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## The Counseling Profession In- and Outside the United States

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As will become apparent from this chapter and practically every other chapter in this handbook, the counseling profession is much larger than any one country (Heppner, 2006). And, contrary to the belief of some, the profession outside the United States is thriving, making important discoveries about human behavior and the science and practice of counseling, and effectively meeting the needs of the clients being served. Furthermore, the counseling profession outside the United States has much to offer professionals in the United States, and it is incumbent on U.S. counselors and counseling psychologists, and for counseling professionals worldwide for that matter, to actively acquire knowledge about the field as it is practiced elsewhere (Heppner, Leong, & Gerstein, 2008).

This chapter begins by discussing the counseling movement in the United States and how it has evolved to embrace an international focus and agenda. Following this, it is argued that the counseling profession is quite vibrant and active in more

than one specific country, that is, the United States. Next, the chapter addresses the importance of counselors and counseling psychologists developing a strong cross-cultural sensitivity to effectively perform in diverse cultures and in different countries. The current status of the internationalization of the counseling profession is then discussed. Challenges revolving around defining various important terms and concepts in the field of counseling are covered next. The chapter ends with a presentation of various trends and challenges for counseling professionals worldwide and some recommendations for addressing these challenges.

### THE COUNSELING PROFESSION EXISTS BEYOND ONE COUNTRY

In the sense of human beings listening to and assisting one another, counseling has been practiced in some form or another throughout history. It could be associated with a hypothesized genetic predisposition

toward altruism. Some writers (e.g., Torrey, 1972) have drawn comparisons between witchdoctors and psychiatrists or psychotherapists. Torrey in his classic book, *The Mind Game: Witchdoctors and Psychiatrists*, argued that these individuals rely on similar philosophies and strategies to help people. That is, these helpers are effective when the persons they assist are instilled with hope, have faith in their provider's talents, believe in the treatment, expect positive outcomes, share the same worldview, and experience a similarity in how the helper cognitively and perceptually approaches the world. While it is true that people from the same culture are more likely to embrace a similar worldview, and cognitive and perceptual style, these factors and the others mentioned by Torrey are all critical in his view to the outcome of a healing relationship, be it with a witchdoctor or a psychiatrist.

Counseling as a formal discipline, however, is now just a hundred years old with the launching of the vocational guidance movement, whereas natural healers or witchdoctors as Torrey called them have been around since ancient times. Beginning in the United States, counseling spread to Great Britain and Europe, and then expanded throughout the world (Stockton, Garbelman, Kaladow, & Terry, 2007). The process of international expansion has been greatly aided through the efforts of national and international organizations dedicated to the helping profession.

Perhaps more than any other individual, Hans Hoxter was responsible for the development of counseling worldwide (Ivey, 2003). He was personally responsible for helping found two international organizations, the International Association of Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG) in 1950 and the International Roundtable for the Advancement of Counselling (IRTAC) in 1966. In 1997, IRTAC was renamed as the International Association for Counselling (IAC).

Hoxter was a remarkable man, one of the truly great figures in the counseling movement. He was a contemporary of other luminaries in counseling and psychology such as Jean Piaget, Leona Tyler, and Gilbert Wrenn (Ivey, 2003). His special talent was to bring people and organizations together. For example,

he worked to gain consultative status with organizations such as the United Nations, UNESCO, and many other international organizations of this caliber (Borgen, 2003). IAC continues to bring together professionals from around the world in their annual meetings that are held in various countries each year. In addition, IAC members can be part of a "working group" that interacts throughout the year, reporting on their activities at the annual meeting. These meetings provide a venue that facilitates exchange between individuals around the world. Another effective mechanism for the exchange of ideas, practices, and research is through the *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling* published by the IAC. This is a valuable resource for articles from professionals worldwide. Among its other accomplishments, the founding of counseling organizations nationally, in several countries, has been a direct result of the influence of IAC.

