

**Use of Multicultural Supervision With School Counselors  
to Enhance Cultural Competence**

Cirecie West-Olatunji

University of Florida

Rachael D. Goodman

George Mason University, Fairfax Campus

Lauren Shure

Center for Evaluation and Educational Policy

### **Abstract**

School counselors are often tasked with addressing the persistent underachievement of many culturally diverse students. However, there is concern that some school counselors lack the cultural competence to effectively intervene with culturally diverse students. This qualitative study investigated the impact of advanced multicultural supervision sessions on three practicing school counselors at a K-12 school. Results suggest that supervision increased awareness of school counselors' biases and provided an opportunity for them to engage in discussions regarding the implementation of culturally appropriate counseling strategies. Implications, recommendations, and areas of future research for counselor education and supervision are also presented.

## **Use of Multicultural Supervision With School Counselors to Enhance Cultural Competence**

As U.S. schools have become increasingly diverse, the need for effective training and supervision practices in cultural competence among school counselors is evident (Sue & Sue, 2008). Furthermore, despite interventions by educators, many culturally diverse students continue to experience persistent underachievement (Haycock, 2001; Lee, 2002; National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2007; Oakes, 1990). School counselors often have the task of addressing these academic struggles (Cholewa & West-Olatunji, 2008). However, there is concern that many school counselors lack sufficient cultural competence; thus, often act as gatekeepers essentially preventing culturally diverse students from being recommended for gifted or other enrichment programs (Amatea & West-Olatunji, 2007; Bemak & Chung, 2005). The authors use multicultural counseling and therapy (MCT) as a framework for investigating three school counselors' cultural competence when working with culturally diverse students at a K-12 school. MCT scholars suggest that cultural encapsulation hinders counselor effectiveness and can serve as an obstacle to accurate case conceptualization and interventions (Sue, Ivey, & Pedersen, 1996). The purpose of this paper is to present the findings of a qualitative study in which the researchers found that regularly scheduled advanced multicultural supervision sessions assisted the participating school counselors in becoming aware of their biases. Implications for counselor education and supervision are also explored.

## **Background**

Despite consistent efforts by educators, culturally diverse students, particularly African Americans and Latino Americans, continue to experience persistent underachievement. Persistent underachievement is characterized by the disproportional placement of culturally diverse students, especially those from low-income backgrounds, in low-ability coursework (Haycock, 2001; Lee, 2002; Oakes, 1990), special education programs (Gallini, Simmons & Feggins-Azziz, 2006; National Research Council, 2002; NCES, 2007; Patton, 1992, 1998; Skiba et al., 2008; Skiba, Poloni-Staudinger,), and behavioral remediation (Cartledge, Tillman, & Talbert-Johnson, 2001; Skiba, Peterson & Williams, 1997). In particular, African American and Latino American students are half as likely to be placed in gifted, talented, and advanced courses as their middle-class white counterparts (Ford, Harris, Tyson, & Trotman, 2002; United States Department of Education [USDE], 2003). Furthermore, African American students receive more severe behavioral referrals and punishments than their white counterparts (Cartledge et al., 2001; Skiba et al., 1997). Finally, for the past three decades, dropout rates for Latino American students have been higher than those of any other cultural group (Kaufman, Alt, & Chapman, 2004; NCES, 2007).

### **School Counselors and Cultural Competence**

As student populations become more diverse and student issues more complex, school counselors have an increasingly difficult task of providing counseling services in today's schools (Crutchfield, Price, Mcgarity, Pennington, Richardson, & Tsolis, 1997). First, many school counselors have received inadequate supervision within their training programs in working with diverse student populations. Second, practicing school

counselors frequently do not participate in regularly scheduled supervision sessions (Paisley & McMahon, 2001; Roberts & Borders, 1994). When the Council for Accredited Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) instituted standards for counseling programs to require multicultural training within the counseling curriculum, practicing counselors, were “grandfathered in” and not required to retroactively take a course in multicultural counseling. Consequently, as a result of the grandfather clause, many older school counselors are not adequately trained in multicultural counseling. Finally, overwhelming workloads and job insecurity often challenge school counselors. Such work conditions can prevent school counselors from developing cultural competence through supervision or additional professional development training (Stone & Clark, 2001). Specifically, a lack of consistent supervision is significant because counselor supervision has been identified as a critical component in counselor development of performance skills, client conceptualization, self-awareness, and professional behaviors (Bernard, 1979; Bernard & Goodyear, 1998).

