

The brutal murder of George Floyd is the latest expression of a society that degrades Black people and subjects them to inhumane and unjust treatment.

The Department of Professional Counseling condemns racism, prejudice, and bigotry in all forms. We stand in solidarity with the Black community in the continuing fight against systemic racism and inequality. As professional counselors it is a moral and professional imperative to be antiracist. The Department of Professional Counseling pledges to take both short- and long-term steps to implement programming to facilitate achieving that goal.



Here are resources you can use to expand your insight , education and advocacy:

*Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson

*The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander

*White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo

*How to be an Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi

The Case for Reparations:

<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>

ACA Resources:

<https://www.counseling.org/knowledge-center/mental-health-resources/racism>

How to be an Antiracist:

<https://brenebrown.com/podcast/brene-with-ibram-x-kendi-on-how-to-be-an-antiracist/>

75 Things White People can do to for Racial Justice:

<https://medium.com/equality-includes-you/what-white-people-can-do-for-racial-justice-f2d18b0e0234>

21 Day Challenge:

<https://www.eddiemoorejr.com/21daychallenge>

10 Things You Should Know About White Privilege:

<https://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/article/2016/10/13/10-things-you-should-know-about-white-privilege>

100 Ways to be a White Ally:

[https://www.vice.com/en\\_us/article/ne95dm/how-to-be-a-white-ally-to-people-of-color](https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/ne95dm/how-to-be-a-white-ally-to-people-of-color)

11 Step Guide to Understanding Race, Racism, and White Privilege:

<http://citizenshipandsocialjustice.com/2017/10/14/11-step-guide-to-understanding-race-racism-and-white-privilege/>

Resources from the Website of Robin DiAngelo (author of *White Fragility*):

<https://robindiangelo.com/resources/>

Jeffrey Singh, Editor

CMHC Student and  
Professional Development  
Specialist

**Special points of interest:**

- \* COVID-19 Response
- \* CAC Conference
- \* Transformational Travel
- \* Crowdfunding
- \* CAC at NJCA

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# Counseling Scene



## Department of Professional Counseling 2019-2020 Academic Year

### The Department's Response to COVID-19

*Submitted by Lisa Himelman, MEd '13*

COVID-19, Coronavirus. These words have become an all-too familiar part of our vocabulary, a looming force that has sent our lives into chaos these last few months. Though everyone has been impacted by this pandemic in numerous ways, each of us has our own story to tell about how our worlds have changed. The implications of the virus seem to be ongoing with no definitive end in sight. And while trends are beginning to improve due to social distancing, stay at home orders and other safeguards, we obviously have a long way to go. One thing we can take solace in is that we are truly in this together, trying to take it one day at a time and doing our best to adapt. Attempting to

be in a positive state of mind will hopefully help all of us forge ahead.

When the pandemic became a harsh reality in early March, Monmouth University made the swift decision to send all non-essential personnel home and cancel classes through spring break. After that two-week period, it was decided that classes would move fully online. Professors scrambled to reconfigure their syllabi and work with Information Technology to effectively setup web-based course modules. Tentative end dates were set for remote instruction and business activities; initially late March, then pushed back to early April. By that point it was

clear that the circumstances were unfortunately getting worse, not better, and it was best to stay virtual for the remainder of the semester.

Eventually, with the future still unclear, Monmouth made the announcement that remote work would continue through the summer. We now anxiously await a decision about Fall 2020.

*(Continued on page 2)*



President Patrick Leahy addressing the Monmouth University Community on the university's response to the COVID pandemic.

Though many things remain uncertain, the university has been upfront and honest about each step taken, asking that schools and departments consistently provide resources and reassurance, especially to students. The *Department of Professional Counseling* has responded accordingly, with professors working tirelessly to give students an impactful educational experience despite being completely online. Our Director of Field Placement has spent countless hours deciding the best course of action for student interns, putting their safety first while trying to keep them on track for graduation. The Professional Development Program now includes home study and live webinar opportunities so counselors can still

earn their required continuing education hours this license renewal year. The department is passionate about keeping everyone connected and engaged during a time when we may feel more isolated.

The 2019-2020 newsletter is a little different than past years, as expected, but retains the spirit of altruism which is so critical to the counseling profession now more than ever. We hope you will find articles that speak to you, learn more about the great work being done by your peers and gather insights that are useful in your practice. Our sincerest wish is that this newsletter provides some normalcy in an otherwise bizarre reality. Rest assured, the Monmouth University Department of Professional

Counseling is always here for you professionally and personally, no matter the state of society.

## An Alumna's Experience with COVID-19

*Submitted by Erin Murphy, MS, LPC, LCADC, NCC*



Erin Murphy, class of 2015, currently works as a Clinical Supervisor at Central Jersey Comprehensive Treatment Center, a medication assisted treatment location. We had the pleasure of interviewing Erin regarding her experience during the COVID-19 pandemic. Here is what she had to say:

**How has your agency responded to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis? (Did you**

**remain open, are you seeing clients in person, are you using telehealth, etc.)**

We provide medication (Methadone or Buprenorphine) to over 950 clients. We have remained open during this crisis but have taken measures to protect both our clients and staff. We have followed both state and federal guidelines in regard to providing take-home medication to our clients so that we have less people in the building. We are currently utilizing phone sessions in order to provide counseling, however if a client needs to meet face to face, we are accommodating this request while maintaining safe distance by utilizing large group/conference rooms as opposed to smaller offices.

We also began implementing additional safety measures by screening everyone who enters the building. This screening

process included taking the client (or staff members) temperature and asking questions relating to symptoms or possible exposure. Nursing staff wear masks and gloves while medicating clients.

Both staff and clients must also wear a face mask while in common areas of the building including hallways. We have tried to limit the contact individuals have with doorknobs by propping open doors (when possible) to common areas while cleaning other doorknobs/ common areas often. We have also marked the floor with tape to show people how far to stand from one another. Our main concern is safety of all clients and staff while continuing to provide services to our clients.

*(Continued on page 3)*

### **How have staff and clients reacted to these unprecedented circumstances?**

The staff has been great. They are adjusting well (as well as one can) to all of the changes and I am happy that staff continue to show up ready to work day after day. We really try to show our appreciation for the way they are managing this by providing breakfast or lunch and providing staff with paid time off. We all need some "mental health" days after this and therefore we have implemented an alternate work schedule.

Some clients are expressing frustration if they still have to come frequently for their medication and do not seem to understand that this medication (Methadone/ Buprenorphine) is highly regulated by the state and we cannot "handout" take-homes to clients who are actively using as this is an overdose risk. Other clients are very thankful for the precautions that we are taking and have shown patience with us as our agency makes necessary changes. It has not been an easy transition and we are all just trying to adjust the new normal.

### **Are there future measures you/your agency are looking into implementing as part of the response?**

I'll be honest, we were not prepared for anything like this. Our director, myself and the other managers got together as a team to decide what measures we could put in place. It seems as though every few days we have made changes to our protocol to get to where we are now. At this moment, I think we are doing a good job of continuing to serve our clients as well as providing a safe environment for both clients and staff. We continue to evaluate our practices and make changes when necessary. This is new to all of us.

### **Do you feel this situation will affect**

### **how clinical mental health services are delivered and/or provide new ways to incorporate into the delivery of those services?**

To some extent I do, however our agency is eager to get back to meeting with clients face to face. We are a medication assisted treatment facility and having a client in front of us is not only necessary for a nurse to be able to dispense medication but not being able to see clients is a safety concern for us. We want to be able to assess a client for possible impairment.

I think that this has been an eye-opening experience and has been a reminder that we need to be ready for anything. With the Covid-19 crisis we have realized that direct contact is not always possible and it is important to be prepared for the unthinkable, because that is what I think the crisis has been, unthinkable. I think that it is likely that other agency's will also re-evaluate some policies/ procedures to ensure that counseling will always be continued even when face to face sessions are not possible.