National organizations, particularly in the West, have begun to develop an international focus. Examples of this include the National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC), which is a national certification organization. NBCC, however, operates with a broad counseling mission (see Chapter 7 this volume). This organization established NBCC International (NBCC-I) in 2003 "to strengthen counseling and highlight counseling needs throughout the world" (NBCC, 2009). Not long after its founding, the Southeast Asia tsunami of 2004 occurred, and NBCC-I became active in collaboration with other groups, including the World Health Organization (WHO), in providing support to mental health professionals who offered counseling services to those affected by the tsunami. Currently, through a series of international conferences, NBCC-I brings together counselors and other helping professionals throughout the world.

The American Counseling Association (ACA) that serves as an umbrella structure for counselors in the United States through both its divisions and individual members has had a major influence on the development of counseling internationally. Particularly after World War II, influential U.S. counselors who were ACA members, primarily university faculty, began to travel to

other countries and to serve as a resource for those interested in counseling.

Various divisions of ACA such as the Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development (AMCD), National Career Development Association (NCDA), and other divisions that became active in international outreach also encouraged these individual efforts. In some ACA divisions, there is a formal committee structure for international activities. Also, the ACA publication, the *Journal of Counseling and Development*, at times, features articles with an international focus. The annual ACA conference brings together many international counselors who interact with colleagues from the United States and other countries throughout the world. In addition to the informal connections that are made at receptions for international visitors, various convention programs also provide a venue for international speakers who both contribute to the knowledge base and stay current with the professional developments of their Western counterparts (e.g., U.S. counselors).

The American Psychological Association (APA) has a long-standing interest and involvement in international activities as well. There is an Office of International Affairs in the national headquarters, an International Division (52), and substantial international activity in many of the other divisions, including Division 17, the Society of Counseling Psychology (see Chapter 1, this volume).

Counseling psychology in the United States has a long and distinguished history (see reviews by Blocher, 2000; Borgen, 1984; Heppner, 1990; Heppner, Casas, Carter, & Stone, 2000; Meara & Myers, 1999; Scott, 1980; Whiteley, 1980, 1984). In 1946, Division 17 (then called Personnel and Guidance Psychology) of the APA was founded. The historic establishment of Division 17 was in many ways the cumulative confluence of the vocational guidance, mental hygiene, and psychometric movements, all of which began in the early 1900s. Just 7 years later, in 1953, the division name was changed to Counseling Psychology; in 2002, the name was changed once again to the Society of Counseling Psychology. The division has maintained its position within the larger APA for now more than 60 years, at one point having more than 3,000 members within the division and

another 11,000 counseling psychologists in other divisions of the APA. "Although Division 17 formally represents organized counseling psychology [in the U.S.], the profession has now evolved beyond any one organization" (Heppner et al., 2000, p. 37) and currently includes very important collaborative relations with several other organizations such as the Council of Counseling Psychology Training Programs (which has today considerable strength within U.S. professional psychology) as well as the Association of Counseling Center Training Agencies (which also has evolved into a strong force within organized psychology). The combined efforts of these and other professional groups represent a very strong voice for counseling psychology in the United States (Heppner et al., 2000). In 2005, an International Section of Division 17 was formed by more than 150 international and U.S.-based counseling professionals to provide a voice for individuals specifically interested in international issues. The overall mission of this section continues to be encouraging, promoting, and facilitating a scientist-professional model of counseling psychology in international contexts in the United States and worldwide through research, service, teaching, training, policy development and implementation, and networking. The members of the section interact through a newsletter, listserv, and Web site (<http://www.internationalcounselingpsychology.org>).

Major national conferences followed the founding of the Counseling Psychology Division initially in 1951 with the Northwestern Conference and later with conferences such as the Greystone Conference (1964), Georgia Conference (1987), Houston Conference (2001), and Chicago Conference (2008); the latter of which was the historic first International Counseling Psychology Conference held in the United States. In addition, doctoral training in counseling psychology has received a great deal of attention over the years, with initial accreditation of doctoral training programs more than 50 years ago (1952); as of this writing, there are more than 70 APA-accredited doctoral programs in counseling psychology in the United States. Moreover, in the 1980s, a standardized credentialing or licensing system was begun in every state in the United States. Counseling psychologists have also maintained an active program of empirical

research for more than 50 years with increasing “methodological sophistication and rigor, and providing important new knowledge that is furthering the development of theories and practice relevant to counseling psychology” (Heppner et al., 2000, p. 37). The combination of long-standing strong professional organizations within U.S. counseling psychology, an active and growing sophistication of evidence-based knowledge, a wide array of accredited training programs, and a respectable and standardized credentialing system had led to the perception that “counseling psychology [in the U.S.] is strong, vibrant, politically active, and expanding” (Heppner et al., 2000, p. 37).

