

The top portion of the cover features a photograph of a fern frond in a forest setting. The letters 'NCCA' are overlaid on the left side of the image in a light green, serif font.

NCCA

Carolina Counselor

Winter 2023

Official Newsletter of the North Carolina
Counseling Association

Carolina Counselor



Official Newsletter of the NCCA

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NCCA Annual Conference
February 15-17, 2024

Counseling Compact for NC
Anticipated Late 2024

Have a Contribution for the Newsletter?

Email your submission to:
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Thanks for Reading!

Please submit to the *Carolina Counselor* when you have something to share with professional counselors in North Carolina.



Carolina Counselor Sections

Branch News:

News about the North Carolina branch of the American Counseling Association

Campus Happenings:

News concerning student projects and student work in the department, university, community, and/or professional organizations such as local chapters of CSI and/or state, regional, and national counseling organizations

Diversity and Advocacy:

Discussion of issues related to diversity, multicultural competency, and advocacy; may address the helping professions directly or indirectly

Division News:

Any news related to NCCA division projects

Higher Education in NC:

Comments on the state of higher education in North Carolina and tips for effective teaching/counseling

Legislative News:

State and national news concerning enacted and proposed policy changes related to professional counselors in any setting

Member Spotlight:

NCCA members who deserve the spotlight! Please provide a photo of the nominee, a short summary of the member's accomplishments, and contact information/photo of your nominee

Perspectives From the Field:

Professional and ethical issues in counseling, counseling theory/practice, and/or reflections on work as a student, professional counselor, counselor supervisor, and/or counselor educator

NCCA membership is required to submit articles.

Branch News

NCCA Annual Conference



We are excited to connect with our members and industry partners on February 15-17 in Greensboro, NC, for our [2024 Annual Conference!](#)

Learn the latest about the counseling profession, engage in thought-provoking conversations, and network with industry peers on February 15-17 at the Embassy Suites by Hilton Greensboro in Greensboro, NC during the 2024 NCCA Annual Conference.

The 2024 conference theme is Change, Adapt, or Lose: The Imperative for Advocacy in Counseling.

Click Here to Register
<https://www.n2ca.org/registration>

<https://n2ca.memberclicks.net/annual-conference>

Diversity and Advocacy

SAIGE-NC Open Letter to Edil Torres-Rivera, ACA President and Christine Suniti Bhat, ACA President-Elect: Move the 2025 ACA Conference

by Angela Brooks-Livingston

Dear Dr. Edil Torres-Rivera and Dr. Christine Suniti Bhat:

I write to you as the 2023-2024 SAIGE-NC president and with the full support of the SAIGE-NC Board to ask that you and the ACA Governing Council move the 2025 ACA Annual Conference out of Florida. In the environment of legislative violence targeting communities, specifically transgender/gender expansive folx, Florida is a front runner. Elected officials in Florida continue to spout hateful, dehumanizing rhetoric towards trans and gender expansive communities. They continue to push legislation that makes living in Florida tremendously unsafe for this community, including not having access for life saving gender affirming care. Meanwhile, other states are committed to be refuge states including Colorado, Illinois, Maryland, New Mexico, California, Washington State, Vermont, and Minnesota. Show your support for members of ACA who do not feel safe going to Florida and move the 2025 Annual Conference to a refuge state.

Because of legislative violence and hate fostered by elected officials, Florida is not safe for the LGBTGEQIAP+ community, immigrants, and Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC). Multiple organizations have published travel warnings about the dangers of traveling to Florida for these communities including NAACP, ACLU, Human Rights Campaign, and Equality Florida. How can ACA keep members of these communities safe while at a conference that attracts thousands of people? If increased law enforcement presence is part of the conversation, this needs to be heavily reconsidered. Law enforcement inflicts violence against these communities, BIPOC especially. This will not harbor an environment of safety.

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Diversity and Advocacy

SAIGE-NC Open Letter to Edil Torres-Rivera, ACA President and Christine Suniti Bhat, ACA President-Elect: Move the 2025 ACA Conference

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I do not assume it is an easy task to move a national conference that has been in the planning stages for several months. I also recognize that this will have a financial impact on ACA. While it is important for an organization to remain in solid financial standing, it is important for ACA to prioritize members.