### **Is there anything else you would like to add?**

I am really proud of the work that everyone has been doing. I have many friends in the field and no matter what agency or private practice they work for; everyone continues to strive for patient care. It is not as easy transition to work in an office and see clients in person and then move to an at home office and to set up sessions via telehealth. It is also not easy to go into work everyday knowing that you are putting yourself and your family at risk due to being in a building where there are others. I am grateful each day for the amazing staff I work with and can't wait until we can all be in the same

room together celebrating everyone's dedication to our clients. I have no doubt that the people I work with really belong in this field.

### **Are there resources (articles, trainings, books, etc.) you would like to share to assist others in similar roles?**

Here are a few things that I have shared with my staff.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/joyful-parenting/202003/behavioral-activation-prevent-depression-during-covid-19>

<https://thewellnesssociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Coronavirus-Anxiety-Workbook.pdf>

[https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fprepare%2Fmanaging-stress-anxiety.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fprepare%2Fmanaging-stress-anxiety.html)

## A Message for Professionals from a Professional

*Submitted by Alicia Zielinski Straub, MS, LPC*

Hello, I am Alicia Zielinski Straub, New Jersey state Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC), National Board-Certified Counselor (NBCC), and Member of the American Counseling Association. In January of 2011, I obtained a Master of Science in Mental Health Counseling from Monmouth University. Additionally, I possess a Bachelor of Arts Degree in both Psychology and Sociology from Rutgers University.

My passion is providing private counseling services to adults, adolescents, couples, and families. I assist clients in developing and increasing self-awareness. Through the use of theoretical approaches, tool, and strategies, I equip individuals to more clearly identify life's challenges and implement resolutions to overcome them. Together, we work through acknowledging and changing habitual patterns of behavior that prohibit one from experiencing a more purposeful, fulfilling, and meaningful live. We make sense of the past and use this understanding to help better embrace the present. Clients receive the support and encouragement that help them move forward in a new direction, living with more purpose and intent.

I practice within an office suite in the Courts of Red Bank, sharing the space with three other clinicians. Serene and tranquil, the atmosphere embodies a haven for healing, comfort and safety. The unfoldment of events related to COVID-19 has created a greater sense of community amongst us practitioners. In addition to processing the unprecedented changes taking place within our fields and our greater world, we have been sharing resources and identifying Telehealth strategies being

used throughout this crisis. Collaboratively, we continue to sanitize the office and keep client traffic to a minimum, meeting face to face with clients only when essential.

As a psychotherapist, I have grown to better appreciate and understand the impact uncertainty and change has on our lives. For those struggling with anxiety, depression, or other mood disorders, as well as undergoing issues with loss/grief and/or managing through life transitions, the unknown can often evoke great fear and discomfort. It's surreal to fathom that each human being is now faced with the challenge of navigating through highly uncertain times and learning to overcome fear. It's critical now that we closely monitor our perception and interpretation of events, practicing how to respond in constructive ways rather than react with heightened emotion. For most in our field, it's common for us to use tools to ground us, engage in self-care, stay present to life through mindfulness, and reframe our thought processes. However, we must remember that behavior is learned and not everyone has learned what, we as counselors, may take for granted.

Part of our response as health care providers is to teach our clients how to stay present to life as it continues to change. Empathically, I have been observing how difficult it can be for some to try to proceed each day when routine or structure has been removed or presented in another form. Teaching clients how to be flexible and adaptable is of utmost important right now. There is a great possibility that a new normal will ensue forcing us to leave behind what might not have been working anyhow.



Within this crisis, we have choice. We can utilize something as simple as taking a deep breath to reset ourselves, as well as other research-based strategies, or we can easily allow the mind to take us down what might feel like a terrifying path. Most are unaware of the neuroscientific processes of the fight or flight response. As we form a better understanding of how we as humans are designed, a greater ability to manage our emotional state emerges. We must slow down and allow ourselves the opportunity to address the thoughts, feelings, and concerns that arise without becoming paralyzed in fear or uncertainty. As life has come to what seems like a screeching halt, we are now provided with the opportunity to do this, as well as to redefine for ourselves what is "essential" and "non-essential".

Staying present to each day as it unfolds will help us to leverage the opportunities and resources that arise, one day at a time. We are entering into the unknown which, scary for many, is also filled with possibility. As we overcome our resistance to change, trusting in our ability to work through whatever is presented to us, we can create for ourselves a state of living and being that is more in alignment with how we are evolving.

*(Continued on page 5)*



I am learning to surrender, to let go of my resistance. Initially, it was difficult for me to contemplate utilizing telehealth as a vehicle to assist clients. Gratefully, I pushed through a negative mindset and am meeting with great success counseling clients either through phone or videoconferencing. Each one of us has a bit of resistance within. I highly recommend paying attention to what arises and exercise the courage to move forward differently, if need be. Make the next best choice. Take the next small step. Stay open to whatever the constructive action is that is being asked of you. The knowledge and

experience that accrues will help us to develop a wisdom that we can draw from as we continue to move forward.

In the meantime, do not underestimate the importance of staying healthy emotionally, as well as physically. They are both requirements in keeping our immune systems strong. We now have more time for self-reflection, we can still pick up the phone or zoom with loved ones to connect. We can learn, we can exercise, we can create, and we can address that which stands in our way.

Be well and don't forget to breathe!

Very Warm Regards,

Alicia Zielinski Straub MS, LPC

### Kristen Robertori, MA, MS, LAC, DRCC

Kristen Robertori graduated from the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program in 2018. Since graduating she has continued her work at New Jersey's civil commitment facility for sexual offenders providing group and individual therapy. Over the last year she has been working with some of her colleagues to introduce and integrate more humanistic, strengths-based approaches to treatment. More recently, she was honored to be invited by Dr. Jodry to join the Mental Health Advisory Board for New Jersey State Senator Vin Gopal and is currently drafting legislation to improve the quality of sex offender treatment in the state. She

is also very much looking forward to attending the annual ACA conference in San Diego this year as she was selected to represent the International Association of Addictions and Offender Counselors (IAAOC), a division of the ACA, to present a 60-minute education session entitled *"Utilizing the Therapeutic Relationship as a Corrective Experience in Sex Offender Treatment."* She hopes to eventually bring this presentation to Monmouth University through the "From Our Own" series and is currently working on her proposal. Kristen believes that counselors are uniquely qualified and greatly needed in working with this

population and hopes through these presentations that she might motivate and inspire students and alumni to answer that call.

### Tatiana Grant, MS, LPC, NCC

Tatiana Grant graduated from the Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program in 2015. This past February, she gave a presentation on Cyber Bullying, Depression and Youth Suicide in the African American community at the "Save Our Children" community outreach workshop presented by the Good Hope Baptist Church in Asbury Park, NJ on February 8, 2020 .



## Third Annual Current Topics in Counseling Conference: Best One Yet!

*Submitted by Jeffrey Singh, CMHC Student*

On Saturday November 16, 2019 the department's active alumni organization, Counseling Alumni Connection (CAC), hosted their third annual Current Topics in Counseling Conference on Monmouth University's main campus. This conference had the highest attendance to date, with 125 participants immersed in a full day of in-depth learning and networking.



The event was honored to host Professor Emerita of Counselor Education at Fairfield University, Dr. Diana Hulse, as their keynote speaker. Dr. Hulse spoke on the importance of connection with her topic on *The Necessity of Interpersonal Relationships to Thrive in the Digital Age: A Call to Action for the Counseling Profession*. She gracefully conveyed the importance of building and nurturing

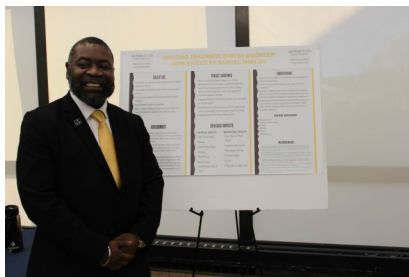
interpersonal relationships, how critical they are in today's world, and how counselors can aid clients in the growth of their relationships. Dr. Hulse emphasized counselors' role as leaders in communication and practicing what they preach. A raffle for 10 copies of Dr. Hulse's book was conducted at the end of her remarks.