In fact, in 2005, Heppner, then president of the Society of Counseling Psychology of the APA proclaimed, “It is a great time to be a counseling psychologist. We have strong knowledge bases and practice skills, and we have strong professional organizations” (Heppner, 2006, p. 170). In essence, the counseling psychology profession in the United States has evolved from the late-19th-century vocational guidance movement to a strong, mature, vibrant, politically correct, active, and expanding profession (Heppner et al., 2000). For many years, it seemed that the heart of counseling psychology was Division 17 (Society of Counseling Psychology) of the APA. As was stated earlier, Division 17 was established in 1946, and for quite a long time it represented organized counseling psychology. The U.S. counseling psychology profession, however, has now evolved beyond any one organization, and it includes viable, active, and politically strong groups such as the Council of Counseling Psychology Training Programs, the Association of Counseling Center Training Agencies, the Academy of Counseling of Psychology, the Council of the Specialty of Counseling Psychology, and other organizations (see Heppner et al., 2000). Although there is considerable overlap in the membership of the Society of Counseling Psychology and some of the other counseling organizations mentioned earlier (e.g., ACA, ICA), there has not been a great deal of direct organizational coordination and collaboration. Given the great needs for consultation, training, and

on-the-ground service, it is hoped that more official contact between various counseling organizations throughout the world will be forthcoming in the near future.

Perhaps for a variety of reasons, it may seem to some people that counseling psychology is a U.S. discipline (Heppner, Leong, & Chiao, 2008; Leung, 2003; McWhirter, 1988). It must be stressed, however, that while counseling psychology as a specialized formally recognized discipline or a professional label is not common outside the United States, the services provided by counseling psychologists in the United States certainly are offered by individuals (e.g., general psychologists, guidance counselors, clergy, nurses, social workers, physicians, fortune-tellers) living in other countries. Moreover, as Pedersen (2005) so eloquently stated, “The functions of counseling have been practiced for thousands of years and are not merely an invention of the last century or two” (p. xi). Similarly, sometimes erroneously U.S.-based counseling psychologists assume that counseling psychology in the United States is the most advanced or most well-developed specialty across the globe (Heppner, Leong, & Chiao, 2008). In fact, for the most part, many U.S. counseling psychologists have not received much exposure to the counseling professions in other countries. We are so encapsulated in the United States, we lack awareness of the implications, and our international colleagues sometimes get annoyed with our ignorance combined with our individualistic perspectives (Heppner, 2007). Our sense, as well, is that frequently U.S. counseling psychologists are oblivious to the counseling professions in other countries and know very few, if any, international counseling scholars. This lack of exposure and knowledge, however, is understandable for many reasons. In general, U.S. training programs do not offer much information about counseling and counseling psychology outside the United States. There is lack of information about the functions of organized counseling outside the United States that is published in U.S. counseling journals (especially, prior to 2005). Furthermore, U.S. libraries typically do not subscribe to foreign counseling and psychology journals. The lack of exposure to and

perhaps the lack of ability of U.S. scholars to read publications not written in the English language also contribute to U.S. counseling professionals being oblivious to the profession in other countries. Also, in the United States, prior to 2000, there was a general lack of international focus in counseling and counseling psychology beyond the U.S. borders. In fact, many international scholars, especially before the year 2005, experienced difficulties when trying to publish or present at professional conferences on issues relevant to populations outside the United States (e.g., Leung, 2003; Ægisdóttir & Gerstein, in press).