According to the 1099 filed with the IRS in 2022, ACA reported a revenue of \$1,784,899, expenses of \$1,369,997, net income of \$414,902, and net assets of \$5,102,429. There will be a loss when moving the conference because of bookings already confirmed. At the same time, if ACA continues to plan to offer the annual conference in Florida, profit from the conference is in jeopardy. Many members will not feel safe to attend the conference.

Additionally, SAIGE-NC will encourage NCCA and SAIGE-NC members to boycott the ACA conference.

Catherine Roland, the 2016-2017 President of ACA, took a stand against legislative violence that occurred in Tennessee, and moved the 2017 conference from Nashville to San Francisco. From her own words in the January 2017 edition of Counseling Today magazine:

This past spring, the American Counseling Association Governing Council made the wrenching decision to move our 2017 national conference from Nashville to San Francisco. That decision was the result of a bill passed by the Tennessee Legislature, and signed into law by the state's governor, that is discriminatory in nature, targeting the LGBTQ community and challenging the 2014 ACA Code of Ethics. The ACA Governing Council determined to vary our plan, make a statement and hope that the cultural and social justice divide we were seeing would heal and that these discriminatory laws would begin to subside. Unfortunately, that doesn't

Diversity and Advocacy

SAIGE-NC Open Letter to Edil Torres-Rivera, ACA President and Christine Suniti Bhat, ACA President-Elect: Move the 2025 ACA Conference

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appear to be the case.

As we greet 2017, more legislation that is discriminatory in nature is on the way from multiple states. These pieces of legislation would attempt to limit counselors and constituents with no basis in logic or justice. It is troubling to say the least, and if we do not stand up and stand tall together, we run the risk of harm coming to many individuals and groups.

Catherine Roland recognized this as an opportunity to embody advocacy, which is required of counselors by the ACA Code of Ethics. She and the Governing Council worked diligently to move the conference, plan the conference attended by thousands of people, worked with hotels and venues to ensure all events had space, and offered members who could not attend in San Francisco to transfer their registration to the 2018 conference. Roland and the Governing Council undertook this monumental task and made it happen.

I encourage you to follow the lead of the late, great Catherine Roland. Stand tall for ACA members who identify as LGBTGEQIAP+, immigrants, BIPOC, and move the annual conference to a refuge state.

Sincerely,

Angela Brooks-Livingston, SAIGE-NC President

April Bradley, SAIGE-NC President-elect

Rebekah Byrd, SAIGE-NC Secretary

Mac Schauman, SAIGE-NC Social Media Representative

Whitney Akers, SAIGE-NC Past-president

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Division News

ACAC NC Division News

by Amy Grybush

As 2023 comes to an end, we are provided with an ideal opportunity to reflect upon our progress thus far and to chart a course for the upcoming year. The Board of ACAC NC has been working on providing new opportunities for connection and growth within our division and we are excited to share a few of these efforts with you:

- Be on the lookout for our bi-annual newsletter beginning Spring 2024
- Starting January 2024, we will begin providing an email news brief called the “Research Round-Up”. These periodic updates will provide synopses on recent and innovative research that may inform your practice. Reach out if you have suggestions for topics (acacnc23@gmail.com)!
- We are working on providing a webinar in late spring (CEUs included!)
- You can find us at our new webpage ([ACAC NC Home](#)), as well as on Instagram [@acac_nc](#) where we provide timely information and resources.

Dr. Amy Grybush is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Counseling at Wake Forest University. She is a licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor Associate (LCMHCA), a Professional School Counselor (PSC), and is trained in Child-Centered Play Therapy.