The lively dynamic of the conference circulated

throughout each breakout session. The presenters demonstrated their knowledge and passion for the field, each providing thought provoking information to attendees. Presentation topics included: *Effective Techniques for Counseling Individuals with Personality Disorders*, *Nature is Nurture: Counseling and the Natural World*, *Changing Minds: Using the Science of Perception in Treatment*, *Becoming a Clinical Ethnographer: Transforming Stories of Suffering into Meaning and Purpose*, .

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*The Impact of the Extreme Achievement Orientation on Adolescent Mental Health, and Why Integrative Medicine and the Philosophy of Traditional Healing Can Save the US Healthcare System.*

While reflecting on his experience as a presenter, Dr. Gary Handler stated that he “found the experience very rewarding– the contact with current students, alumni and professors was rewarding, the congeniality during the presentation, and the listener involvement was energizing”. This energy was felt throughout the conference as the day continued.

A catered networking luncheon was held mid-day between sessions. Students, alumni, professionals, presenters, representatives from counseling organizations, and Monmouth departments joined in conversations and made great memories. Organizations and departments tabling provided useful community resources, and current Professional Counseling

students presented their research during a poster session. To further support current students, the CAC sold department merchandise and setup donation stations, with all proceeds going directly to the Professional Counseling Scholarship Fund. Largely due to efforts surrounding and present at the conference the department will be able to start awarding scholarships in fall 2020.

The innovative methods and ideas gained from this conference benefitted the continuing education of counselors in attendance, and in turn will help them better serve their clients. Student volunteer, Heather Weidner, found that the conference “was a great experience to connect with professionals and peers” and that educational sessions “provided [her] with information to use in internship as well as after graduation”.

The department and CAC consistently develop meaningful experiences for current students and those working in the field through offering relevant content and facilitating connection. And in these uncertain times connection is more important than ever. With these continued goals in mind, the CAC is pleased to announce their fourth annual Current Topics in Counseling Conference which is expanding to a two-day event on Friday, October 16 and Saturday, October 17, 2020. Day one features a five continuing education hour ethics seminar followed by a six continuing education hour conference on day two. The department and CAC look forward to seeing many returning participants, as well as first timers, at this flagship event that flourishes with each new year.





# MARK YOUR CALENDARS!



MONMOUTH  
UNIVERSITY

PROFESSIONAL  
COUNSELING



## Current Topics in Counseling Conference

### Monmouth University

(400 Cedar Avenue, West Long Branch, NJ)

#### Day 1, Pre-Conference Ethics Institute: Friday, October 16, 2020

Time: 9am - 3pm (1 hour lunch break)

Topic: *Ethics, Law, & Social Justice: The Intersection of Behaviors and Beliefs* presented by Perry C. Francis, EdD, NCC, ACS, LPC, Professor and Counseling Training Clinic Coordinator at Eastern Michigan University.

5 CE hours in ethics

Breakfast and CE hours certificate will be provided.

#### Day 2, Full-Day Conference: Saturday, October 17, 2020

Time: 8:30am - 4:30pm

Keynote Address: *Cultural View of Disability: Communicating with People with Disabilities* presented by Mona Robinson, PhD, Professor and Immediate Past Chair of the Department of Counseling and Higher Education at Ohio University. Workshops on timely counseling-related topics will follow the keynote.

6 CE hours (includes hours in multicultural and opioid)

Breakfast, catered networking luncheon, and CE hours certificate will be provided.

#### Registration Information

##### Professionals

Friday Only: \$100  
Saturday Only: \$125  
Full Conference: \$200

##### Current Students

Friday Only: Free  
Saturday Only: \$30  
Full Conference: \$30

##### MU Alumni, MU Employees, & Current Field Placement Supervisors

Friday Only: \$100  
Saturday Only: \$100  
Full Conference: \$175

More details about the event including how to register will be available in Summer 2020.

Please continue checking our website for the most up to date information:

[www.monmouth.edu/pcprofdev](http://www.monmouth.edu/pcprofdev)



Monmouth University Department of Professional Counseling has been approved by NBCC as an Approved Continuing Education Provider, ACEP No. 4242. Programs that do not qualify for NBCC credit are clearly identified. Monmouth University Department of Professional Counseling is solely responsible for all aspects of the programs.

## Upcoming Presentations

MONMOUTH UNIVERSITY | PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING

### VIRTUAL CE PROGRAMS AVAILABLE

**Home Study Program**  
**An Introduction to Motivational Interviewing:**  
**Basic Principles and Practical Applications**  
*Presented by Matthew Tirrell, MS, LPC, NCC, ACS*  
 2 CE hours

**Home Study Program**  
**Medical Trauma: Emotional**  
**Implications and Crisis Intervention**  
*Presented by Alison Kulick, MS, LAC, NCC, C/T*  
 2 CE hours

**LIVE Online Program via Zoom**  
**Nature is Nurture: Counseling and the Natural World**  
*Presented by Megan Delaney, PhD, LPC*  
*Thursday, July 2, 2020, 6:30-8:30pm*  
 2 CE hours

Alumni/Professional fee for each program: \$20 (includes CE hours certificate)

To register please visit <https://pcevents.monmouth.edu>. Please refer to the website for credentialing information, details about each program, and refund policies.



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If you are interested in future events, or to be added to our professional development e-mail list, please contact Lisa Himelman at [lhimelma@monmouth.edu](mailto:lhimelma@monmouth.edu).

## Counseling Student Association

*Submitted by 2019-2020 CSA President, Christiana Rutkowski*

During the first few months of the Spring 2020 semester, the Counseling Students Association ran a couple of events that included a Broadway show, a Pinot's Palette painting event, and an Assertiveness Training workshop. Dear Evan Hansen was the Broadway show that was attended and was a showing about mental health that takes place during this current age with the utilization of technology and social media to connect with others.



During the Pinot's Palette event, CSA members and adviser Dr. Jodry painted a picture of a lotus with the word "Breathe" included in it. This painting related to the counseling profession regarding self-care, the mind-body connection, and brought fellow students together.

Lastly, the Assertiveness Training workshop was a four-hour event that included a group-based discussion regarding assertiveness skills, role plays, and how to enhance our practice of becoming more assertive and advocating for oneself. Unfortunately, the final event of the semester had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 outbreak. It was a trip to New York City to visit the Gestalt Center,



where it was a full day workshop called "The Enneagram – Discovering Character." CSA is looking forward to the planning and implementation of similar and different events in the future.



## Chi Sigma Iota, Mu Upsilon Omega

*Submitted by 2019-2020 CSI Co-President, Alicia Giglio*

The 2019-2020 academic year the Monmouth University Mu Upsilon Omega chapter of Chi Sigma Iota (CSI) engaged in numerous leadership and service events. CSI members began the year by volunteering at OASIS-tlc- a farm dedicated to helping individuals with Autism spectrum disorder learn life skills and build up experience for future careers. Members helped the organization prepare for their Gala, which was hosted later that night. CSI executive members were also able to get a tour of the farmhouse, where they learned about the routine of the individuals who reside at the house during the week. Executive members also moved compost to the OASIS farm's greenhouse. Aside from helping out OASIS-tlc, Mu Upsilon Omega donated toys to benefit the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility for Women. Each year, a holiday party is thrown for



the mothers who are incarcerated to celebrate the festivities and provide them with an opportunity to give gifts to their visiting children. CSI helped contribute to the mental health and wellbeing of not only the women in the facility, but their children as well.