In addition to supervision challenges, school counselors may encounter other obstacles to workplace performance. They are often expected to support the academic, socio-emotional, and developmental needs of students but also given responsibilities that are not related to their training, such as test administration and scheduling (Paisley & McMahon, 2001). Fulfilling all of these expectations is difficult, especially when considering current counselor-to-student ratios. The American Counseling Association (1999) estimated that the average counselor-to-student ratio in the United States ranges from 1 to 313 in Vermont to 1 to 1,182 in California.

## **Multicultural Supervision**

Through the utilization of professional development and ongoing supervision, school counselors can gain multicultural competence allowing them to become leaders within their schools to advocate for the development and implementation of culturally responsive school practices and curriculum (Paisley & McMahon, 2001). Supervisors in cross-cultural supervision dyads can optimize the benefits of cross-cultural and multicultural supervision by: (a) openly discussing one's own culture and how this impacts their beliefs and worldview with supervisees (Bernard & Goodyear, 1998), (b) exploring cultural countertransference issues (Hunt, 1987), and (c) providing a safe environment for racial and ethnic identity development (Cook, 1994; Cook & Helms, 1988; Peterson, 1991). Constantine (1997) examined the extent to which multicultural supervision was conducted at internship sites and ways in which it could be enhanced. Participants in the study reported that spending more time processing issues around cultural differences could have enhanced supervision.

Other research on multicultural supervision examined best practices for addressing multicultural issues and conceptualization skills as well as the effects of supervision. Supervisors who attend to multicultural issues in supervision and have multicultural competence themselves may be successful in training students who are effective in working with culturally diverse clients (Constantine, 2001). Garrett and colleagues (2001) offered a model of supervision that instructs supervisors to examine and address the supervisee's interpretations of her/his experiences in the supervisory relationship and in session with clients. Borrowing from Interpersonal Process Recall (Borders & Leddick, 1987; Kagan, 1975), these scholars suggested that multicultural

issues could become explicit in the supervision process when culturally competent supervisors inquire into supervisee's perceptions of clients, assumptions of client perceptions of them as counselors, interpretations of client responses, and the rationale for supervisee responses (Garrett et al.). In addition, various models of multicultural supervision exist, including: developmental-interpersonal (Bruss, Brack, Brack, Glickhauf-Hughes, & O'Leary, 1997; Constantine, 1997; Porter, 1994), descriptive (Ancis & Ladany, 2001; Helms & Cook, 1999; Brown & Landrum-Brown, 1995) and empowerment models (House & Holloway, 1992).

Ladany, Inman, Constantine, and Hofheinz (1997) found that supervisees who were instructed to focus upon multicultural issues in their client conceptualizations were better able to consider multicultural issues in their client conceptualizations than those who did not have this instruction. Effective culture-centered case conceptualization is thought to be correlative to positive treatment outcomes (West-Olatunji, 2009) and poor or culturally encapsulated case conceptualization has been linked to early termination and an aggravation of psychological distress for culturally diverse clients (Pedersen & Ivey, 1993). Overall, there is a consensus that supervision experiences need to integrate an attention to culture both within the supervisory relationship and in client conceptualization and treatment (Hird, Cavaleri, Dulko, Felice, & Ho, 2001).

### **Multicultural Counseling and Therapy**

Multicultural counseling and therapy (MCT) emerged as a response to the use of Western psychology to oppress and impose white middle-class values upon culturally diverse people (Sue, Ivey, & Pedersen, 1996). MCT posits that culture frames one's attitudes, beliefs, and worldview. Thus, MCT includes helping roles and processes that:

(a) define wellness in congruence with an individual's culture and subsequent values, (b) utilize cultural-centered client conceptualization and treatment modalities, and (c) include an ecosystemic conceptualization of clients (Lewis, Lewis, Daniels, & D'Andrea, 2003; Sue, Ivey, & Pedersen; Sue & Sue, 2008). Using multicultural counseling and therapy as a lens, this study asked the question, "What are the cultural competence outcomes when practicing school counselors engage in weekly multicultural supervision sessions?"

### **Method**

The researchers followed case study protocols in order to go beyond the descriptive questions, such as who, what, when, how much, and how many, to answer the questions of how and why (Yin, 1993, 1994). This approach offers an ideal research format to explore the how's and why's of the participant's worldview. Furthermore, use of this heuristic methodological approach allowed the researchers to deepen the reader's understanding of the participant's phenomenology in a way that extends the reader's own experience.