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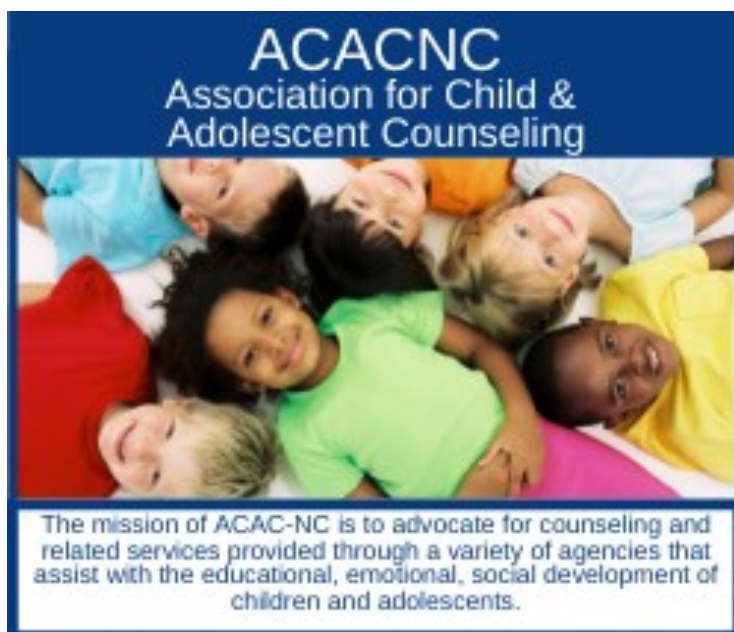
ACAC NC Division News

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- There will be an ACAC NC Meet Up at the 2024 North Carolina Counseling Association Annual Conference, February 15-17, 2024 (more information to come).
- We are currently holding our membership drive and would love to have you [join us!](#)

The end of the year also provides the opportunity to express our gratitude; for our members, our colleagues, our profession, and for the children we serve. May the end of your year be filled with peace and contentment.

Amy L. Grybush, PhD, LCMHCA, NCC
Assistant Professor, Wake Forest University
President, ACAC NC 2023-2025



Division News

NCCCA Division News

Greetings All College Counselors,

The NCCCA Division of NCCA would like to announce an opportunity to revitalize the division. We currently have three officers in position for the next year who are diligently working at increasing membership and providing services for our membership. We are planning on having a "Get to know you" mixer at our February annual conference....details to follow. We intend on providing at least 2 webinars in the spring and summer of 2024 that address the unique needs and challenges of college counselors. These webinars will provide CEU's and will be marketed to the division as well as the NCCA general membership. We would encourage you to reach out to us and provide feedback as to what the membership feels would be helpful and what you would like the Executive Officers of NCCCA to address in the coming year.

We hope as you are finishing your semesters at your prospective workplace and/or colleges that you are able to achieve your goals and provide the wonderful services you do at your respective institutions.

Current Officers:

President: Kim Werth, MA, LCMHC, NCC.
Secretary: Megan Peek, MA, LCMHC, NCC
President-Elect: Calista Colbert, MA, LCMHCA, NCC

Thank you all for entrusting us and letting us be an integral part of this organization, it is truly an honor.

Best,
NCCCA Officers

Division News

North Carolina Counselors for Social Justice

Counselors for Social Justice is a national division of the American Counseling Association that became official in 2000. CSJ works to promote social justice in our society through confronting oppressive systems of power and privilege that affect professional counselors and our clients and to assist in the positive change in our society through the professional development of counselors.

We have begun planning to start a North Carolina division of CSJ. If you are interested in being involved, please reach out to Sarah Moore, sarahmoorephd@gmail.com.

Division News

One and Done: NCAMFC Announces the Year of the Only-Child Family

by Patricia Bethea Whitfield



The North Carolina Division of Marriage and Family Counselors has proclaimed 2023-2024, the **Year of the Only-Child Family**. The goal is to focus on the fastest growing family structure with a specific focus on how the choice to have just one child impacts family dynamics and how counselors can best meet the needs of families who pursue the spare approach to child rearing.

In 1980, the Chinese government adopted a one child policy to curb explosive population growth. Then the world watched as Chinese spouses wrestled with awesome choices around how to get the preferred one child, a boy, which pregnancy to carry to term to assure the preferred outcome, and how to manage their grief and ensure their care if the one child were lost in later life.

Fast forward nearly forty years and, faced with declining population growth, the Chinese government has rescinded the one child policy. Each Chinese family is now permitted two children while worldwide, more families are choosing to have just one child and for some very different reasons. According to the Pew Research Center, in the United States, family size has shrunk from 3.7 children in 1960 to a current trend of just one child in nearly 25 percent of families and the trend is growing.