The Mu Upsilon Omega chapter provided scholarships to active CSI members for them to attend the third annual Current Topics in Counseling Conference this past November. Our chapter was able to fully fund the conference fee for 4 current students, and to partially cover the cost for an alumni member of CSI. This opportunity enables CSI as an organization to help further inspire and educated developing professionals in our field. Later that month, the Mu Upsilon Omega chapter donated food for the LGBTQ+ Cultural Considerations event. The event was a collaboration between the Department of Professional Counseling, the School of Social Work, and the School of Nursing. The event discussed the importance of an interprofessional approach when working with LGBTQ+ clients. The event was established and run by CSI member, Lauren Cozzolino, who began the event with an educational session. The event then became a panel weigh in with professionals such as CSI member and ACA President-elect, Dr. David Ford, Later, Lauren along fellow CSI members Alicia Giglio and Jeff Singh, led attendees in a case conceptualization based off of the information presented.

Lastly Mu Upsilon Omega held our yearly induction ceremony on February

22<sup>nd</sup>, where we inducted 60 new members from both the Mental Health Counseling Program and the Education Counseling Program. Traumatic Loss Coalition Leader Heather Soto was the keynote speaker, sharing her own experience as a call to action for CSI members. Alexis Appezato spoke as an alumnus, integrating how experience expressed the impact members will make in their careers. We are excited to announce that the 2020-2021 executive board is as follows: President – Molly Malkinski, Vice President – Sam Mottola, Secretary – Amy Scarpulla, Treasurer – Sam Perrotta, and Professional Development chair – Meghan Keates. While the year may not have ended how we would have expected, all of the events we have been a part of have contributed to our goals of mission and service, as well as advocacy within the counseling field.



## Transformational Travel

*Submitted by Dr. Joanne Jodry, Ed.D., D.M.H.*

Monmouth University offers many opportunities to our Professional Counseling graduate students. One class that is offered to students is Transformational Travel (PC 598), which is a class that takes students to India for more than 2 weeks in an effort to help them personally and professionally transform. The goal is to help the students raise their consciousness to different ways of knowing and adding to their multicultural and multireligious experiences and competencies.

About three years ago, I met a woman who impressed me so much with her life mission that I wanted to expose our students to her courageous life choices. Courtney Deacon Lalotra grew up in Bricktown, NJ and found herself on a trip to India with professors from the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) where she had attended and

graduated. While there with her school, she saw the poverty and despair of the many low or no income people trying to survive with very little. She came back to the USA and sold everything she had and went back to try to make a difference in India with the children. At first she worked for a mission orphanage, but found herself unsatisfied with the system. She was especially unhappy with the way the children with any disabilities were not cared for by the mission homes. She was told that children with disabilities had “no return on the investment”. This is how One Life to Love was born.

Courtney began One Life to Love to focus her attention on creating a safe and loving home for children with disabilities since there was no other safe place for them there.

Our graduate class, Transformational Travel, grew from this first meeting that I had with Courtney. Since that time, we have been to India twice and are planning our next trip this January 2021. The trip consists of two parts: Service (focused with the children at One Life to Love) and; Spirituality (visiting spiritual sites and gurus throughout India). This class has become very popular because as the students return from India, they have such life changing experiences that they tell the other students. Here are a few accounts of student’s experiences from India this past January 2020:



## Personal Growth

*Submitted by Peter Quinton*

When I came to Monmouth and set out to become a counselor, I knew I was looking for much more than a degree. I was also looking for personal transformation. I knew that in order for me to truly get the most out of my time in the program, I would have to seize opportunities that would push me far past my comfort zone and face the fears which have held me back from growth for so long. When Dr. Jodry first

brought up this trip and it’s transformative influence to my Theories class last Spring, I knew this was the opportunity I was looking for.

The opportunity, of course, was a two-week, spirituality-focused trip to India, which alone was far beyond anything I have experienced. However, what really gave this experience the weight to be life-changing was our intention to support One Life

To Love. Having the chance to further connect with my spiritual side, practice greater altruism, and explore a new culture were all I needed to hear to know that I was going to be a part of this trip, no matter what I’d need to overcome.

*(Continued on page 12)*



Despite the inspiration of taking part in a spiritual journey through a country I never thought I'd get the chance to visit, I knew there would be challenges along the way. Prior to the trip, I faced some of my biggest challenges that I would need to overcome, such as meeting my fundraising goal of \$1,500 to support One Life To Love. To overcome this challenge I had to tap into my creativity and find the courage to put myself out there in the fundraising process – two things I have always struggled to do confidently but always wanted to embody. However, after selling hundreds of cookies and helping organize an Indian dance show fundraiser, I raised well over my goal and pushed myself the farthest out of my shell that I have been in a while. I started to see my growth, and I had not even left the country yet!

## Lessons Learned

*Submitted by Caitlyn Bahrenburg*

When I took off from Newark airport with 16 classmates this past January, I could never have imagined what was in store for me. I felt it from the moment we touched down in Dehli. The sacred land of Mother India held gifts for me; of that, I had no doubt.

Throughout our time in India, we were privileged to learn from University professors, esteemed gurus, spiritual leaders, and Yogesh Lalotra, the most knowledgeable and dedicated tour guide in the business. We sailed the Ganges River, danced in a temple, and ziplined over an ancient fort. We bonded as classmates, becoming family in 16 short days, and challenged ourselves to step outside of our comfort

With this kind of experience being so foreign to me, it was difficult travelling with any expectations, but I doubt they would have come close to what I experienced. Every day came with new surprises and moments of awe, from dancing with a Hare Krishna group, meeting gurus on the Ganges River, to eating Indian Pizza Hut on a bus. I connected with myself on a much deeper level as we traveled India's many diverse vistas, practicing meditation, and writing feverishly every day. I connected deeply not only with my fellow travelers, but with the children of One Life To Love, who showed me you can share delirious amounts of joy with someone despite age, cultural or language barriers. Most importantly, this trip solidified two lessons I aim to keep with me forever: 1) Living a full and meaningful life can come about in limitless ways, and 2) One person can change the world.

zones in an effort to grow. All of these once in a lifetime experiences changed me and shaped me. But none of it compares to the lessons I learned from the true teachers, the true gurus: the children.

My classmates and I walked through the streets of Dehli to the Home of Hope to meet Courtney Lalotra, the selfless founder of One Life to Love and a true Earth Angel, and the children she cares for. I can remember it so clearly. The dirt roads. The beautiful sky shimmering through the trees. The feeling of anticipation welling up inside me. As we rounded the corner of the road, we were greeted with beautiful smiling faces, children holding signs saying,

There were many fears and anxieties I felt leading up to this trip, and at times I felt they acted as barriers from realizing my goal. After overcoming these barriers and fully immersing myself in the experience, I feel that I have come back a changed person from this journey. I have come to realize that fears do not have to hold me back, and when I can live without these fears, life becomes limitless before my eyes.



“Welcome,” and the lovely house mothers who gifted us with malas made of fragrant fresh flowers. It was a welcome I never could have expected and certainly did not feel deserving of. I barely made it past the front gate before the feeling of unconditional love and belonging washed over me like a wave and within moments I was crying tears of joy. Although it was my first time here, it felt like I was home.

*(Continued on page 13)*

The group of children was comprised of a small group of boys who live at the Home, and other children who attend the daycare program. Some were shy and protective of their younger siblings despite being children themselves. Others were outgoing and eager to play with us. We were nervous, excited, jet lagged, and overwhelmed with emotion. I never thought it would be possible to fall in love with a child that is not my own. However, within the first hour, I was proved wrong. As we began to play together, singing and dancing and painting rocks, trust and comfort quickly began to form. We had no common language and little means of communication, but none of it mattered. We didn't need words. We spoke the language of love.