The research team consisted of three females. The first author of this paper was a counselor educator at a research-intensive university. Her professional expertise focuses on multicultural counseling issues with children. The remaining co-authors were doctoral-level counselor education students with concentrations in multicultural counseling. The second author, at the time of data collection, served as a full-year intern at the participating school.

The setting was a developmental laboratory school affiliated with a research-intensive university and located on its campus. The school, located in the southern

United States, serves approximately 1,150 students in kindergarten through twelfth grade. Participants in the study consisted of three school counselors. School indicators reflect high achievement for the overall student body, sufficient resources available to school personnel, and high parent involvement across ethnic groups. The majority of the students attending the school are middle class and white.

### **Participants**

The participants included two white school counselors (one male and one female) and one Latino American female school counselor, ranging in age from 30 to 52 years. Years of experience as a school counselor were as follows: 0 years, 7 years, and 26 years. While two of the three participants were master's-level counselors, one counselor was enrolled in a doctoral counseling program. All of the participants reported having participated in various levels of multicultural training. Pseudonyms (*Patty*, *Barb*, and *Tim*) were used in reporting the results to ensure confidentiality of the participants.

### **Data Sources and Procedures**

The experimental method consisted of data collected from demographic forms, audiotaped focus group and informal interviews, cultural biographies, and process notes from the supervision sessions. Demographic information was collected from the three participating counselors to solicit information about their level of education, gender, age, ethnicity, number of years of professional experience as a counselor, and prior multicultural counseling training.

Opportunities to participate were advertised during monthly staff meetings, via the staff listserv, and through a one-page flyer in counselors' mailboxes. Participation was voluntary with no compensation offered. Participants were provided with the

informed consent form during the faculty/staff fall orientation session. Once they agreed to participate, they were provided with the demographic and cultural biography forms. The three participating school counselors agreed to participate in the study by: (a) completing a monthly assigned reading, (b) engaging in a monthly one hour professional development workshop on diversity issues with the entire school faculty (see Table 1), and (c) attending weekly one hour supervision sessions throughout the school year.

**Table 1**

*Diversity Workshop Schedule*

<b>Month</b>	<b>Module</b>	<b>Reading</b>
October	Educational Hegemony	Tatum, B. D. (2007). <i>Can we talk about race? And other conversations in an era of school resegregation</i> . Boston: Beacon Press.
November	Why teachers need to know about counseling & Why counselors need to know about teaching	Diaz-Greenburg, R. (2003) <i>Emergence of voice in Latino/a high school students</i> . New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.
December	Parenting and family involvement in schools	Michie, G. (2004). <i>See you when we get there: Teaching for change in urban schools</i> . New York: Teachers College Press.
February	Culture-centered teaching and counseling practices	Hale, J. E. (2001). <i>Learning while black: Creating educational excellence for African American children</i> . Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
March	Reflective teaching, community as client, wrap around	Smith, L. (1994). <i>Killers of the dream</i> . New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
April	From methods and materials to caring	Ladson-Billings, G. (1994). <i>The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African American children</i> . San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

All supervision sessions were held on the school campus in a conference room and facilitated by the principal investigator. A total of nine supervision sessions were held. Seven of these were held in the fall and only two were held in the spring due to various

school holidays, special events, and competing work demands. The baseline focus group interview questions were developed by the principal investigator and based upon a review of the literature. Ten supervision approaches were selected from relevant literature on counselor education and supervision for use during the intervention. Journal articles describing the supervision approaches were distributed to the participants at the first supervision session following the baseline focus group interview. The format of the supervision sessions involved: (a) a warm up exercise in which participants listened to relaxing music and engaged in deep breathing for approximately five minutes, (b) a brief review of the activities during the previous supervision session, (c) a short case presentation and choice of supervision format, (d) the supervision activity, and (e) subsequent processing of salient issues from the supervision activity.

### **Data Analysis**

To analyze the data, the researchers began by independently reading through the transcripts while listening to the tapes (when applicable) to assess for accuracy. Following the initial readings, the researchers read through the transcripts several more times while highlighting comments or phrases that were representative of the participants' experiences. Subsequent data analysis procedures included clustering highlighted statements into summary statements on the right margin of the transcript and creating domains of meanings from the clustered summary statements. In order to reach consensus, the researchers collectively examined commonalities and highlighted divergent themes. Extracted themes were subsequently examined by the research team and cross-referenced with researcher notes and comments that were created during the data collection phase. After the results were assimilated, the researchers met with the

participants to gather feedback and ensure accuracy of data interpretation. To ensure internal validity, the following strategies were employed: triangulation of data, member checking, and peer examination.

