



WCSA Updates

Summer Academy 2015

Data Boot Camp
Offering Beginner,
Intermediate, and
Advanced Learning
Levels

Tuesday, July 28, 2015
from 9:00 a.m. - 4:00
p.m. (includes lunch)

CESA 6 Conference
Center, 2300 State Road
44, Oshkosh, WI 54904

Co-Sponsored by CESA
6 Safe and Healthy
Schools Network

Registration Fee:
Grad Student - \$40

SAVE THE DATE:
Fall Summit 2015

Mental Health in
Schools or WSCPAR
Training and Work
Session

Thursday, Oct. 22, 2015
from 9:00 a.m. - 4:00
p.m. (includes lunch)

Turtle Lake, WI

Registration Fee:
Grad Student - \$40

THANK YOU!

...to all the amazing volunteers who helped make Conference run so smoothly!
(And thanks to Maddie Schaefer for working an extra shift when help was needed.)

You were all rock stars!

Shelley Navis, Maddie Schaefer, Courtney McGraw, Jessica Gomez, Erica Harbath, Ashley Miller, Danielle Limberg, Amanda Bigalk, Ashley Billstrom, Kristyn Brownell, Paige Lathrop, Lorice Ratas, Patty Dempsey, Desirae Shroeder, Erin Burns, Megan Wycklendt, Lana Johnson, Wanda Melton, Kelly Creech, Scott Bollen, Sasha Albrecht, Dani Mortenson, Kelly Anderson, Molly Corrigan, Katie Wilsmann, Jamie Fait

WCSA Committees Need Your Help!

If you're thinking, "How can I be involved with WCSA after I graduate," or "How can I be more involved with WCSA while I'm still a student?"... Join a committee! If you were at Conference, you undoubtedly heard about the opportunity to join committees—and the need for help on committees so that WCSA can continue to do great things like putting on one of the best school counseling conferences in the nation! Here's a brief overview of the committees you may want to consider joining:

Education and Professional Development Committee

Tasks: Non-conference professional development for members, including Summer Academy and Fall Summit; WSCPAR Sub-Committee.
Contact: Paula Hauge at hauglep@elmwood.k12.wi.us

Government Relations Committee

Tasks: Day at the Hill pre-conference sectional, building connections with state agencies, and creating partnerships for school counselors.
Contact: Nate Rice at ricen@wawm.k12.wi.us

Professional Recognition and Scholarship Committee

Tasks: Read high school and graduate student scholarship submissions, compile electronic database of all school districts in the state.
Contact: Kaila Rabideau at kaila.rabideau@gmail.com

Public Relations Committee

Tasks: Help promote National School Counselor Week, develop promo materials for school counselors, share great work done by WCSA members statewide.
Contact: Lisa Koenecke at lisa.koenecke@gmail.com

Technology Committee

Tasks: Connect school counselors through social media and develop other mediums for online networking.
Contact: Katrina Eisfeldt at keisfeldt@spencer.k12.wi.us

Graduate Student Sectional Follow-Up: What I Wish I Knew Before My Internship

Liz Singer, UW-Whitewater

Thanks to all the students who attended the grad student sectional on Wednesday night of conference! I was shocked to open my eyes after Megan Wycklendt's fantastic breathing activity to find ASCA Executive Director Richard Wong sitting in the back row! For those who weren't there, we first focused on calming our breath and being aware of being mindful after a long day of sectionals. Then Jessica Pagel and Erica Harbath from Oshkosh took the stage with a wonderfully informative presentation on play therapy—and guests even got Playdoh to take home! We then brought up Gary Campbell, school counselor at Meyer Middle School in River Falls, to field questions about must-have experiences. Last but certainly not least, Richard Wong closed the sectional by informing us on hot topics in school counseling nationwide and giving us some words of encouragement for our future job successes. If you would like either Megan's or Jessica and Erica's handouts, please send me an email at lizsinger2@gmail.com.

WSCA Conference 2015 Reflections

Katerina Youngberg and Stephanie Orfei, UW-River Falls

The WSCA Conference, held a few weeks ago in Madison, was our first counseling conference experience. The two of us, along with four other UW-River Falls students, ventured south to meet with hundreds upon hundreds of school counselors and school counseling students from across the state. For all six of us, this was our first time attending the conference and we learned quickly how things worked and the best way to take full advantage of what the conference has to offer, as well as how to enjoy a few days away from our internships and classes. The following are a few tips we decided would be beneficial to share with students thinking who attend conference in the future.