I spent most of my time at the Home of Hope on our first day with a young woman named Pooja — the bravest person I have ever met. Pooja spent the first 18 years of her life lying on a dirt floor in a small room, where her mother kept her locked all day while she worked in an effort to keep her safe from her abusive step-father. Pooja could not

speak nor walk and needed a level of care that her family could not provide. When Courtney brought her to the Home of Hope, Pooja's life changed forever. She has since learned to walk and feed herself. Her personality shines through and while she is nonverbal, she is making excellent progress in her speech. I was so moved by our instant, powerful connection. I had never experienced such an immediate, unconditional, and trusting love before. Pooja cracked open my heart that day. Because of her, I will never be the same. I saw a similar shift and opening in my classmates. Some who had never held a child before were carrying the little ones around a mere hour into our first day. We were exhausted from travel and uncertain of what lied ahead for us in this majestic foreign land, but none of it mattered when we stepped in that door. It was pure joy and connection. Laughter and hugs and so many smiles. By the end of our first day with the children, there was no question: we were a family, not by blood, but by choice. I knew from that day on they would be imprinted on my heart forever.

Before coming to the Home of Hope, the children in Courtney's care knew nothing but suffering and pain. They lived in abject poverty, never knowing where their next meal would come from or when with no guarantee of warmth or safety — conditions no child should have to endure. Yet, upon meeting them at the orphanage, the children did not wear their suffering on their faces. They were little beings of light and joy. They laughed and danced. They allowed themselves to trust and feel safe. They fell asleep in our arms. They were entirely open to live. These beautiful, angelic children were the most resilient, brave, and heart-forward people I have ever met in my life. They taught me



what it is to overcome, to refuse to let the conditions we are born into define us. They taught me how to play and to reconnect with my own inner child.

But more importantly, they taught me how to love. They taught me how to love without words and without conditions. Wild and dangerous love. Love without possession and without guarantees. I surrendered to love, knowing that I would be leaving them after 16 days and likely never see most of them, if not all of them, again

My journey to India was a journey back to myself. I returned home not different, but more myself. My classmates, my professors, the incredible experiences I was fortunate enough to be a part of, it all had parts in shaping me. But just as the song goes, I believe the children are the teachers. It was their innocence, their strength, their joy, and their love that helped me to return home to myself and that taught me my greatest lessons. I will look back on my time in India for the rest of my life with immense gratitude. Om shanti, Mother India. Namaste One Life to Love.



## It's True: A Reflection of Transformational Travel

*Submitted by Nicole C. Paprcka*



A world away from home showed me home is not a place.  
Home is not confined to a time or a space.  
Home is a feeling, a smile, a face.  
A bond that heals the soul, a knowing you are safe.  
When you open the doors, love fills the room.  
Joy transcends sadness, laughter is in bloom.  
It is here I learned that happiness exists beyond pain.  
That you can sing away sorrow and chicken dance in the rain.  
Because beyond all the hardship, a light reaches out.

It surpasses all worry, all fear, all doubt.  
It shines from the soul and connects us all.  
A world once so big, becomes ever so small.  
In each of their faces, exists a reason to give.  
In each of their smiles, a permission to truly live.  
In each of their eyes, a deeper look at what's inside.  
A reminder of the gift it is to simply be alive.  
It was clear there was a message of hope to be attained.  
A belief in the beautiful rainbows you can only know after it rains.  
I learned the power of kindness, and the healing touch of grace.



The gentle arriving at peace that overrides the path it takes.  
This is all I felt.  
This is all I saw.  
And now I know  
it's true...  
Love conquers all.



## It's Something Unpredictable, but in the End is Right...

Although our length of time varies in the program, sooner or later it is time for us to leave and further develop our professional roles. We utilize the knowledge we have gained and the connections we have made, and the memories we make are eternal. Here are what some of our new alumni have to say about their time in the program:

### Nick Spanola

Looking back over my years spent in Monmouth University's Clinical Mental Health Counseling Masters program, I can easily conclude that this has been one of the best experiences of my life so far. As I entered this program in 2016, I was excited to begin my counseling education. It only took just a few short weeks in classes for me to realize just how special this graduate program was going to be. In my first semester, Dr. Jessica Burkholder and Dr. Sarah Springer taught me the foundations of what it meant to be a counselor, and helped me discover the personal journey that accompanies entering into this profession. I held onto these teachings throughout my time in the program, and I can truly say that I have learned as much about myself as I have about counseling over the past 4 years.

Another crucial part of being a Monmouth counseling student has been the meaningful connections I have formed with the faculty and my classmates. As mentioned previously, Dr. Sarah Springer helped to spark a greater passion in me related to the profession through her personal dedication and commitment. Until I took her group counseling class, I had not put any thought into running counseling groups, but she helped me to see the dynamics of group counseling and the benefits that can come along with it. I was able to go on to run several groups in my practicum/internship experiences, as well as getting to design my own group for student athletes, and I am so

grateful for Dr. Springer's teachings. Dr. Jessica Burkholder is another professor who has left a lasting impression on me. I have had the pleasure of taking five classes with her, including my two internship classes, and working as her CACREP Graduate Assistant for 3 semesters. Through my work as her GA and in her internship classes, Dr. Burkholder has helped me to develop my personal identity as a counselor and cultivate an understanding of the profession that goes beyond just skills and theories. Dr. Burkholder has truly served as a mentor and guided me towards completing this program, and I will forever appreciate our work together. A big thanks must also go out to Professor Matt Tirrell and Lisa Himmelman, who I got to work with both in class and as a GA. They both do so much for the department and all the students like myself, and I cannot thank them enough for their support and devotion throughout my education. In regards to classmates, I have met so many amazing people during my years here that I cannot even begin to single any people out. I have formed friendships, made memories, and hopefully formed lasting connections that will go well beyond Monmouth.

As my time in the program comes to an end, I can honestly say it is a bittersweet feeling. I am going to greatly miss the engagement and positive environment that has come along with being a part of the Monmouth counseling student community. I loved going to class every

week, especially internship classes, and having in-depth and thoughtful discussions with professors and classmates as we learned from one another and collaborated. However, I am also excited for what lies ahead after graduation. I have been fortunate enough to be hired at my internship site working for Preferred Behavioral Health Group as a School-Based Counselor. I am looking forward to continuing my work with my students and colleagues at Brick Memorial High School, and hopefully getting more opportunities to create new mental health and recreational programs for students. While I am nervous about my future as a counselor, I know that my education at Monmouth University have given me the best opportunity to succeed in this profession, for which I will always be thankful.





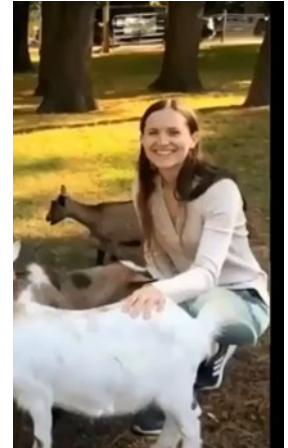
## Alicia Giglio

From the moment I opened my acceptance letter to when I received my diploma, this program has inspired and challenged me beyond my expectations. I began two years ago with a passion for mental health but lacked confidence and skill. Each of my professors encouraged and challenged me to become a better version of myself both personally and as a counselor. Through their faith in me and my dedication, I pushed myself outside of my comfort zone

and became as involved as I could in the program. I held a leadership position for CSI, I had graduate assistantships, and I immersed myself fully in class and field placement.

I found that I achieved the most growth when I became comfortable with failure and criticism. Once I was able to accept that failure is necessary for growth, I became more confident in myself and viewed my difficulties as opportunities for growth.

Each semester I was amazed by how my skills developed and the lessons I had learned. I also found myself inspired by my professors and classmates who helped me see from multiple perspectives. We are our greatest resource, because we provide one another constructive



feedback and are willing to have difficult conversations.

As an alumna, I know that I still have resources available from our department to assist me in entering the field and beyond. I am so thankful I picked this program and I know the lessons learned from the last two years will stay with me in the future



## Samantha Renfree

My time in this program was embedded in leadership, advocacy and empathy strengthening. I am deeply grateful for being afforded this experience.