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One and Done: NCAMFC Announces the Year of the Only-Child Family

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Many families may be trending toward one child because of what it costs to raise a child. These costs include childcare cost, missed time from work for working parents, and the rising cost of education. Also, according to Psychology Today, many women are delaying childbearing until later and therefore, limiting the number of children they can expect to have in their reproductive lifespan, and many individuals are making the decision to parent alone regardless of marital status. Finally, some individuals reject the notion of having children who will be expected to care for their parents in later life and others see the one child choice as crucial to a sustainable earth already overburdened by too many people.

While the only-child choice is gaining some acceptance, society still poses a lot of questions about things such as how being an only child will affect the child's emotional health or how having just one child will impact the parent-child bond. From the perspective of Bowen's multigenerational approach, genograms certainly look a lot different with fewer siblings, aunts, uncles, and cousins but we have yet to discover the true impact of the only child choice on family dynamics over time.

Join the North Carolina Association of Marriage and Family Counselors as we explore the growing trend and shifting dynamics of only-child families in the NCAMFC Spring 2024 virtual conference. Individuals and family counseling classes are invited to explore aspects of the only-child choice and join in the discussion. If you adopt this project, please let us know. Conference details will follow.

Patricia Bethea Whitfield, Ed.D., President
North Carolina Association of Marriage and Family Counselors

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Division News

SAIGE-NC Division News

This year, SAIGE-NC committed to accessibility, advocacy, and keeping members informed. The SAIGE-NC Board members are passionate about members having access to information that affects them and their clients, along with support while trying to navigate an environment of legislative violence. SAIGE-NC is working diligently to stay current and disseminate information to members and counselors in North Carolina about this legislation happening in the North Carolina General Assembly targeting the transgender/gender expansive community. In August 2023, three laws went into effect that targeted youth in the trans/gender expansive community, including the Save Women's Sports (HB574 (Anti-Trans Sports Bill), Youth Health Protection (HB808 Gender-Affirming Care Ban), Parents' Bill of Rights (SB49 Don't Say Gay or Trans Bill). These laws went into effect immediately, which left a lot of questions for schools, healthcare providers, and counselors.

These laws have an impact on the LGBTGEQIA+ community, especially our youth. According to a 2023 poll conducted by the Trevor Project:

- 86% of transgender and nonbinary youth say recent debates around anti-trans bills have negatively impacted their mental health; as a result of these policies and debates in the last year, 45% of trans youth experienced cyberbullying, and nearly 1 in 3 reported not feeling safe to go to the doctor or hospital when they were sick or injured.
- 75% of LGBTQ youth say that both anti-LGBTQ hate crimes and threats of violence against LGBTQ spaces often give them stress or anxiety.
- At least 70% of LGBTQ youth say issues like efforts to restrict abortion access, gun violence, police brutality, and not having enough money often give them stress and anxiety.

It is clear the argument that these laws are to protect youth are doing the exact opposite. These laws are adding to the difficulty of being a LGBTGEQIA+

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adolescent. It is increasing stress and worry for parents of these youth who want to keep them safe and support them with their identity discoveries. Additionally, it is also taking the power away from the youth, parent, and doctor to make medical decisions for the well-being of the adolescent.

SAIGE-NC is working diligently to keep members informed, and offer space for getting support. Board members are staying in touch with organizations in the state, Campaign for Southern Equality and Equality NC, to have the most up-to-date information. We pass this information along to members through email and social media posts. Please follow us on social media to get updates and notifications of events: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/saige-nc-ncca/>; <https://www.facebook.com/saigencca>; https://www.instagram.com/saige_nc/ Additionally, SAIGE-NC Board members will offer a session at the NCCA conference in February 2024 with the most updated information about these laws.

SAIGE-NC has offered several events this semester including free continuing education trainings on working with pregnant folx in the LGBTGEQ+ community, and gender affirming care. As a Board, we are committed to accessibility, therefore; our trainings are free to anyone who is interested. Additionally, we voted on a resolution that states graduate student membership to SAIGE-NC is free and newly licensed counselors (2 years or less) membership fee is \$5. If you joined for the 2023-2024 year, you can contact NCCA after January 1, 2024 to receive a refund. The refund request must be made by June 30, 2024. If you are not a member and want to join SAIGE-NC, please send us an email: saigencca@gmail.com.