Nonetheless, the lack of exposure in the United States to counseling professions around the world is quite unfortunate because it represents a tremendous loss to U.S. counseling psychologists and counselors. The many chapters in this book from numerous countries indicate the development of a broad range of knowledge acquired from around the world. Not only has such knowledge been unavailable to U.S. counseling professionals until now with the publication of this book, a lack of information about counseling and psychology worldwide also means less awareness and comprehension about different cultural contexts and what they mean for counseling (see Chapter 9, Japan; Chapter 10, South Korea; Chapter 35, United Arab Emirates, this volume). These limitations not only restrict U.S. counseling psychologists' knowledge base but also their worldview and understanding of humanity around the globe.

The current economic recession in the United States, beginning in the year 2008, that has expanded worldwide, reminds us about how interconnected countries are in modern times. With economic globalization and increased technology, many countries and cultures have experienced greater pressure toward cultural change than ever before. Such change can be perceived as positive and negative. Oftentimes, societies are resistant to economic, social, and political changes and hang on to cultural traditions sometimes beyond their original intent. Berry (1997), for instance, describing the power of culture stated that "individuals generally act in ways

that correspond to cultural influences and expectations" (p. 6). It is also true that even the most ancient of societies is not static in their beliefs and practices. Sometimes very slowly, but in other places quite rapidly, change occurs, be it positive or negative. For instance, current technology, such as cell phones and the Internet, makes instant communication between individuals who are geographically separated possible. This can enhance the sharing of ideas, worldviews, and ways of living.

Migration to cities and tourism are additional factors that expose cultures to change. Sadly, the forced migration as a result of wars also brings about rapid change and social disruption. We suspect that when societies go through rapid change, the climate for counseling develops. Then, counseling services, formal or informal, provide solace and guidance that are often interrupted and even destroyed.

It is difficult to keep up with the exponential expansion of counseling worldwide. Counseling is a natural progression as countries develop a resource base and begin to react to profound demographic changes. "When a nation lacks the financial and organizational capital to reinvest in the country, mental health and other services tend to remain underdeveloped—despite the need for these services that is often present in such times of crisis" (Stockton et al., 2007, p. 80). Fortunately, though, this lack of resources is sometimes mitigated by the contributions of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) or foreign government assistance that provides assistance for counseling services. Thus, from an early-20th-century beginning by either internal development or external aid, counseling has become a worldwide phenomenon, and U.S. counseling professionals must accept this reality and actively develop a much broader and richer understanding of the diverse cultures and countries around the globe.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF CROSS-CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

Almost 50 years ago, Gilbert Wrenn (1962) raised concerns about counselors' cross-cultural insensitivities in a landmark book, *The Counselor in a Changing*

*World*. Wrenn was particularly concerned about counselors' inability to understand others from a different culture, and in essence, he warned of the dangers of cultural encapsulation. "Although Wrenn's message was clear about the importance of counselors' understanding of their own worldviews and how these may affect their work with clients from different cultures, it was not widely received" (Heppner, Leong, & Chiao, 2008, p. 69). This notion of being insensitive to other's worldviews, or ethnocentrism, has been suggested as perhaps "the biggest impediment" (Marsella & Pedersen, 2004, p. 414) to the internationalization of the counseling profession. In fact, many scholars have identified ethnocentrism as a major challenge (e.g., Cheung, 2000; Gerstein, 2006; Heppner, 2006; Heppner, Leong, & Chiao, 2008; Kwan & Gerstein, 2008; Leong & Blustein, 2000; Leong & Leach, 2007; Leong & Ponterotto, 2003; Leung, 2003; Marsella, 1998; McWhirter, 2000; Norsworthy, 2006; Pedersen & Leong, 1997; Segall, Lonner, & Berry, 1998).

