

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

Spring/Summer 2025

Official Newsletter of the North Carolina  
Counseling Association

# Carolina Counselor



Official Newsletter of the NCCA

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

2025 Annual Conference  
February 27 - March 1

Counseling Compact in  
Progress

Thanks to Our Outgoing  
Officers!

### Have a Contribution for the Newsletter?

Email your submission to:  
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### We're on Social Media

#### Facebook:

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ngAssociation

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[n2ca.org](http://n2ca.org)

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# Inside This Issue

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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

*2025 Annual NCCA Conference Was a Success!*



<https://n2ca.org/>

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# Branch News

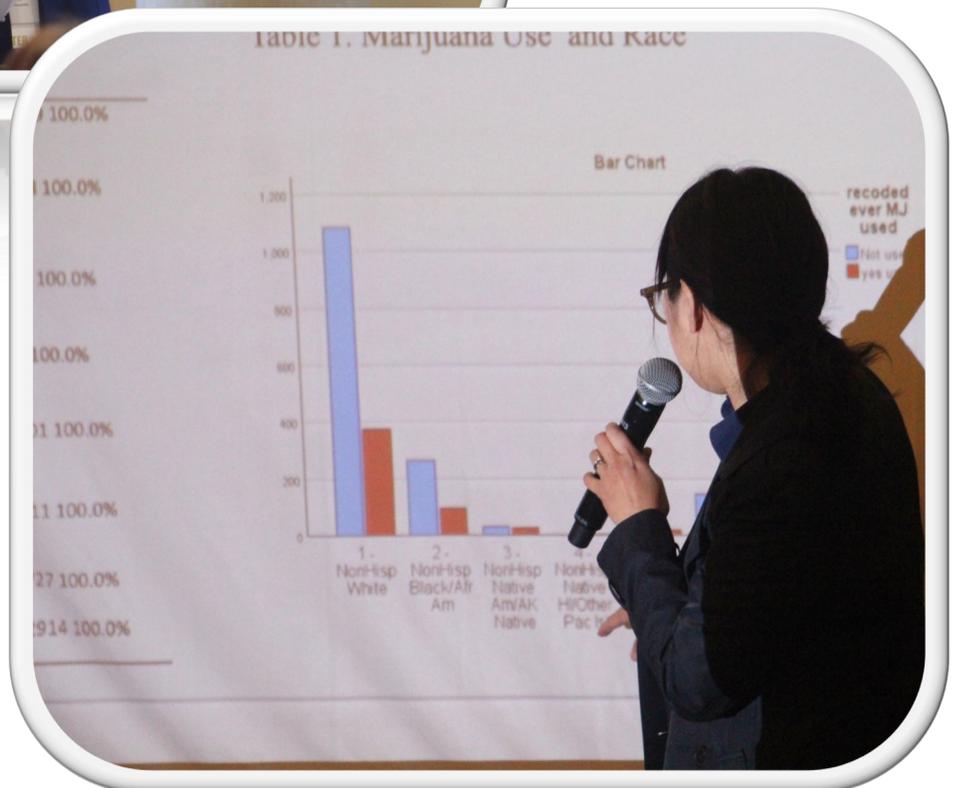
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# Division News

## *Updates from the Association for Child and Adolescent Counseling of North Carolina (ACAC-NC)*

**By Amy Grybush**

As part of our ongoing commitment to supporting the professional development of counselors across the state, the North Carolina Division of the Association for Child and Adolescent Counseling (ACAC-NC) was proud to offer scholarships to two members to attend this year's annual conference. These scholarships were awarded to individuals who demonstrated a strong dedication to working with children and adolescents in their clinical work and a desire to grow in their professional journey. Below are the reflections from the scholarship recipients who attended the conference. Their experiences highlight the value of continued learning, meaningful connection, and the impact of investing in our counseling community.

### **Reflections on the NCCA 2025 Conference: A Transformative Experience**

*By: Valorie Longworth – Graduate student at Wake Forest University*

Last month, I had the incredible opportunity to attend the North Carolina Counseling Association (NCCA) Conference, an experience that not only enriched my professional knowledge but also deepened my passion for the field of

Dr. Amy Grybush is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Counseling at Wake Forest University and the President of ACAC-NC (2023-25). She is a Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor Associate, a Licensed NC Professional Educator (School Counselor), a National Certified Counselor, and is trained in Child-Centered Play Therapy. Her primary research interest is in trauma-informed approaches across treatment and teaching settings.