In the spring 2024, SAIGE-NC is committed to continue to be active and offer services to members. Be on the lookout for dates for gender affirming care CE

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training, working with LGBTGEQ+ folx who are neurodivergent CE training, membership meetings, and invitation to join a networking list of LGBTGEQ+ therapists.

We are a strong, vibrant community. We have the right to take up space, be visible, celebrate, and live joyfully. We will continue to live in joy, and peace while also fighting with righteous rage. SAIGE-NC is committed to keeping members informed and to be a resource. Please reach out if we can support you in any way or want to get involved with the work of SAIGE-NC.

Meet the 2023-2024 SAIGE-NC Board Members



President: Angela Brooks-Livingston (she/they), MA, NCC, LCMHCS, LCAS, CCS is currently serving Wilkes County as a private practice therapist. They graduated from Appalachian State University Clinical Mental Health Counseling Master's program with a concentration in Marriage and Family therapy, and certificates in Addictions Counseling and Expressive Arts Therapy. She worked in community mental health for 8.5 years in several positions including outpatient therapist, intensive in-home team lead, and associate center director. Angela specializes in working with the LGBTGEQ+ community, in particular transgender and gender expansive clients. She teaches at Appalachian State University as an adjunct instructor in the Counseling, Family Therapy, and Higher Education Department. Angela has been involved in NCCA for 14 years, including serving as NCCA president in 2016-2017. Angela practices soul-care by camping with her partner, son, and dog, reading, completing puzzles, watching British television, practicing Julia Child recipes, and listening to 80s hairbands.

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President-Elect: April Bradley, MAR (she/they) is a master's student in William & Mary's clinical mental health counseling program and a 2023 Child, Adolescent, and Family Behavioral Health Fellow with the Center of Excellence for Integrated Care. A graduate of Yale Divinity School in Ethics, April is the 2023 recipient of the Eckerd College's Margaret Rigg Social Justice Award for her demonstrated and committed service in the advancement of gender and family justice. Her counseling interests and research include serving adults, children, families, and the LGBTGEQ+ community with diverse needs and experiences, such as mood and anxiety disorders, reproductive and perinatal mental health, medical, birth, and complex trauma, parenting, and attachment through the myriad life experiences that shape each of us, such as chronic illness and disability, gender identity, mental health, neurodivergence spirituality, and sexuality. April is the editor and compiler of the forthcoming *Flare: An Anthology of Chronic Illness Told in Flash Narratives* and serves as the chair of the North Carolina Counseling Association's Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee.



Past-President: Whitney P. Akers, PhD, LCMHC, NCC, ACS (she/they) is an Associate Professor in the Department of Counseling and the Director of the Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke. A National Certified Counselor, an Approved Clinical Supervisor, and a Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor (NC), Dr. Akers' clinical experience includes counseling in community agency, inpatient, spiritual care, hospital/integrated care, detention center, school, equine therapy, and private practice settings. Their research interests center on the ways in which people who identify as LGBTGEQ+ experience outness, and how their intersectionally diverse lived-experiences are

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impacted by the current sociopolitical climate in terms of access to safety, survival, connection, and personhood. Additionally, they engage in participatory action research strategies in an effort to support marginalized populations, challenge oppressive power structures, and enhance communal resiliency.



Secretary: Rebekah Byrd , Ph.D., LPC, (TN), LCMHC (NC), NCC, RPT-S, ACS (she/hers) is an Associate Professor of Counseling and Director of the Institute for Play Therapy and Expressive Arts Education and Research at Sacred Heart University. Dr. Byrd has been a counselor educator for over 13 years and has over 20 years of experience working in the mental health field in varying capacities and settings. Her research

specialization falls primarily in issues pertaining to children/adolescent counseling, play therapy, LGBTGEQQIA+ advocacy, school counseling, social justice/multicultural concerns, self-injury, and women's wellness. She recently co-authored a textbook on counseling children and adolescents. She serves on many national and statewide committees.



Social Media Representative: Macintyre (Mac) Schauman, MA, LCMHCA (he/him) is an outpatient therapist at the University of North Carolina Medical School in Chapel Hill. A recent graduate of the Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program at Appalachian State University, Mac served as the Vice President of the Counseling, Family Therapy, and Higher Education Queer Alliance and as the first openly gay Graduate Student Body President. Mac was honored with the Outstanding Graduate Student Service Award and the Dr. Christina Rosen Social Action

Award. As the newly appointed Social Media Representative for SAIGE-NC, Mac is excited to further the cause of LGBTQ+ advocacy and awareness.