Ethnocentrism is particularly problematic because "when we are unaware of cultural issues, it is difficult to know what we do not know" (Heppner, Leong, & Chiao, 2008, p. 77). And, when counseling professionals are unaware of the cultural context in their interactions with international colleagues, their lack of awareness significantly affects their understanding, sensitivity, and appropriate responses (Heppner, Leong, & Chiao, 2008). Sometimes, the lack of cross-cultural awareness of U.S. counseling psychologists and counselors is overlooked, and our international colleagues simply dismiss our responses as innocent and uninformed behavior coming from outsiders or foreigners who just lack cultural knowledge. In addition, sometimes the emphasis on individualism within the dominant Eurocentric culture in the United States can also result in a more self-centered orientation in contrast to more collectivistic cultures. And sometimes, the combination of perceived cultural insensitivity and individualism will result in serious negative perceptions of U.S. scholars, ranging from annoyance to frustration to anger. As Heppner (2006) noted, "It is all too easy to offend our international colleagues" (p. 169). Because cross-cultural insensitivities, slights, and disrespectful behavior often occur without the U.S. counseling professionals' awareness, they often

continue their insensitive actions and may never get corrected. Such ongoing negative consequences can inhibit or even curtail cross-cultural and cross-national collaboration.

As a greater number of U.S. counseling psychologists and counselors perform work beyond their geographical borders, though, their awareness of their limited knowledge about the world's cultures and its implications for counseling may increase. A very strong statement about the information available about cultures worldwide was voiced by Arnett (2008). He persuasively argued that psychological research published in six premier APA journals focused primarily on Americans who make up less than 5% of the world's population. Therefore, the currently published research in the premier U.S. journals has ignored the remaining 95% of the world's population. The same can be said about research in counseling and counseling psychology. Gerstein and Ægisdóttir (2007) found that counseling journals included few studies on international populations and topics. Based on his review, Arnett concluded that the "mainstream of American Psychology has so far been largely oblivious to international contributions and remains largely an insular enterprise" (p. 603). And, unfortunately, this conclusion also applies to the U.S. counseling and counseling psychology professions. Leung (2003) even stated that it is possible for U.S. counseling psychology students to obtain a PhD without ever reading an international article!

### CURRENT STATUS OF INTERNATIONALIZATION OF THE COUNSELING PROFESSION

Recently, a number of scholars have reported on the breadth and depth of the counseling profession across the globe (e.g., Gerstein & Ægisdóttir, 2005a, 2005b; Heppner & Gerstein, 2008; Heppner, Leong, & Gerstein, 2008; Leong & Savickas, 2007; Stockton et al., 2007). In essence, the counseling profession is growing rapidly worldwide, not only in size but stature. The counseling profession is developing at different rates in non-Western countries, and while it is a very specialized field in the United States, in

other countries, where psychology is poorly established, many types of professionals and paraprofessionals who have received little to no training are offering counseling services (Cheung, 2000).

Although there are many cross-national similarities and differences in the identity and credentials of counselors and counseling psychologists and in the breadth and function of their professional associations (Heppner & Gerstein, 2008; Heppner, Leong, & Gerstein, 2008), the cumulative impact of our international colleagues and their professional groups worldwide is revealing, informative, exciting, and inspiring. Moreover, the recent development of an International Division of Counseling Psychology (Division 16) in the International Association of Applied Psychology, the oldest applied psychology association in the world, is very exciting and indicates the growing internationalization of the counseling profession.

Furthermore, as this first *International Handbook of Cross-Cultural Counseling* attests to, there is much to learn from counseling professionals around the world. This includes learning about shared and indigenous perspectives in counseling and psychology worldwide, current research findings and conceptual models, and unique strategies of psychology and counseling practice around the globe. In fact, it is our opinion that an opportunity to learn from our international colleagues is one of the most exciting new developments within the counseling specialty. We also anticipate that increased international collaboration will have the potential to change the entire face of counseling and counseling psychology forever. As Heppner (2006) claimed, international contact and collaboration will “enhance the sophistication of our research, expand our knowledge bases, increase the range of counseling interventions, and in essence, increase counseling effectiveness across a wide range of populations” (p. 169). Clearly, U.S. counseling professionals can benefit greatly from an understanding of counseling in other countries and cultures.