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# Division News

## *Updates from the Association for Child and Adolescent Counseling of North Carolina (ACAC-NC)*

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counseling. From insightful workshops to networking with like-minded professionals, the conference provided a space for learning, growth, and connection.

One of the highlights of the conference was attending sessions led by experts in mental health counseling, many of which were directly relevant to my work as a Behavior Technician and my aspirations in clinical mental health counseling. The Trauma, Dissociation, and the Brain: The Efficacy of Brainspotting session stood out as a powerful exploration of trauma processing, offering practical strategies to support clients in their healing journeys. Additionally, Finding Connection in Resistance: Supporting LGBTQ+ Clients, Counselors, and Communities reinforced the importance of advocacy, inclusivity, and cultural competence in the counseling field. These discussions resonated deeply with me, strengthening my belief in compassionate, client-centered care.

Beyond the educational sessions, the conference was an invaluable networking experience. I had the chance to connect with professionals from diverse backgrounds—licensed counselors, students, and educators—each offering unique perspectives and wisdom. These conversations were both inspiring and affirming, reinforcing my commitment to making a meaningful impact in the field. As a Wake Forest graduate student, I particularly enjoyed attending sessions presented by WFU professors. Seeing their expertise showcased in such an engaging and interactive way was incredibly motivating.

Another key takeaway from the conference was the emphasis on self-care for mental health professionals. Many speakers highlighted the importance of maintaining personal well-being to sustain effective client support. In a field

# Division News

## *Updates from the Association for Child and Adolescent Counseling of North Carolina (ACAC-NC)*

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where burnout is common, this reminder was particularly impactful, encouraging me to be intentional about my own self-care practices.

As my very first conference, NCCA 2025 set a high standard and left a lasting impression. The opportunity to learn, engage, and be inspired by both seasoned professionals and fellow students was invaluable. I am grateful for this experience and look forward to attending future conferences, continuing to expand my knowledge, and furthering my contributions to the counseling profession.

### **NCCA Conference 2025**

*By: Klaiis Steinmann – Graduate student at Lenoir-Rhyne University*

Attending the North Carolina Counseling Association (NCCA) Conference was an incredibly valuable experience. Everything from the conference directors to the venue and the wide range of presenters was thoughtfully organized, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to have been part of it. As a counselor-in-training, the conference gave me so much to take in, expanding my perspective and introducing me to new skills and evidence-based approaches that I've already started incorporating into my sessions. This year's theme, trauma-informed practices, felt especially relevant and beneficial to me.

One session that really stood out to me was led by faculty from North Carolina State University, who presented on integrating trauma-informed practices into counselor education. They shared details about a course focused on trauma and crisis, which led to a great discussion about the evolving needs of trauma education in counselor training. Beyond offering insight into NC State's

# Division News

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and crisis class does a great job of incorporating these elements, and I hope for more programs to look at this model.

Another important part of the discussion centered around the counselor's role in self-care and burnout prevention. Working with trauma clients can take a real emotional toll, so it's crucial for trauma education to include strategies for maintaining well-being and preventing professional fatigue. By prioritizing these aspects, training programs can help future clinicians provide compassionate, effective care while also sustaining their own mental health.

Overall, the NCCA Conference was an incredible learning experience that reinforced my commitment to trauma-informed care and professional growth. I'm excited to apply what I've learned and continue exploring ways to strengthen trauma education in counseling.

# Perspectives From the Field

## *Addressing Addictions in Schools: The School Counselor Liaison*

**By Ashley Smith**

Within the school setting, professional school counselors are uniquely positioned to provide prevention services for at-risk students (Haskins, 2012; Lambie & Rokutani, 2002). In the United States, substance use and addictions are among the leading causes of adolescent death (Brannigan et al., 2004) and one of the most pervasive and detrimental addictive behaviors among children and adolescents, including food, gambling, exercise, sex, spending, the internet, and video/computer games (Hagedorn & Young, 2011), it is important that school counselors, in particular, are essential players in preventative measures via a school-wide comprehensive school counseling program that addresses individual student planning, direct and indirect services, and responsive services for all students. This article aims to provide professional school counselors with tools to serve as liaisons that inform and educate school and community stakeholders about the harmful effects of substance use.