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Legislative News

Counseling Compact Updates for North Carolina Counselors

by Natalie Ricciutti

It has been the goal of the American Counseling Association (ACA) to lessen the barriers to portability and reciprocity that counselors often face, and provide better care to clients in underserved areas (ACA, 2023). The foremost way ACA is working to accomplish this goal is through the Counseling Compact. The Counseling Compact was signed into law in North Carolina on July 7, 2022, making it the 16th state to do so (Counseling Compact, 2022). Since then, the compact has been signed into law in 31 states, and the ACA and state-level counseling professional organizations are working with the other 19 states to advocate on behalf of the Compact (L. Linde, personal communication, November 21, 2023). For this reason, it is necessary for counselors in North Carolina to be informed about the Counseling Compact if they wish to practice in other states.

According to Dr. Lynn Linde, the Chief of Professional Practice for the American Counseling Association, a Compact Commission has been created to help implement the compact's vision for interstate counseling practice (L. Linde, personal communication, November 21, 2023). The Commission includes one representative from each of the 30 states' licensure boards, and is

Dr. Natalie Ricciutti is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Counseling at UNC Charlotte. She is a proud advocate for the Counseling Compact and interstate counseling practice in order to better serve clients in rural and underserved areas.



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Counseling Compact Updates for North Carolina Counselors

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in the process of determining a vendor to develop a comprehensive database for the Counseling Compact. The database will be used by the Commission, compact member states, and licensed professions (Counseling Compact, 2023). The purpose of the database is to streamline the process for state-level licensing boards to provide privileges to practice to counselors licensed in outside states. The database will also allow licensing boards to learn differences and similarities between individual state's licensure requirements. Dr. Linde stated that the biggest challenge the Compact Commission has faced so far was the development of a database. The Commission is expected to choose a vendor soon, and the database will start to be developed shortly after that. Additionally, the Compact Commission is expected to hire an Executive Director in early 2024 to oversee the creation of the database.

Counselors licensed in North Carolina and any of the other states that have passed the Counseling Compact will be able to apply for privileges to practice after the database has been fully developed and operationalized. At this time, the Compact Commission hopes for privileges to practice to start being granted in the second half of 2024. In the meantime, Isabel Eliassen, the Policy Analyst for the Council of States Governments, stated that licensed counselors can make sure their licenses are active, up-to-date, and with no disciplinary actions (I. Eliassen, personal communication, November 21, 2023). Counselors can also determine the jurisprudence requirements of the states they wish to practice in. Counselors with privileges to practice must adhere to the scope of practice and all applicable laws and regulations in the state where their client is located. Some states, including North Carolina, may require counselors to pass a jurisprudence exam prior to being granted privileges to practice. For these reasons, it is necessary for counselors practicing in multiple states to be

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Counseling Compact Updates for North Carolina Counselors

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familiar with each states' mandates.

Licensed counselors who wish to practice in other states can receive additional information from the Counseling Compact website (counselingcompact.org). Applications for privileges to practice will also be available on the website. Both Dr. Lynn Linde and Isabel Eliassen recommended that counselors keep an eye out for updates from the Counseling Compact and the North Carolina Board of Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselors throughout 2024.

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- Counseling Compact. (2023). *RFP for data system announced*. <https://counselingcompact.org/rfp-for-data-system-announced/>
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Legislative News

When Ethics and the Law Conflict?

by Bill Stewart

A few months ago, the Republican supermajority overrode the Governor's veto to pass three anti-trans bills into law. A version of this article was circulated through the SAIGE-NC newsletter, but we wanted to circulate this to all members to inform on the bills and inspire advocacy for our profession and – most importantly – our clients whom these laws impact. For children under the age of 18, these bills prevent trans students from participating in school sports, prevent gender-affirming medical procedures, and prevent or limit gender expression that is not consistent with biological sex. These laws run counter to science which shows that gender affirming medical and mental care improve well-being and reduce the risk of suicide. As counselors, the ACA Code of Ethics ASCA Ethical Standards require us to place the well-being of our clients first. Unfortunately, the ASCA Ethical Standards also includes a provision that directs school counselors to follow local laws. How do we balance those conflicting obligations?