## DEFINITIONAL CHALLENGES FOR THE COUNSELING PROFESSION

As reported in Chapter 1 of this volume, the definitions for *counseling*, *counselor*, and *counseling*

*psychologist* are not consistent throughout the world. Neither is there consistency in current uses of these terms nor the required credentials to use one of these professional titles. In the United States and in Canada, a doctoral degree is required to be eligible to obtain the title of “counseling psychologist.” In other parts of the world, counseling psychology is a master’s- or bachelor’s-level profession, or such a professional title may not even exist. Moreover, what is considered professional counseling in the United States and Canada does not necessarily reflect how professional counseling is practiced elsewhere. For example, in Great Britain, an attorney or a legal representative is also a counselor. In the United States, there are financial counselors, genetic counselors, nutritional counselors, home improvement counselors, and executive coaches/counselors. Therefore, it is critical to differentiate professional counseling and counselors from other types of services and providers. Stated differently, it is essential to clarify and stipulate what professional counseling is and what it is not.

Regardless of how counseling is defined around the world, individuals in every country and culture still have to cope with emotional and physical suffering. Such suffering can come in different forms and can be experienced quite differently from culture to culture and from country to country. As Frank and Frank (1993) reported in their classic book *Persuasion and Healing: A Comparative Study of Psychotherapy*, from a Western perspective, many individuals are struggling with feelings of demoralization. However, as Tyler, Brome, and Williams (1991) so eloquently stated, there are many ways to be human. They proposed that their ethnic validity model of psychotherapy is predicated on the assumption “that there are a variety of ways of being human and these ways are not directly translatable into one another” (p. 25). Similarly, extrapolating from Tyler et al.’s model, there are also many forms of healing in the world, including professional counseling, to match these multiple ways of being human.

In the United States and many other Western countries, there is a strong Cartesian (Descartes) dualistic philosophy and methodology of intervention, be it psychological or otherwise. For instance, if a person in the United States is clinically depressed,

he or she will tend to seek help from a mental health professional (e.g., counselor, counseling psychologist, psychiatrist). If on the other hand, an individual in the United States is having a heart problem, he or she will visit a cardiologist. In general then, persons in the United States prefer to see a medical doctor for problems with their bodies and a mental health professional for concerns about their minds.

In many other cultures or countries, a person in need will seek out a “helper” who offers services to treat a broad range of problems. Such helpers conceptualize individuals in terms of their whole body, mind, and spirit. They embrace a holistic approach to caring for others integrating intervention strategies such as communication, rituals, herbs, touch, and prayer. In general, it would appear that in many Western countries, especially the United States, mental health professionals gravitate to a dualistic, analytic approach (treat the mind not the body; treat the body and not the mind), while in the East (Asia) and parts of South, Latin, and Central America, they embrace a holistic, integrated approach (treat both the mind and the body). It is important to note also that persons’ help-seeking behavior is greatly influenced by the health service system of each country regardless of its grounding in a dualistic or holistic philosophy.

There are also some important distinctions that can be stated about differences in the way mental health professionals in the West think about and approach counseling. U.S. counseling professionals, in general, are very practical and pragmatic. Many believe that all the problems experienced by clients are solvable. Furthermore, being pragmatic, U.S. counseling professionals are not as interested in philosophical issues and challenges. They approach their work as problem solvers frequently using functional approaches such as cognitive-behavioral therapy, dialectic therapy, and solution-focused therapy. In contrast, mental health professionals in Europe, in general, are much more interested in philosophical issues and challenges, and as such, they value discussions with their clients about meaning and purpose. They also believe that not all problems are solvable. European counselors and psychologists are also baffled by the extensive use in the United States

of educational and other tests in counseling. Counseling in Europe, therefore, is often about phenomenological exploration and finding meaning. Therefore, existential therapy based on the writings of Rollo May and Victor Frankl often guides the work of European mental health professionals.

Not surprisingly, the educational training programs for mental health professionals in the United States and Europe stress different bodies of knowledge and skills. In the United States, there is a heavy emphasis on the acquisition and enactment of various skills. In Europe, in contrast, there is an extensive focus on philosophy and the establishment of a rich conceptual framework and ability to think and express thoughts. In fact, it is not uncommon to be just trained in one or very few theoretical frameworks. Moreover, in European counseling training programs, students sit for essay examinations not multiple choice tests. Additionally, in Europe, graduate students rarely take classes. Instead, there is an apprenticeship model of learning, where the student has individual meetings with a professor and/or participates in informal discussions with other students at locations apart from campus. In Great Britain, for example, a graduate student in counseling receives a highly personalized and individualized education.