My time spent at Monmouth will forever be part of my roots and my professional identity. I have come to understand that the power of connection cannot be undermined.

Since my first semester, the idea of serving others with compassion and curiosity has been instilled in me. The faculty here, all with a range of interests and specialties promote the individual in all their students; in me. They lead through display of how integrating, expanding and understanding our self-identity

enhances the counseling experience. They helped guide me to do the same, to be a leader and enhance my own perceptions as a professional.

This program has brought people into my life who will continue to be held dear to my heart. My time here has enhanced all aspects of my identity from professional to personal. I will continue to look back fondly of and hold immense gratitude towards everything I have experienced during this time here.



## Dr. Megan Delaney

**Dr. Megan Delaney's** book "Nature is nurture: Counseling and the natural world" published via Oxford University Press, came out in January 2020. From foraging and hunting for food to (more recently) finding solace and peace in a beautiful vista, humans have long interacted with the natural world. Though a connection to nature runs deep in our DNA, however, people of the modern age are indoors almost 93% of the day. With that said, there is growing evidence that the natural world promotes mental and physical well-being, including stress relief, improved mood, and neurological benefits.

Ecotherapy, a growing but lesser-known construct in mental health, explores the reciprocal relationship humans have with nature and its capacity to build strength and provide healing. Nature Is Nurture provides an overview of the theoretical concepts and empirical bases of ecotherapy via historical considerations and

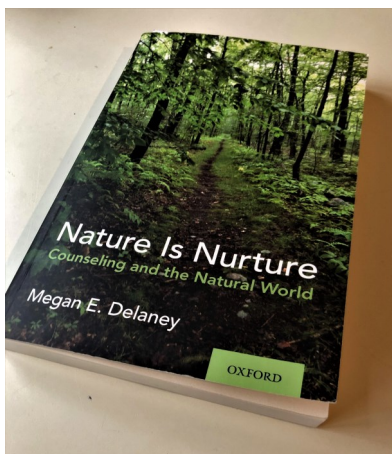
recent research within the discipline. Chapters share practical ways to incorporate ecotherapy with children, adults, and veteran populations; within schools; and in group work. Descriptions of modalities such as animal-assisted, equine-assisted, horticultural, forest-bathing, green-exercise, and adventure-based therapy are also included alongside case examples, techniques, and practical and ethical considerations. In examining the impact of improved physical and mental wellness for all clients, this book provides counselors, therapists, social workers, and psychologists with the knowledge and techniques to infuse ecotherapy into everyday practice.

Nature Is Nurture includes many collaborations from Monmouth University professors including Drs. Joanne Jodry and Sarah Springer and Monmouth University Professional Counseling alumni Daniel Zebrowski, Rashmi Kamath Talpady, Emmi McCauley, Mallory Sheklian, Bethany Sheridan, Merritt Reid, Jessica Colucci, Maeve Hogan and Kristen Huber. The book has provided some wonderful opportunities for Dr. Delaney to share her love of ecotherapy including being asked to write a blog on Psychology Today (<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/nature-is-nurture>). Recently Dr. Delaney was asked



to present (virtually) to the Canadian Association of Social Workers and while the American Counseling Association conference was canceled this year, she looks forward to presenting on Ecotherapy at the 2021 conference. Nature Is Nurture is available on amazon (<https://www.amazon.com/Nature-Nurture-Counseling-Natural-World/dp/0190849762>).

*(Continued on page 18)*



# FACULTY SPOTLIGHTS

Dr. Delaney continues to teach Ecotherapy in the fall and had an amazing class. This year we went camping, tried our hand at archery, went forest bathing, completed a low ropes course, mucked horse manure, and tried some equine therapy and had an outdoor thanksgiving feast. The course is ever evolving. Dr. Delaney is hoping to take students on a 7-day wilderness immersive backpacking trip over spring break 2021 to the canyonlands of Utah. This trip, in

partnership with the National Outdoor Leadership School, is open to anyone who has taken Ecotherapy (alumni included!) and is a chance to spend a week, completely unplugged, exploring the glory of the Utah landscape, sleeping under the stars, learning new skills and new strengths, and participating in an incredible group bonding experience.

To find out more about ecotherapy, email Dr. Delaney at [mdelaney@Monmouth.edu](mailto:mdelaney@Monmouth.edu)



## Dr. Alan Cavaiola

**Dr Cavaiola** has just completed work on a textbook entitled, *A Comprehensive Guide to Addiction Theory & Counseling Techniques* which is co-authored with Dr Margaret Smith who is also a full Professor and teaches in the Addiction Studies program at Keene State University in Keene, New Hampshire. Their book is scheduled for publication in the Fall, 2020 and is being published by

Taylor & Francis/Routledge. Both Drs. Smith and Cavaiola serve on the Board of the International Coalition of Substance Abuse Studies Educators (INCASE) which is where they met and began to collaborate on their textbook on addiction etiology.

**Dr. Cavaiola** mentioned that the book was written for both graduate and under-graduate students and contains many “learning opportunities” or classroom exercises and case examples.

**Dr. Cavaiola and Dr. Jason Branch** are also collaborating on a textbook entitled *Addiction Counseling: A Practical Approach*, along with Dr. Amanda Lee Giordano, who teaches in a CACREP-accredited Counseling program at the University of Georgia. This textbook is being

written entirely by Drs. Branch, Giordano and Cavaiola and is scheduled for publication in the Spring, 2021 and is contracted for publication by Springer Publishing Company.





## “Ethical Cross-Racial Supervision”

On April 9th, 2020, **Dr. David Ford, Dr. Jason Branch, and Matthew Tirrell** had the privilege of representing the Department of Professional Counseling at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology’s virtual conference. Also, co-presenting was a colleague of the faculty, Dr. Samuel Sanabria, associate professor and chair of the Department of Counseling for Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida. The presentation team’s proposal was accepted by the American Counseling Association for inclusion in the 2020 ACA conference in San Diego. However, when the ACA was compelled to cancel the conference in response to the coronavirus pandemic, the presentation was sought by a colleague of Dr. Ford, who represents the Chicago School of Professional Psychology.

The focus of the presentation, titled “Ethical Cross-Racial Supervision”, was centered on educating attendees on ethical and cultural considerations for practicing competent cross-racial supervision. To do so, the team of presenters utilized the Multicultural Social Justice Counseling Competencies and the Multicultural Orientation Model of supervision as the basis for their work. Emphasis was placed on the importance of broaching cultural issues with counselor educators, counselors-in-training, and their clients. In addition, the presenters drew upon the ACA Code of Ethics and ACES Best Practices for evidentiary support of the need and professional expectation to integrate cultural sensitivity into supervision.

In this case, the presenters focused on racial differences in supervision. Each of the presenters was able to speak from a unique perspective, drawing on their personal and professional experiences in supervision, counselor education, and field placement. The cross-racial and multidimensional professional identities of the presenters was beneficial for offering a thorough and informed view of the material. Ultimately, the goal of the presentation was to assist attendees with integrating the content into clinical supervision and ethically provide culturally responsive supervision in a cross-racial supervisory relationship. Based on feedback from attendees and conference facilitators, the presentation was impactful and well-regarded.

## Faculty Accomplishments

**Dr. Joanne Jodry** and several students worked with New Jersey Senator Vin Gopal where they assisted in research to help expand access for mental health in New Jersey. Through their collaboration, they helped Senator Gopal get the following bills signed into laws:

- S1032, concerns expansion of services provided by DHS mental health screening services
- S1339, Enhances enforcement and oversight of mental health condition and substance use disorder parity laws
- S2861, Requires health curriculum for public school students in grades kindergarten through 12 to include instruction on mental health.
- S3172, Requires public school instruction in mental health as it relates to suicide prevention and provides various elements which may be included in instruction.\* Education (passed Senate)
- SR93, Urges Congress to pass and fund federal "Excellence in Mental Health and Addiction Treatment Expansion Act." Resolutions and Concurrent Resolutions Filed w/Sec. of State





**Dr. Sarah Springer** became a Certified Daring Way™ Facilitator -Candidate and taught a class called Courageous Connections based on Shame Resilience Theory and the research of Dr. Brene Brown. She is currently doing research to understand students' experiences in this class with one of our alumni, Lauren Cozzolino and a counseling professor in the Educational Counseling department, Kathleen Grant. They received a grant from the Center for Teaching and Learning at Monmouth to support this research.