## **Results**

Four themes were identified: awareness/interest, knowledge, commitment, and stressed/overwhelmed. Each of the participants shared culturally rich lived experiences that serve to inform their awareness of culturally diverse students and interest in serving their unique needs. Further, the counselors seemed to have knowledge of school policies, child developmental needs, and disproportionate outcomes for culturally diverse students. Despite their steadfast commitment to students, the counselors often hesitate to act on their awareness and knowledge regarding the marginalized experiences of culturally diverse students at their school. Exacerbating this phenomenon, the counselors articulated feeling stressed and overwhelmed by their myriad of job-related responsibilities.

### **Awareness and Interest**

The counselors framed their interest in multicultural counseling using their own lived experiences as a foundation. One stated, "I have also been the target of racism so I can relate to some degree." Another stated, "My cultural identity is a rich tapestry of a number of groups, ideologies, and life experiences." Awareness was defined as having consciousness of multicultural issues and concerns, such as cultural differences among students, inequities in schooling experiences for some students, and their own socialized biases. Barb stated, "...if an African American kid...decided to pitch a fit...he's just referred for counseling, documentation not done." Associated with

counselors' awareness of cultural differences was their stated interest in developing effective interventions. On another occasion, in talking about ways to collaborate with teachers to work with culturally diverse students, Barb shared that, "I would love to do multicultural education...but finding material...I was trying to search for material." In responding to a reported concern by teachers that the African American students are too loud in the cafeteria, Barb commented, "When they're eating it's a social thing so they talk loud...culturally diverse thinking would be great because these kids are not being super loud or crazy. They're just socializing."

In discussing teachers' differential responses to student behaviors, Barb shared, "...it comes to behavior within a lot of our minority kids...I can be very well wrong, but what I've observed is that different people will have different tolerances." Patty reported, "...a lot of these kids don't have the services they need because the teachers just deal with it." In elaborating on this phenomenon, Patty stated, "I feel sometimes there is a misguided advocacy for some of those children...I think that there's good intentions and they are advocating with good intentions but sometimes you need to look at what is really going on with this child...."

### **Knowledge**

The theme of knowledge refers to familiarity with what works for children and of school policies. Counselors demonstrated knowledge of school policies, child development, and cultural differences. Barb shared her understanding of the students' needs, "I think the children need recognition and they don't necessarily get it...maybe a kid does all the right things at the right time – there is no recognition for you. I know how to do multicultural lessons." Patty reflected on the developmental needs of the students,

“...Something happened in between fifth and sixth grade. Something happened that we may need to look at....”

In discussing the issues of the African American students sitting together in the school cafeteria, Patty commented, “I read a lot – like [the book] ‘Why are all the Black kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria’. It’s easier sometimes, it’s more comfortable. They need a little bit of a break...because they’re few in numbers, they feel more comfortable together.” Patty also shared some of her observations regarding test scores for culturally diverse students, “Looking at the data, test scores ‘fall off’ for some students in 6<sup>th</sup> grade. It’s more prevalent with culturally diverse students....”

### **Commitment**

Counselors also demonstrated a strong commitment to children and to the counseling profession. In talking about her persistence in the face of many job-related challenges, Patty asserted, “... if there’s anything that I can do as a counselor to make a difference even for one along the way...I want to do that, too.” Barb stated her desire to serve in more of a leadership role in the school, “I would like to play a role in creating...a program [where] children are held in high expectations, they are allowed to make decisions about their behavior....” Tim’s main concern focused on his effectiveness, “...I’m really excited to be doing this. I think my biggest concern about this is that this can be intense work...this is something I truly believe and so I’m here...let’s do it.” Later in the year, Barb commented that, “I would like to play a role in creating the best...behavior program where children are held to high expectations – all children.”