Although each law has challenges for our clients, the law that most directly challenges counselors is the Parents' Bill of Rights. This bill does the following:

- Requires educators and school personnel to notify parents of students'

Bill Stewart is a Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor – Associate who works in private practice where he spends part of his time working with the military community. Bill is the current president of the Military and Government Counseling Association of North Carolina and is the Member-at-Large for Government Affairs for NCCA. Prior to becoming a counselor, Bill served as a paratrooper in the 82nd Airborne followed by a career at Johnson & Johnson. Bill also holds an MBA from Duke University.



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When Ethics and the Law Conflict?

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names and pronouns if they are different from student records. This includes nicknames.

- Prohibits the discussion of gender identity, sexual activity, or sexuality in grades K-4th grade.
- Allows parents and adult students to “opt-in”, rather than “opt-out” of protected information surveys, which can ask questions about “sex behaviors and attitudes” “political affiliations of the student or student’s parent”, “mental or psychological problems of the student or student’s family” among other things.
- Creates a process for parents to review and object to educational materials used at the school, including school library materials.
- Takes effect for the 2023-2024 school year.

Per the above, a school counselor employed by a school is required to break confidentiality and notify the parents if a student expresses a gender preference that is not consistent with their biological sex. Failure to do so can result in loss of license and fines up to \$5,000.

The rollout of this law has been inconsistent. Originally, the bill was planned for approval over the summer but the process of over-riding the appeal took until the second half of August. Some school districts appear to have assumed the bill would pass and were prepared with updates for parents prior to the start of school. Other districts appear to be scrambling to interpret and enact enforcement.

The Impact

School Counselors have historically provided a safe space for LGBTQ+ kids to discuss the challenges they face at school due to bullying. Because this law requires the outing of kids whose parents may not be supportive, that safe space

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When Ethics and the Law Conflict?

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is no longer available. The statistics suggest that this will have a devastating impact on kids who are already high risk. LGBTQ+ youth are four times more likely to commit suicide. Per a study by Minta, this risk drops by 1/3 if the kids have just one supportive adult. Additionally, the Trevor Project found that LGBTQ+ youth are not at greater risk because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, but rather because of how they are mistreated or stigmatized by society. All of these statistics support the need for gender-affirming care by our school counselors.

This bill is limited to school counselors who are employed by the state. Currently, non-school employed counselors can still provide gender-affirming talk therapy without disclosure to parents. We have concern that efforts will be made to close this loophole at some point in the future.

What Can You Do?

North Carolina law now requires school counselors who are employed by the state to report students who express a gender identity that is different from their biological sex. Here's some things you can do:

1. Follow the guidance of your school and talk to your supervisor about this law to understand your requirements.
2. School counselors have the ability to discuss their requirement to disclose with the students just as they would discuss limits to confidentiality. This may enable a counselor to learn more about a student's situation without directly discussing their gender identity.
3. If you have a child who you think may disclose, consider directing them to care outside the school system.
4. Share awareness of this situation with colleagues to build awareness about the mental health risks to children.

Legislative News

When Ethics and the Law Conflict?

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5. Attend the SAIGE-NC session on gender affirming care on December 8 from 630PM – 830PM (learn more at www.n2ca.org/upcoming-events).
6. Get involved with groups like SAIGE-NC that advocate for school counselors and kids.
7. **MAKE SURE YOU VOTE!**



Perspectives From the Field

Gratitude: A Uniting Force Across Miles, Climates, and Cultures

by Rose Aucoin

I am a North Carolina Licensed Clinical Mental Health Professional who finds herself temporarily relocated to a rural community in Utah. Given that I moved a year ago from a large southern city of over a million people, the move was every bit a culture shock. After the initial three-day drive from my North Carolina home of twenty years, to my new home in Utah, I was met by the kindest neighbors with greetings of welcome, wrapped up in fresh garden produce, home-made baking, and people ready to help me settle amongst approximately 712 residents. I went about my day meeting people in the grocery store, the gas station, and the town post office. Each time I met someone I was happy to hear stories of the joys and struggles of rural life. Living for the first time on a hobby farm of goats, chickens, and many barn cats, my new life was truly an adventure. I was forever learning and growing within the safety of neighbors who shared tips like placing tennis balls in the nesting areas so my chickens knew where to lay their eggs or the best ways to deal with run-away-roosters.