Springer, S.I., Grant, K., & Cozzolino, L. (2020) *Exploring students' experiences with a shame resilience curriculum in a counseling elective course: Courageous Connections*. CETL Spring 2020 SoTL Mini-Grant: Monmouth University (\$1000).

She will be presenting on this class and this research with Lauren Cozzolino and current student Shelby Tortorello at the upcoming NARACES conference and Monmouth University's Annual Counseling Conference, and was supposed to present a Daring Way workshop in Australia for which she received a Monmouth University Creativity grant, but it has since been postponed due to COVID.

Springer, S.I. (2020). *An International co-facilitation Daring Way™ presentation of a Shame Resilience Workshop to educators and health care providers in Queensland, Australia*. Creativity Grant: Monmouth University (\$2000)

**Dr. Sarah Springer** published two articles with two of our alumni, Christine Hennigan Paone and Jessica Colucci presented on the Preparedness for Suicide study at the NARACES conference in Vermont.

Springer, S.I., Mason, E., Moss, L., Pugliese, A & Colucci, J. (2020). An Intervention to Support Elementary Faculty in Meeting the Needs of Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Youth. *Journal for Child and Adolescent Counseling*

Springer, S.I., Hennigan-Paone, C., Colucci, J. & Moss, L.J. (2020). Preparedness for Suicide Assessment: Examining Pre-Service School Counselors' Perceptions of their Training Experiences. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Counseling*.

Springer, S.I., Hennigan, C., & Colucci, J. (2018, October). *Addressing Suicidality: Examining Pre-Service School Counselors' Perceptions of their Training*. North Atlantic Region Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (NARACES) regional conference, Burlington, VT.

**Dr. Stephanie Hall and Dr. Springer** were accepted to present at the International School Counselor Conference in Bangkok Thailand (the conference is currently postponed due to COVID)

Springer, S. & Hall, S. (2020, March 20-23). *School Counselors as Advocates for the Needs of Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Youth*. [Conference session]. *International School Counseling (ISCA) Conference*, Bangkok, Thailand (Conference canceled)



**Lisa Himelman's** husband Eric earned his PhD in Biomedical Sciences from Rutgers University in May 2020. Eric's dissertation research focused on cardiomyopathy in patients with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy. He is looking forward to pursuing a career in the pharmaceutical/biotech industry where he wishes to continue doing important research. Congratulations Eric!

# HAWK NETWORK

## Attention Counseling Alumni & Students,

We are excited to share that Monmouth University has developed a new online platform designed to enhance your professional network, the Hawk Network! The university's online community for networking and mentorship, can help you continue interacting and collaborating with current students, program graduates, faculty, staff, and other mental health professionals. There are many ways Hawk Network can benefit you, including accessing valuable resources, job/internship opportunities, and finding an alumni mentor. Additionally, the Department of Professional Counseling group has been created specifically for our constituents to communicate and collaborate directly. Please join the Hawk Network, create a profile (you can even import information directly from LinkedIn), and take some time to explore everything the site has to offer. Registering only takes a few minutes!



### [Join the Hawk Network](#)

Once a member please join the Department of Professional Counseling group within the GROUPS tab at the top of the homepage (or click on the button below). This is specifically for our current and prospective students, faculty, staff, alumni, field placement sites, and other agencies and professionals in the counseling field. Here you can view/post jobs, share resources, learn about upcoming events, and participate in relevant discussion boards. We are glad to take an active role in this important network as part of our commitment to keep our alumni engaged and invested in Monmouth, as we have done through our successful alumni organization Counseling Alumni Connection (CAC).

## Crowdfunding for Scholarship: We Did It!

*Written by Jeffrey Singh, CMHC Student*

The 2019-2020 academic year offered new challenges and aspirations. One of those aspirations was developing new ways to benefit our current students. At the beginning of the year, the Department of Professional Counseling, in collaboration with their active alumni organization Counseling Alumni Connection (CAC), aimed to fund a scholarship fund for students. The goal is to support academic pursuits for students currently enrolled in Professional Counseling degree programs, as well as for future students with the same zeal for helping others through counseling. In order to be able to offer the scholarship to students in Fall 2020, the department had to raise \$5,000 by the end of the fiscal year (June 30th).

Director of Professional Development and Special Projects, Lisa Himelman, and her graduate assistant, Jeff Singh, took the lead on the project. Together they recruited student and faculty members as project ambassadors to promote the scholarship effort. The ambassadors included faculty members and alumni such as Dr. Stephanie Hall, Matthew Tirrell, Dr. Gary Handler, Jennifer Trimarchi, and Alex Evangelista. Along with our esteemed faculty and alumni, the following students were also recruited to help with the project: Samantha Renfree, Alicia Giglio, Victoria Porter, Samuel Shields, Molly Malkinski, and Alanna McGlynn.

Through a variety of targeted initiatives, the department, the CAC, and the project ambassadors worked to raise funds for scholarship.

Crowdfunding campaigns, similar to GoFundMe, took place during both the fall and spring semester.

During the 2019 Current Topics in Counseling Conference several



donation tables were located in different buildings on campus, staffed by student volunteers. Aside from the conference, donation information was available at the many professional development events facilitated by the department and CAC throughout the year.

Online campaigns were utilized during the Crowdfunding efforts. Ambassadors posted on their social media pages and reached out to loved ones to increase awareness of the scholarship. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all fundraising took place through virtual platforms. Project members shared inspirational messages to gain additional support for the scholarship effort. Dr. Handler addressed professionals and alumni in a statement expressing that “in the last couple of years of teaching internship classes I became very conscious of the financial and family life challenges graduate school poses

to our students.” Dr. Handler very generously matched a total of \$1,500 in donations over the course of the year. We are incredibly grateful for his continued support.

Now that the fiscal year is closing, the department is excited to announce that as of May 2020 our \$5,000 goal was achieved and the scholarship funding can now be awarded to deserving students in the fall. We want to extend a BIG thank you to everyone involved in project promotion and to our generous donors.

**We are still accepting donations! To give please visit [www.monmouth.edu/give/pcs.f](http://www.monmouth.edu/give/pcs.f).**





## Department of Professional Counseling's Counseling Alumni Connection Presents at New Jersey Counseling Association Virtual Spring Conference

*Written by Lisa Himelman*

On Friday, May 29, 2020, the Department of Professional Counseling's Counseling Alumni Connection (CAC) co-founders Matthew Tirrell, Jennifer Trimarchi, and Erica Lapid, along with their advisor Lisa Himelman and graduate assistant Jeffrey Singh, presented at the New Jersey Counseling Association (NJCA) Virtual Spring Conference.

Their presentation titled *Connection: The Benefit of Alumni Engagement in Graduate Programs* highlighted the creation and implementation of the CAC, a well-established and active alumni organization, as well as their successful programs and initiatives. This was the first time this presentation was given at a state-wide conference.

Attendees learned about how the initial idea of the CAC came to fruition, including an overview of

the administrative facilitation, and how it has positively impacted Professional Counseling alumni, current students, the university community, and other professionals in helping disciplines. The motivation of this organization has always been the counseling tenet of altruism, with the primary goal of giving back to people within and outside of Monmouth University. The presenters wanted to share this mission with other educators and clinicians, which is what brought them to participate in the NJCA Conference. They provided suggestions and resources for how this model could be adopted at other universities assisting with the promotion of benevolence more widely. The presentation was well received with a great turnout and feedback. The presenters are grateful to NJCA for giving them this

opportunity, and to the department for their constant support and encouragement of the CAC. They hope to continue showcasing this important work at future conferences not just in New Jersey, but also nationally.