Analysis of the process notes revealed that the counselors continued to express their views about supervision throughout the fall months, stating that they felt positively about group supervision and saw the benefits. Their energy remained high and they felt hopeful about working with culturally diverse students. Of interest, they increasingly talked about being more of a resource for the teachers. However, they continued to demonstrate reluctance to work with the parents of culturally diverse students. The supervision process notes reflected that, despite their commitment to working more effectively with African American and Latino American students:

They disclosed their lack of understanding and fears when working with culturally diverse students and parents. They were able to conceptualize students' and parents' irritability and distrust toward teachers and counselors due to cultural discontinuity and perceived lack of empathy among educators. However, they seemed reluctant to identify possible interventions that might address parents' blaming roles in particular. Despite increased understanding, they appeared to remain hesitant to increase interaction with culturally diverse parents.

By the end of the fifth supervision session, counselors began reviewing their counseling services and discussed, "adding more focus on diversity and cultural sensitivity." A new mission statement for the counseling office was drafted, "Collaborating to meet the unique needs of each child through a culturally-sensitive developmental counseling model to assist students in reaching their highest potential." They agreed to each conduct independent research on developmental and multicultural counseling models and then, as Patty stated, "advertise as our 'culturally sensitive developmental counseling model' from which we draw."

The remaining sessions during the fall were working sessions in which the counselors dedicated themselves to enhancing their skills with students and collaborating with teachers. It should be noted that every supervision session began with the counselors expressing their anxieties about completing their work tasks and the stress associated with the multiple roles and tasks at the school. Without exception, it was necessary to repeatedly ask the counselors for each supervision session as they typically felt it was important to continue their work tasks rather than coming to the supervision session. However, the counselors ended each supervision session by voicing renewed commitment to their work and energy. In the last session of the fall, the process notes illuminate their reflections:

The counselors agreed that the supervision has been helpful and they have enjoyed being a part of it. Then they each went around and spoke individually of their experiences. They talked about how they feel it has helped them: (a) be more present with their students, parents, and colleagues, (b) be aware of the biases they bring into their work especially with culturally diverse persons, and (c) examine their expectations of culturally diverse students and parents and how their expectations shape their interactions.

### **Stressed/Overwhelmed**

Despite the counselors' demonstrated commitment to their jobs and to enhancing their cultural competence, it is imperative to note that the overarching theme in the investigation was the amount and intensity of stress that counselors disclosed. Even after seven supervision sessions, it was noted that, "the counselors appeared to be exhausted and distracted by the demands of their work." Counselors spoke about their

roles in the school setting and articulated their frustration about not being able to make a difference. Patty shared, “So, literally, at the end of every day my head was spinning...I had to go to the doctor for stress-related illness. We have so many responsibilities and it is very overwhelming.” Barb talked about the stress associated with her awareness of differential schooling experiences for some students, “...there are certain kids...that are discussed ad infinitum in the team meetings...the vast majority of them tend to be culturally diverse kids. That’s why I’m so stressed out...”

In January, the principal investigator asked the counselors to facilitate the faculty-wide diversity workshop in an effort to foster sustainability of the diversity initiative and to encourage them to take on more of a consultation role. This session went well and resulted in the counselors reporting that they felt more like leaders in the school as they processed the faculty’s discourse during the training and posed questions about what might be next steps. They decided that the, “eventual goal after raising awareness amongst faculty is to help them better connect with parents.” They also posed important questions in supervision, “How do you do advocacy? And what are productive advocacy behaviors?” However, while the second half of the year reflected counselors’ increased cultural competence and consultation skills, this period was characterized by increased anxiety and distrust. Concerns about role definition surfaced as counselors expressed confusion about their roles and the supervisor’s role in relation to the increased demands for consultation from teachers and administrators.

### **Discussion**

The school counselors who participated in this study articulated the benefits of having time to reflect on their effectiveness with the students and parents at their

school. While the focus of this investigation was on cultural competence, having time set aside for counselors to create discourse about their work seemed to increase their efficacy with all students. Having a counselor educator to serve as their facilitator of the weekly supervision sessions allowed the counselors to explicitly converse about multicultural counseling issues and, thus, increased their cultural awareness regarding counseling responses. While all three counselors articulated that they had received adequate multicultural training, they still voiced a need for skill development. They were aware that certain interactions with students were culturally laden but did not know what specific interventions might be expedient or effective in a given situation. Participation in the weekly supervision sessions appeared beneficial in enhancing the counselors' multicultural counseling skill sets.

It should be noted that the counselors' lack of responsiveness to the needs of culturally diverse students may be due, in part, to their cultural and racial biases. It has been shown that resistance to multicultural training negatively impacts counselor effectiveness (Constantine, 1997, 2001). Further, current work in this area has suggested that school counselors, in particular, exhibit racial insensitivity characterized by low expectations and poor conceptualization of student abilities, talents, and needs (West-Olatunji, Shure, Pringle, Adams, Lewis & Cholewa, 2010).