Quickly I realized that not only were my new neighbors sharing their knowledge of farm life, but they were also opening up to me about their faith, families, and life struggles in a way that gave me the gift of deeper

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Perspectives From the Field

Gratitude: A Uniting Force Across Miles, Climates, and Cultures

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understanding and empathy for a culture different than my own. I watched farmers lose their lands after a drought, forced to sell their homes, facing uncertainty about how to meet their families' basic needs. I witnessed how faith, community, and service were coping skills that the LDS community taught by example. From food banks, clothing closets, weekly delivery of basic needs, and intentional pairings of community members for emotional support, it became clear that counselors working with clients with similar cultures would need to consider the role religion plays in their lives.

Many times, during the days and nights while I sat on my front porch taking a break from my work as a remote counselor educator, I found myself reflecting on how this life experience enhances my multicultural awareness and counseling competence. Having the opportunity to learn firsthand the struggles of rural farmers and their families while witnessing the positivity of their faith-based coping mechanisms brought me face-to-face with my biases around the role that religion has in counseling. While I am not a religious person, my eyes were opened to the fact that others are religious and that as a counselor I can respect and broach this topic with future clients. Most importantly I learned that I am not being ingenuine if I make room for my client's faith in our work together. Our mutual respect and interest in each other's culture prepared me to serve my new neighbors in a relevant way.

When I was asked by an official of the local LDS community to speak at their church on the topic of gratitude, I saw a way to give back to strangers who taught me so much. I accepted this invitation immediately. It was with great pleasure and a good deal of nervousness that got to work planning how I would introduce the practice of using a Gratitude Journal as a way of coping with the daily stress of life. This is where my multicultural competence in counseling

Perspectives From the Field

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really got a workout. As I created my presentation materials, I experienced a “first” in that it was the first time I was about to speak to a group of people whose religious faith was their strongest support in life. I faced a dilemma, in most of my clinical experience and academic training I had the uncanny feeling that religion was a topic to steer away from in my role as a mental health counselor. Yet, I did not know how to speak in a church without recognizing the role faith has in the lives of those who were waiting to hear what I had to say. The mental gymnastics that I found myself engaged in led to preparation that put faith central in my presentation. During my workshop we reviewed the research around how practicing gratitude enhances a person’s feelings of connection to their Higher Power. For those in attendance this was God-the-Father. We talked about how practicing gratitude strengthened families and encouraged them to become more active in their faith community. We talked about research that indicates that people of all ages benefit from practicing gratitude as a way of promoting healthy communication and relationships at home, school, and work. We ended the night with a review of how gratitude practices boost a person’s physical, mental, and brain health. During the social that followed, creative gratitude journals were made by all participants who completed the activity with a commitment to using their journals throughout the New Year.

As I reflect on the past year, I realize that my new neighbors have given me the gift of inclusion in their space where I gained knowledge and experience of how to best serve clients who come to me from the LDS community. The result of this opportunity is that I experienced an organic reinforcement of the power of community engagement in building my multicultural competence as a counselor. For this I am forever grateful!

Thanks for Reading!

Do you have a contribution for the
Carolina Counselor?

Would you like to discuss a potential idea for this
newsletter?

email Nicole Stargell at nccounselingassociationweb@gmail.com

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Carolina Counselor Editor



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Carolina Counselor Assistant Editor



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Back to School

“Dedicated to the growth and development of the counseling profession and those who are served.”

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- The fundamental purposes of the North Carolina Counseling Association shall be:
- To provide a united organization through which all persons engaged or interested in any phase of the counseling profession can exchange ideas, seek solutions to common problems, and stimulate their professional growth.
 - To promote professional standards and advocacy for the counseling profession.
 - To promote high standards of professional conduct among counselors.
 - To promote the acceptance and value of individual differences and the well-being of all individuals.
 - To conduct professional, educational, and scientific meetings and conferences for counselors.
 - To encourage scientific research and creative activity in the field of counseling.
 - To become an effective voice for professional counseling by disseminating information on, and promoting, legislation affecting counseling.
 - To encourage and support the divisions and chapters.

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