Where it began...From L to R: Lisa Himelman, Jennifer Trimarchi, Matthew Tirrell, and Erica Lapid at the CAC Kickoff Event in September 2014

### About the presenters:

Matthew Tirrell, MS '13 is a licensed professional counselor, Director of Field Placement in the Department of Professional Counseling, and adjunct professor at Monmouth University.

Lisa Himelman, MEd '13 is the Director of Professional Development and Special Projects in the Department of Professional Counseling.

Jennifer Trimarchi, MS '14 is a licensed professional counselor, owner of Awareness Within, LLC, and adjunct professor at Monmouth University.

Erica Lapid, MS '12 is a licensed professional counselor, owner of Way to Wellness, LLC, and an adjunct professor at Atlantic Cape Community College.

Jeffrey Singh, BA '16 is a current student in the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program and graduate assistant in the Department of Professional Counseling.

### Connection: The Benefit of Alumni Engagement in Graduate Programs

Lisa Himelman, MEd - Advisor  
Matthew Tirrell, MS, LPC - Co-founder  
Jennifer Trimarchi, MS, LPC - Co-founder  
Erica Lapid, MS, LPC, LCADC - Co-founder  
Jeffrey Singh - Graduate Assistant



## Congratulations to our Graduates!

### August 2019 Graduates

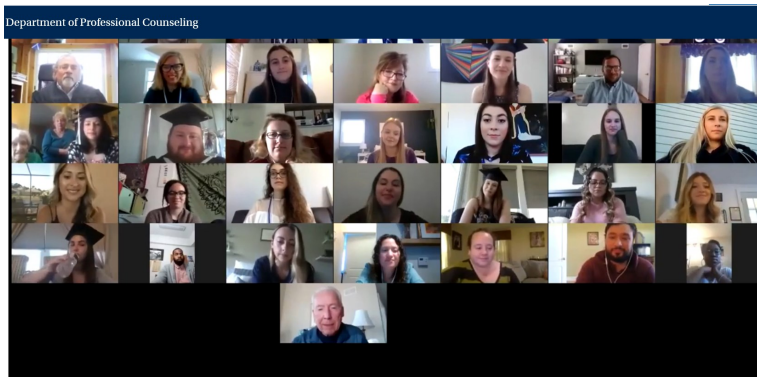
Fitore Blata	Rashmi Kamath Talpady	Jennifer Townsend
Caroline Chitty	Aimee Mount	
Christopher Dunkak	Merritt Reid	
Heather Harbachuk	Sunanda Sharma	
Parker Hilton	Megan Tangradi	

### January 2020 Graduates

Corinne Aballo	Liana Howard	Cassandra Mercuri	Elise Vermane
Albert Bristol III	Laura Hrycyk	Rebecca Morrissey	Andrea Wiggs
Angelina Cifelli	Hayley Kotacska	Olivia Pruznick	Sari Wyckoff
Michelle Costantino	Jilian LaGrippo	Emily Rice	
Lauren Cozzolino	Andrew Lerman	Shannon Scibor	
Charlotte Helfgott	Dana McArthur	Susie Sehulster	

### May 2020 Graduates

Emily Acosta	Stephanie Galarza Conti	Samantha Renfree
Samantha Algieri	Alicia Giglio	Kimberly Shjarback
Meghan Casey	Kristin Justice	Nicholas Spanola
Grace Cassidy	Caitlin Matus	Steven Taragano
Kelly Coles	Lisa Musolino	



A photo from this year's virtual graduation with a special guest appearance by Safety Officer Ray Ryan!

## To Dr. Hall, with Gratitude:

After 11 years with the department, Associate Professor and Chair Dr. Stephanie Hall is leaving Monmouth to join Emory and Henry College in Virginia.

Dr. Hall led the department with integrity, strength, and kindness. She was instrumental in many significant achievements, making important and critical decisions that truly benefitted the department. Dr. Hall worked to have the department named changed to Professional Counseling which better reflects the career path and goals of our students. She changed the MS degree name from Mental Health Counseling to Clinical Mental Health Counseling and made important modifications to the MS program in order to satisfy new CACREP accreditation requirements. Dr. Hall worked to implement two different assessment systems, starting with Chalk & Wire in 2014 and transitioning to Tevera this May. As a result of her guidance in these areas and more, the department received a full eight-year reaccreditation from CACREP which is necessary for counselor education programs.

Dr. Hall served on multiple university committees and as a CACREP site reviewer. She oversaw the hiring of five tenure track faculty positions: Dr. Jessica Burkholder, Dr. Sarah Springer, Dr. Megan Delaney, Dr. David Ford, and Dr. Jason Branch. Dr. Hall also created a new full-time administrative position, Director of Field Placement, and hired department alumnus Matthew Tirrell, who is a perfect fit for the

role. After tireless efforts, she converted Lisa Himelman's position to Director of Professional Development and Special Projects, allowing for the expansion of department and CAC continuing education offerings.

Monmouth is now a leading CE provider in the state, a "hub" for counselors and other helping professionals to learn new knowledge and techniques. Dr. Hall felt strongly about department/school collaborations, developing relationships and improving the program's profile across campus.

Our faculty, students, alumni, and other constituents can all agree that Dr. Hall's accomplishments as chair are unmatched. She facilitated a warm and inclusive environment and is an incredibly generous person. We will miss Dr. Hall as a chairperson, faculty member, colleague, and friend, and wish her only the best as she embarks on this exciting new endeavor. Thank you, Dr. Hall, for demonstrating respect and benevolence, and for being a mentor to so many of us. We are incredibly grateful for what you have done for the department, Monmouth University, and the communities we serve.



## Chair's Corner

Dr. Stephanie Hall

Typically I would begin writing this entry with a list of the successes of the 2019-2020 academic year.

This year is different. It seems appropriate to acknowledge the challenges that we have faced and the losses that have been experienced. I also want to acknowledge the strength and persistence that it took to get us to this point. There are few words to adequately describe what it takes to complete a semester during a global pandemic. I am thinking of our May 2020 graduates who should be celebrated this month, surrounded by their friends, families and professors. Please know that we are all celebrating with you in spirit, and look forward to doing so virtually on the 13<sup>th</sup> of May.

Congratulations to all of you! We are proud of you and cannot wait to see what you will do to make the world a better place. I also want to congratulate Dr. Jessica Burkholder who

was tenured and promoted to the rank of Associate Professor. We will add that to the list of events to be celebrated when life returns to normal.

Our department has much to be proud of: talented students, faculty and administrators. I feel fortunate to be connected to such an amazing group of people. As many of you already know- this will be my last year at Monmouth University. I am relocating to Virginia to start a new counseling department. I am filled with both excitement for the future and sadness to leave a place (and many people) that I have loved for the last 11 years. I will always be grateful for my time in New Jersey and will continue to support this department's growth and achievements. Dr. David Burkholder will become chair on July 1<sup>st</sup>, with Dr. Joanne Jodry stepping into the role of CMHC program director. I wish you all continued success and happiness in the future.



Thank you for  
being a part of my journey.

## MONMOUTH UNIVERSITY

**Department of  
Professional Counseling**  
400 Cedar Avenue  
Graduate Center  
West Long Branch, NJ  
07764

Phone: 732-571-3570

Fax: 732-923-4661

Please note that during the pandemic, all university offices are being staffed remotely.

### Website:

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Consider making a gift to support Professional Counseling students' education and professional development by donating to the Professional Counseling Scholarship Fund!

Visit [www.monmouth.edu/give/pcsf](http://www.monmouth.edu/give/pcsf) to donate or contact us to learn more.

**Lisa Himelman**

Director of Professional Development & Special Projects

[lhimelma@monmouth.edu](mailto:lhimelma@monmouth.edu)