If possible, take advantage of the half-day or full-day pre-conferences. We attended the afternoon half-day sessions, with a few of us at each one that was offered. This provided some in-depth information and exploration on specific topics related to issues that LGBTQ students face as well as activity-based counseling. The nice part of these longer sessions was that there was time to collaborate and get to know the other school counselors attending the conference.

Attend different sessions than the people you go with. One thing we found helpful was to attend different sessions that were going on at the same time, and afterwards, share resources, information, and the main ideas we took away! This way, it was like we got to attend more than just the session we went to!

Take advantage of all the opportunities to network with other school counseling professionals and educators. Attending sessions and checking out the exhibitor's hall provided opportunities to connect with other professionals, but we found that there were other unexpected ways to accomplish this as well. Little did we know that relaxing in the hot tub at our hotel would turn into a networking opportunity! Sitting with someone new on the shuttle or at lunch was another great way to connect with other school counselors from around the state. Do not be afraid to put yourself out there, introduce yourself, and strike up a conversation with those around you.

Connect with alumni from your program! UW-River Falls and other universities host alumni events at conference. At the UWRF event, alumni and friends of the program gathered to reconnect, share about the program, and see what current students are doing. This year we had 28 people come to our alumni gathering, which provided a unique opportunity for us to learn about life as a school counselor after graduation.

Finally, do not forget to have fun! We explored Madison, got some Badger gear on State Street, and enjoyed our few days off from our internships to have a bit of down time! Overall, we thought the conference was a fantastic way to expand our knowledge of school counseling and build new relationships with school counselors around the state. A few of us have already decided to submit proposals to present next year! We look forward to continuing our trips to the WSCA Annual Conference in future years, and hope you do the same!

Graduate Student Sectional Follow-Up: I'm About to Graduate...Now What?

Katie Wells, UW-Stout

I was able to co-present this section with Liz Singer, hosted by DPI's Gregg Curtis. The sectional offered graduate students advice for their first year as a school counselor. Gregg helped students feel more comfortable after explaining the licensure process and the importance of mandated Academic and Career Plans. ACPs help students plan for careers and college so they can be successful after high school. Olin Morrison, Green Elementary school counselor in River Falls, was able to speak about what the interview process will be like and what students should be knowledgeable about for interviews. He was able to help us understand the competitiveness of job interviews and what employers are looking for.

Stacy Eslick, Madison West school counselor, provided a PowerPoint about research-based small groups. Her group was on student success skills. Additionally, I was able to offer students some suggestions for online curriculum resources, important school counselor websites including ASCA Scene and WSCA's resource tab, and some social media resources that school counselors can use to swap lesson plans and consult with other school counselors. We also received advice via PowerPoint from WSCA Past President Lisa Koenecke. She encouraged graduates to complete a WSCPAR and to use data to show effectiveness. Lisa also reminded us to be respectful of students and their families, because students come from diverse backgrounds and families of all make-ups. If you can't remember, ask them to remind you who is at home. Finally, she said we must work on closing the achievement gap because, as school counselors, we are vital to helping students succeed. Liz and I enjoyed presenting this sectional and were excited to learn from our guest speakers and to have ASCA Executive Director Richard Wong back to attend our sectional and tell us about the ASCA Conference.

Preparing for a Poster Presentation at the WSCA Conference

Patty Dempsey, UW-Oshkosh

I decided to take a step out this year and apply to do a poster presentation. I remember being told about the opportunity last year, and how intimidated I was at the thought of trying to have something worthwhile to present. This year, after some more encouragement from my professor, I opened myself to consider it. This opportunity definitely challenged me to seriously consider what contribution I want to make to the field of school counseling. My internships helped me to crystallize some ideas. During my internship at the high school, I was confronted with the reality of students who were failing and at risk of not graduating, and my subsequent sense of inadequacy over how I could help. I decided to dig into the research that explores what the drop-out rates are at currently in this country and in our state, what factors contribute to students dropping out, and the strategies that have been found to make a difference in reducing the drop-out rates. Even more specifically, my research pointed me to the racial gap that exists in drop-out rates. I initially became aware of this problem back in the first class I attended in our program when we were asked choose a social justice issue to learn more about. I was thankful to rediscover my passion for addressing this issue two years later as a result of my internship. It was even more exciting to have an opportunity to do something to contribute to the solution by doing a poster presentation.

