abroad opportunity and how to build one for your own university.

Credential verification note: Credentials have been standardized where supported by existing conference records. Other presenters' degrees and licenses require confirmation from their submitted bios or registration records before publication. No unverified credentials have been added.