While generalizations often lead to misunderstandings and conflicts, sometimes they help capture the essence of situations. Given this caveat, European mental health professionals frequently perceive U.S. mental health professionals as technicians and mechanical, while professionals in the United States often view their European counterparts as philosophers. If these stereotypes are even somewhat accurate, then it follows that individuals who earn a PhD in counseling/counseling psychology in Europe have obtained a Doctorate of Philosophy, whereas persons earning a similar degree in the United States have obtained a Doctorate of Pragmatism!

Given the observations stated above, at the most basic level, counseling professionals around the world, particularly U.S. counseling professionals, must acquire information on the unique and common function of counseling and the shared and specific roles of mental health professionals in different



countries. Speaking at an IAC conference, Hoxter (1998) defined counseling as follows:

A method of relating and responding to others with the aim of providing them with opportunities to explore, clarify, and work towards living in a more personally satisfying and resourceful way . . . and may be used in widely different contexts and settings. (p. 29)

There are a variety of other definitions promulgated by professional organizations, including the APA Society of Counseling Psychology, Division 17, as well as professional societies in various other countries. The central theme of each definition though is *the counselor as a helping professional*.

Since professional counseling as we think of it today began in the United States, and has grown rapidly throughout the world, there is sometimes an assumption, as stated earlier, that a Western or U.S. model of counseling has to be the most desired one. A Western or U.S. style of counseling, however, may clash with local or national cultural traditions that are highly significant to the populace. Emavardhana (2005) noted that the Western concept of counseling, for example, often emphasizes the importance of the individual, which can run counter to the more traditional beliefs in community prevalent in many developing world societies. The role of the family, including extended family, clan, and tribe cannot be overemphasized. T. Dodson, who has worked extensively in Latin America, concurs and comments on the common bonds of cultural values regarding family that exist within Latin America: "A counselor would be wise to consider the family impact of the change process that an individual is going through while going through a counseling experience" (personal communication, January 24, 2009).

This emphasis on the communal is exemplified in a story related by L. Levers (personal communication, January 19, 2009), who was asked to counsel an influential African male who had been kidnapped and then later rescued. She agreed to meet the individual at his home, which was in effect a compound. She was surprised that not only was the client present for the meeting but many members of his

extended family and friends were also in attendance. Rather than a 1-hour session, the counseling lasted throughout the day, and meals were even served. Levers reported that despite her initial surprise, the event went well and the client felt relief.

As Bradley (2000) has noted, cultural misunderstandings can occur through nonverbal ways, as well. This became very apparent early in the career of one of the coauthors of this chapter, Rex Stockton, when he was on sabbatical leave in Spain and also attending a conference in Holland. Stockton's Spanish colleagues would place themselves physically very close to him and his Dutch colleagues, equally friendly, expressed friendship by shaking hands while keeping an arm's length distance. This is also true of eye contact; in some cultures, avoidance of eye contact is a mark of showing respect rather than being regarded as evasive.

Stockton's thinking about counseling also has been informed by contact with a Ghanaian psychologist trained in Western theories and procedures. This psychologist spent several years working in an African mental hospital and talks about the importance of ancestors in some counseling settings. As S. Atindabila (personal communication, February 15, 2006) related, when counselors in certain settings believe that progress is being made in the course of therapy, they have to understand that unless the client thinks that his or her ancestors will approve of their altered, presumably more therapeutic behavior, they will not change. Thus, it is incumbent on counselors and counseling psychologists to understand the local culture as well as counseling theory.

Levers (2006) who has conducted research with African traditional healers, underscores the importance of acknowledging local customs and indigenous practices when working in areas devastated by illness such as the treatment of HIV/AIDS. She noted that "at least 80% of all Africans throughout sub-Saharan Africa continue to seek health care services from traditional healers" (L. Levers, personal communication, January 19, 2009). The most enlightened Western programs have responded by providing information and training to the traditional healers.