Substance use in adolescence can affect many areas of the brain, causing behavioral, psychological, and social issues. This is due to the portion of the brain that controls executive functions being among the last to fully mature (Johnson et al., 2009). Additionally, research has shown that students' living situation and

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# Perspectives From the Field

## *Addressing Addictions in Schools: The School Counselor Liaison*

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socioeconomic status may lead to illegal substances to manage stress caused by their living environment (Goodman & Huang, 2002). On average, children and adolescents spend 6.6 hours in school for 180 days of the calendar year. For this reason, school professionals can contribute to the health and wellness of students (Johns et al., 2019; SASS, 2008). Students are less likely to engage in risky behaviors if they have strong relationships with adults in the family, the community, and the school setting. School professionals can educate students and provide opportunities to strengthen protective factors. Protective factors for students may include positive communication regarding healthy choices, teaching skills to help students be independent, setting limits and consequences to help students learn important life skills, communicating a sense of caring due to strong connections, and encouraging involvement in school and community extracurricular activities (Haskins, 2012).

Despite most professional school counselors not having had content related to addiction as a part of their graduate work (Hagedorn & Young, 2011), professional school counselors are skilled in recognizing areas of need for students who may require additional support in their academic, career, or personal-social development (Ratts & Hutchins, 2009; Watkins et al., 2006). In the school setting, school counselors can provide intentional support to students who are at risk. Furthermore, students frequently encounter school counselors throughout their school careers. As such, school counselors can assist with substance use prevention and intervention (Lambie & Rokutani, 2002). School counselors can position themselves as supportive adults in the school setting for students dealing with substance use and addictions via:

A. Serving as liaisons between the school, family, and the student to

# Perspectives From the Field

## *Addressing Addictions in Schools: The School Counselor Liaison*

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facilitate assessment of the student's academic, social, and emotional concerns (ASCA, 2019).

B. Educating students and families about resources in the community regarding therapy, jobs, education, recreation, and transportation needs (ASCA, 2019).

C. Encouraging students to be involved in positive extracurricular activities in the school or community (Pate et al., 2000).

D. Maintaining advocacy and accountability in an effort to assess progress and note changes in students' substance use (Comerci & Schwebel, 2000).

At the school counselor's core is the hope of being an in-house person who can aid students in social-emotional and behavioral skills during their formative years. One of the ways school counselors can carry out this goal is by collaborating with family, school, and community stakeholders. The American School Counselor Association (ASCA)'s Standard A.4. and B-SS 6. addresses the professional school counselor's responsibility to form a collaborative relationship between school and community stakeholders for student academic, career, and social-emotional success (ASCA, 2019). A comprehensive school counseling program should consist of an intentional process through which a school counselor engages in prevention, intervention, and responsive services that facilitate communication and understanding between school, family, community, and federal and state agencies that aid in the academic, career, and personal-social development of all students (Portman, 2009). As liaisons, school counselors can help schools

# Perspectives From the Field

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maintain trust by honoring and illuminating students' voices, facilitating change through collaboration with familial and community stakeholders, and instilling hope.

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# 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](mailto:nccounselingassociationweb@gmail.com)

NCCA membership is required to submit articles to the *Carolina Counselor*.

## **Submission Deadlines**

Spring: February 28

Summer: May 31

Fall: August 31

Winter: November 30

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## Carolina Counselor Editor



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## Carolina Counselor Associate Editor



**Vanessa Doran**, MAEd, LCMHC, NCC currently works at Jodi Province Counseling Services, PLLC in Jefferson, NC serving a rural community with an array of mental health needs. As a Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor and National Certified Counselor, she works with children as young as 2 years old to adults ages 40+, and everyone in between. Vanessa thoroughly enjoys working with middle and high school age kids and utilizing CBT, Person Centered, and Existential Theory in her counseling office. She graduated with an MAEd in Clinical Mental Health Counseling from the University of North Carolina Pembroke in 2016, and her BA in Psychology with a minor in Sociology from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Vanessa enjoys learning about Expressive Arts therapy, Animal Assisted Therapy, and Play Therapy.

# Wrapping Up The School Year!

“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.

NCCA Board of Directors: <https://www.n2ca.org/board-of-directors>

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The NC Counseling Association, a state branch of the American Counseling Association, represents professional counselors in various work settings.

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*The North Carolina Counseling Association represents diverse interests of its membership through an Executive Council, geographically located members, specialty organizations, and committees.*

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