### **Recommendations**

Given these challenges for school counselors, two significant recommendations are warranted. First, counselor educators can become more active as partners with school counselors to facilitate the shift to more responsive roles within the school community, especially when working with culturally diverse students (Amatea & West-

Olatunji, 2007; Stone & Clark, 2001). Supervision can play a greater role in the professional development of school counselors. Counselor educators can serve as supervisors and advocates for school counselors through engaged scholarship. Research embedded in school communities allows for continuous contact with administrators, teachers, and other school personnel to clarify the role of the 21<sup>st</sup> century school counselors. Serving as faculty-in-residence, teaching graduate counseling classes at K-12 schools, integrating service learning experiences into course content, and partnering with school counselors to conduct participatory research are all excellent examples of how counselor educators can play a greater role in the professional lives of school counselors.

Secondly, by emphasizing the importance of regularly scheduled peer supervision sessions, counselor educators can encourage school counselors to value supervision (Paisley & McMahon, 2001). In the *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen Covey (1989) recounts a story about preparing for a lecture in which his papers were stacked on chairs when a gust of wind blew through an open window casting the papers everywhere. For a while, he spent his time trying to pick up the papers as they continued to blow around the room. Then, he realized that the task would be easier if he first closed the window and picked up the papers. In school settings, it may be beneficial to, metaphorically, close the windows prior to picking up the papers. School counselors need to be encouraged to schedule weekly supervision sessions as a way to enhance their case conceptualization skills and knowledge construction. There is often this need to address every presenting problem or crisis without thinking first about what the needs are or what evidence-based practices might

are available. By stopping to reflect, school counselors might move toward the development of a “master counselor” with the sufficient awareness, knowledge, and skills to be effective when working with culturally diverse students.

### **Future Research**

One important investigation could focus on best practices among school counselors who are effectively responding to the needs of culturally diverse students. Exploring how they spend their time and what resources they use with students would provide more information about effective school counseling practices. Similar to the benefits of master teachers, master counselors might illuminate and model advocacy, consultation, and leadership skills. Another relevant investigation could explore counselors’ conceptualization skills with culturally diverse students and the impact of those skills on the referral rate of culturally diverse students to special education programs. A quantitative study investigating the likelihood that school counselors would recommend students for special education services based upon culturally bound behaviors is warranted. Hypothetical student vignettes displaying typical mainstream Eurocentric behaviors coupled with vignettes displaying student behaviors more typical of African American or Latino American cultures can be utilized to evaluate the effect, if any, of students’ culturally-bound behaviors on school counselors’ recommendations for special education services.

In summary, this study found that the implementation of weekly advanced multicultural supervision was successful in increasing school counselors’ awareness of their biases and gave them an opportunity to discuss the implementation of culturally appropriate counseling interventions. School counselors have been charged with the

responsibility of affecting positive change on the academic achievement of all students. Cultural competence is necessary in order for school counselors to effectively intervene against the persistent underachievement of many culturally diverse students. It is suggested that school counselors take time to reflect upon their practice by participating in weekly supervision sessions and utilizing the consultation and collaboration of counselor educators, when available.

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## Biographical Statements

**Dr. Cirecie West-Olatunji** currently serves as Associate Professor of Counselor Education at the University of Florida, a Governing Council Representative of the American Counseling Association, and is a past president of the Association for Multicultural Counseling & Development (AMCD). Nationally and internationally, Dr. West-Olatunji has initiated several clinical research projects that focus on culture-centered community collaborations designed to address issues rooted in systemic oppression, such as transgenerational trauma and traumatic stress.

**Dr. Rachael Goodman** is an Assistant Professor in the Counseling and Development Program at George Mason University. Dr. Goodman's interests include social justice, counseling outreach, traumatic stress, culture-centered disaster response, and counselor training. Her research and clinical work has focused on outreach and trauma counseling among marginalized populations, particularly in communities that have experienced natural or human-made disaster.

**Dr. Lauren Shure** is a Research Associate with the Equity Project at Indiana University. Her research interests focus on educational equity and school counselor training, specifically in relation to low-income, culturally diverse K-12 learners. Clinically, Dr. Shure is a licensed professional counselor with an emphasis on culture-centered counseling interventions.