My goals for my presentation were: 1) To raise awareness of the racial gap that exists in high school graduation rates across the country and, in particular, in Wisconsin. 2) To increase understanding of the risk factors that potentially lead to high school students dropping out and potentially contribute to the racial gap. 3) To increase knowledge of evidenced-based strategies that are available to schools and school counselors; in particular, to incorporate into the comprehensive school counseling program to help reduce the risk of dropping out and close the racial graduation gap.

Putting together a poster presentation is different from a research project, because it takes time to figure out the key terms and information to include in the poster. It's important not to overload the poster, making it difficult to read, and it's critical to have flow that is appealing to the eye and simple for the observer to know the take-away points. If you have the means to get a poster printed and laminated, that is great. If not, I saw others at WSCA that used papers and pictures taped to tri-fold boards that were equally professional, colorful, and easy to read. A couple resources I found that offer a great guide for how to make a poster presentation are from the following websites:

<http://www.ncsu.edu/project/posters/#Note0> (for tips) and

http://www.posterpresentations.com/html/free_poster_templates.html (for templates).

I would also recommend putting together an executive summary of your poster with your professional contact information on it, so that if people stop by your poster when you are not there, they can bring your information home with them. The summary could include your title, the issue/problem your presentation is addressing, your goal/objective, your research/results, and a list of references. I encourage you to open yourself to the idea of doing a poster presentation and see what you gain and how you grow through the experience. You each have something to contribute to the field of school counseling.

Study Abroad In Scotland

Katerina Youngberg and Stephanie Orfei, UW-River Falls

Three school counseling students, including Larissa Ruud and ourselves, the authors of this article, had the unique opportunity this past summer to participate in the Wisconsin in Scotland Study Abroad Program. We each took one or two courses in Dalkeith, Scotland, where we met fellow counseling students from across the state. The two courses offered, Social and Cultural Foundations of Counseling and Counseling and the Chemical Dependency Process, allowed us to collaborate, explore, and learn, all while immersed in another culture.

While living in Scotland, students stayed in the Dalkeith Palace, explored the hundreds of acres of land surrounding the house, and took weekend trips to the countryside. We spent time in the city of Edinburgh, shopping and visiting museums and the local castles in the area, and some students even got a glimpse of Queen Elizabeth and Prince William while they were in town for a ceremony! The house chef prepared traditional Scottish dishes, including Scottish eggs and haggis! In addition, we got to feed a hairy coo, listen to local bands, and get to know the locals. We took advantage of our time living in another country and will be able to apply these unique experiences to our work as school counselors.

One of the best things about these summer courses is that they were not only with school counseling students, but also with students who are studying community counseling and marriage and family therapy, so we really got to hear a wide range of perspectives during our class time. We created counseling connections, resources, and friendships that will last a lifetime.

This was the first time students from the UW-River Falls School Counseling Program have taken courses abroad. We all agreed that we came back with new insight and knowledge about school counseling. We would encourage students currently in counseling programs, or even graduates that want to take another course on a specific topic, to explore what is being offered abroad. Students will have another opportunity to study abroad in Scotland this coming summer, and again in the summer of 2016! We encourage school counseling students to contact the Global Connections Office at UWRF if they are interested in learning more about this experience.

How I Changed my Counseling Approach for Working with Elementary Students

Megan Leisen, Winona State University

I have been doing my practicum/internship in an elementary school. In the course work that has led up to my internship, I have been taught many different techniques and theories for working with clients. However, when I started working with elementary-aged students, some of the techniques were not as useful because cognitively, the students were not at a level where they could process the information in ways I hoped they could. I remember being very excited in my first individual session with a student. I felt so prepared with my micro-skills and I was ready to start. Well, about two minutes in, I realized that the use of silence is not always the answer or that reflection of meaning does not always work in elementary students.

