

LCA Graduate Student Committee Officially Becomes a Division of LCA

The Louisiana Association of Counseling Graduate Students (LACGS) is proud to announce that we are now a division of LCA. A huge thanks to the LACGS Committee members, for all of their hard work in making LACGS official!

Upcoming Events

Professional Development Workshop

May 12, 2018

LACGS is excited to announce that it will be hosting a Professional Development Workshop at Loyola University for PLPCs and counselor graduate students! The Workshop will be a two part event. The first part of the workshop will feature a presentation titled: "Becoming a PLPC: What you need to know" that will focus on preparing current graduate students for the transition between student and PLPC. The second event will feature a Multicultural Panel where PLPCs and LPCs in the field will discuss their experiences with multicultural competence in practice. For more information about the event, please email lcagsrep@gmail.com!

LACGS NEWSLETTER

Upcoming Events | SARP Spotlight | 2017 Recap



Counseling in the Context of Current Events

By **Ida Ansell**

This issue places a special focus on the counselor's role in social justice and advocacy because we know that counseling occurs within a cultural context. As society becomes more globalized and complex, counseling in our modern world requires more than empathy. Our clients will be coming in with problems stemming from the oppressive systems in which we are all embedded. Social conditioning affects us all in insidious and myriad ways, and we often act them out unconsciously. We run the risk of acting them out with our clients in the therapeutic setting if we lack multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills.

The political and cultural divide has personal and professional effects. We remain emotionally reactive, unable to hear each other, furthering the split and othering. Some people in privileged positions seem afraid of the natural evolution of inclusion and diversity while those who are marginalized are forced into positions in which they may react out of intense fear and anger due to chronic trauma and oppression experienced.

It is inevitable that these intense cultural moments will shape and shift our future therapeutic relationships. We need to have the courage to look at and address our blind spots in order to prevent potentially re-traumatizing our clients. If we resist evolving as our culture becomes more complex out of insecurity and fear, much damage will be done to ourselves, our clients, and our relationships.

The Importance of Putting Yourself in Other's Shoes

By Michelle Robichaux & Amber Hall

Empathy, it's one of Carl Rogers' three core conditions that we as counselors attempt to embody as we work with our clients. Often times, we may take pride in our ability to pick up on other people's emotions and we may even consider this to be our biggest strength in therapy. However, though empathy is important in the counseling relationship it is not enough for us to just be aware of what our clients are *feeling*, we also need to be aware of their own unique *experiences* as well.

I have often heard some students and counselors say that they feel as though they can just simply empathize with their clients and that this will be enough to help them develop good rapport. While I would say that empathy and rapport building skills are vital to the counseling relationship, it is also important that we take the time to understand and learn about our client's unique worldview and how their own belief system and cultural background has affected them.

Therefore, in addition to embodying empathy with our clients, we as counselors also have a duty to educate ourselves in regards to our client's socioeconomic, racial and cultural backgrounds as well. For how can we attempt to see our client's world through their eyes if we have never stepped outside of our own? While placing ourselves in new and different environments than we are used to can be scary, this transition is necessary for growth and development in order to become competent when working with client's whose background may be different from our own.

To become culturally competent, one must avoid being culturally encapsulated. The best way to learn about cultural diversity is to experience it firsthand. One way to broaden our horizons is to actively engage in one cultural event/experience with an ethnic/cultural group different from our own (e.g., religion, disability, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc.). Some questions to answer in order to process the experience are as follows:

Where did you go?

What was it like?

How did it feel to be a minority person at the event/place?

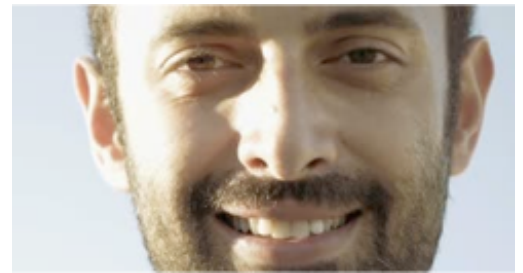
What were some of your thoughts, feelings, and actions?

What cultural dynamics did you observe?

What insights did you gain from this experience that will influence your awareness and knowledge as a culturally alert counselor?

Here are some possible sites you can visit to increase your cultural competency!

1. Tam Boa Temple
2. Tangipahoa African American Heritage Museum & Veterans Archives
3. Women's Center for Healing and Transformation



A Bittersweet Journey: The Race Toward White Identity Development

Oriel Romano, a graduate student and graduate assistant at Loyola University is passionate about promoting and advocating for social justice within the field of counseling. As a former educator, she understands the importance of addressing difficult topics in small digestible chunks. One topic that is often overlooked or unfamiliar is the concept of White Racial Identity.

Her most recent project is the creation of a game inspired by the classic childhood favorite: Candy Land. This original, fun, and creative game helps students explore and discuss their racial identity by taking them on a journey through Helms’s model of White Racial Identity Development Model. The game entitled, A Bittersweet Journey: The Race Towards White Identity Development, creatively portrays and describes the various stages of White Racial Identity according to Helms’s model.

Oriel hopes in playing the game students will learn about Helms’s stages of White Racial Identity and ultimately help them identify their current stage of their own racial identity. Oriel hopes that by participating in the game, players will gain ideas and opportunities to discuss how to progress in their racial identity and broaden their awareness and understanding of racial identity and issues in society in an effort to encourage people to live a more proactive, inclusive, and culturally diverse life. This game strives to help participants explore an incredibly difficult, but important topic in a fun and creative way.



SARP SPOTLIGHT

Students Addressing Race and Privilege, a student-led group at Loyola University New Orleans, put together a racial identity process group led by an outside facilitator from Tulane University’s Social Work program last Spring in which 13 students participated. This group aimed to be a supplement to the single multicultural course, as research shows that this is no longer sufficient in order to gain knowledge, awareness, and skills. In particular, white students’ lack of awareness of themselves as racial beings compounded by the implications of white privilege present unique challenges. By the end of the five weeks, all students responded that much was gained from the experiential learning experience and several stated that they wished there had been more sessions.

With the success of the pilot group, SARP worked with faculty to figure out best how to implement the group within Loyola’s program. They received another grant to run the process group again this spring. Two SARP students applied for a research grant to run the process group three more times and study its effects on white counselors in training. If given the funds and significant effects are found, a racial identity process group could become a supplemental multicultural competency training in counseling programs.

What is SARP?

SARP is an acronym for Students Addressing Racism and Privilege. This is a student run organization aimed to improve and enhance counseling student’s education through a multicultural lens.

What is a racial identity process group?

The racial identity process group is structured to provide students a space to process feelings surrounding multicultural issues more freely. Readings are sometimes assigned to stimulate discussion and experiential activities are designed to help us approach these topics from a new perspective.

2017 Highlights