This was a struggle for me at first, but as counselors, we have the ability to adapt quickly. I have since realized that with elementary students, you may talk about topics such as their pets, how their weekend was, or even what they ate for breakfast that day and it has the potential to be productive! You don't always need to be talking about feelings or cognitions and how those things are impacting mental health. I have found that most children love games and being able to play with something. One game my supervisor loves that we use frequently is "Family Happenings." This was developed specifically for individuals working in professions like counseling. It focuses on topics related to family dynamics including: separation, divorce, alcoholism, remarriage, blended families, death, abuse, neglect, adoption, birth, family relocation, and school problems. However, I have found that with slight adjustments, this game can be fun and therapeutic for all ages or presenting concerns. Even playing Hungry Hungry Hippo with a student who has problems related to anger can be beneficial by asking questions such as, "How did you feel when you lost?" and "How can you relate that to friendships in school?" Children like games and rapport can be built more quickly while playing them.

Another thing I have found is that the use of books can also be very beneficial in counseling sessions with elementary students. There are so many good books out there that address issues children may be facing at school or home. One book I have used is *How to Lose All Your Friends* by Nancy Carlson. This book is helpful in addressing ways not to behave for children that might have issues maintaining friendships. There are also a lot of relaxation books or books that address particular strong emotions that are developmentally appropriate for children.

Most toys can be modified into some type of counseling game with a little imagination. Young children have a hard time sitting and talking for the course of 20 minutes, so it is helpful to be doing something. (Games and play can also be used as a reward.) I do not believe that books or games should be used independently, but I do think that they can be the perfect addition to therapy to help children open up and help build relationships with school counselors.

Response to Spirituality in Counseling

Scott Bauer, UW-Superior

On my way back from a WSCA graduate student committee meeting on Saturday, November 22nd, over the crackling of static from what was probably a public radio broadcast, I heard a comparative religion expert, and practicing atheist, discuss how extremists in every belief system, including atheism, give a poor overall impression of that system. He cited that only 2.5% of Americans describe themselves as atheist, and only one out of every 7 of atheists are considered anti-theist (having a public viewpoint that the concept of “religion” itself is evil). Such a discussion contrasted from the Catholic crucifix décor of Mount Mary University earlier observed that morning at WSCA’s meeting site.

That barely audible radio broadcast reminded me of a question raised during a session at the annual Wisconsin Counselor Association conference just one weekend earlier in Madison. Being part of a small counseling program at UW-Superior, our participation in conferences often depends on having enough interested attendees to share and justify expenses. At the 2014 WCA Conference, in one of the breakout sessions I attended, B. Rader presented on Alfred Adler’s view of religion as necessary (if perhaps transitory) for social promotion and individual health. One of the attendees posed a question from an anti-theist position similar to Freud’s personal view. Rader acknowledged that within the psychological sciences, the atheistic philosophy of Freud still philosophically underlies many assumptions regarding faith. The more moderate, although rather secular, humanism of Adler failed to become the profession’s overall standard.

Counseling is finally acknowledging the functionality that religion and spirituality have for the majority of clients. Not simply chaplains or pastoral counselors, but all counselors can acknowledge practiced faith as a protective factor. In a culture dominated by the intrinsic meaninglessness of post-modern existential philosophies, common shared experiences and deep personal meanings prevent hopelessness. When I was an active military chaplain, I would ask each of my counsees, “Where is God?” Respondents to the question tended to list first their religious practices. Eventually, we understood what meaning informed their entire lives. Often, the stress in their lives came from a disconnection from the particular people and practices that used to motivate them.

Now, even secular counselors are encouraged to ask their own “God question.” How might a client’s faith be the major protective factor in times of deep grief, separation, or loss? What cultural traditions support the client’s passage of time, developmental stages, holidays/holy days, anniversaries, or other life transitions? Where Freud discouraged religiosity and where existentialists encouraged “meaning-making,” the client may need to go into the mystical areas of purpose and destiny. As partners on the highway into eternity, school counselors may find their place in the car-pooling lane. Multiculturalism is now expanding to be religiously inclusive and supportive. Are you secure enough in your own religious assumptions to truly respect your students’ own expressions of faith? School counselors are to serve all students and related school systems regardless of faith background (including the absence of faith); yet, if we cannot be there for students who do express concerns in spiritual vocabulary when they need appropriate parental notification for referral, we may fail to serve.

~ Graduate Schools with WSCA Student Chapters ~

Concordia University, Lakeland College, Marquette University, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Mount Mary University, University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, University of Wisconsin-Platteville, University of Wisconsin-River Falls, University of Wisconsin-Stout, University of Wisconsin-Superior, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, Winona State University.