Western counselors and counseling psychologists are sometimes surprised by the central role of religion in the lives of many other clients. When Stockton was first asked to provide training in Africa (Botswana) for human services personnel who worked with individuals who had HIV/AIDS, he made it a point to spend considerable time reading about African history and culture in general and Botswana in particular. Nevertheless, he was surprised when after beginning the training, a participant raised her hand and said, "Prof, don't you think we should begin with a prayer?" Although surprised, Stockton was able to say, "I need all the help I can get," and another participant then led a prayer. After this, a weeklong workshop proceeded with a prayer at the beginning of each day. Integration of prayer into the workshop content was appreciated by the participants and probably contributed to their positive response.

Wherever they work, counselors and counseling psychologists have to figure out how to conduct their activities in ways such as to reduce stigma. This is not only true with dreaded diseases such as HIV/AIDS, but even in more innocuous settings, this can be a major problem. A counselor from Mauritius who was trained in the United States related that she had to change her "mental health counselor" title to "counselor" once she started her private practice in her country so as to minimize stigma. This stigma is not restricted to Mauritius, but in either personal work or contacts with others, it seems to be a worldwide phenomenon (J. d'Argent, personal communication, January 21, 2009).

Some more traditional cultures place importance on storytelling and singing and dancing more so than is typical of the U.S. tradition. For example, in several African countries, when Stockton has provided training or consultation, participants who were either human service professionals or clients had almost always honored the occasion with a ceremonial dance and song. The meaning and intrinsic purpose of the ceremony can be very life affirming and may provide some solace in lives that, too often, are affected by poverty and disease.

Counseling in its broadest form, therefore, has been and is increasingly prevalent worldwide.

However, beyond some fundamental values and common themes, it is expressed in ways that accommodate to various cultures and traditions. Above all else, it remains a means to formally provide help to those in need across a broad spectrum from vocational to mental health counseling services.

### **TRENDS AND CHALLENGES FOR COUNSELING PROFESSIONALS WORLDWIDE**

Counseling principles may be enduring, but they are shaped by the needs of society, and we can expect that as the world is evolving, changes in both the profession of counseling and the provision of counseling services will also take place. People worldwide will continue, however, to be challenged by traditional counseling issues such as family and relationship problems, career choice, and finding employment, as well as stress, mood, anxiety, and other emotional concerns. With that being said, while it is obviously difficult to predict the future of counseling around the world, some developments can be anticipated with reasonable certainty. For example, we believe that the dire, potentially explosive nature of the world's urban slums will likely intensify. Additionally, there is also mounting evidence of the dramatic rise in addiction to the Internet, especially in Asian countries.

The number of individuals displaced and negatively affected by climate change will probably multiply as well. Individuals will continue to be traumatized by conflicts, civil wars, ethnopolitical conflicts, migration and immigration, and natural disasters. As long as the field of counseling remains supple, respectful of other cultures, research based, innovative, cooperative with other disciplines, and true to its core values, it should be in a position to play an important role in ameliorating some small fraction of our world's very significant ills.

As stated earlier and throughout this book, technology has made it possible for people to communicate in ways incomprehensible in prior generations. This technology and the emerging new technologies have great potential for training, practice, supervision,

and networking in the field of counseling regardless where professionals are located. We do not know what will evolve or how technology will evolve (who would have predicted YouTube or FaceBook a generation ago?), but for certain, this rich and dynamic resource will produce momentous changes that will provide for challenges as well as opportunities.

The trend toward various national counseling organizations expanding their view to have a more international focus is likely to continue. It is hoped that this will be coupled with the increasing advancement of national and regional counseling organizations in countries where counseling is not as fully developed as is possible. While we cannot know with certainty the shape or disposition of counseling in the future, we can be sure that the need for this service and the need for counselors and counseling psychologists will only increase.

The need for other types of healers around the world will also be important in the years to come. It is critical, therefore, that counseling professionals either develop a respect for such individuals or remain appreciative of their work. However, there must be a clear recognition of what professional counseling is and who is qualified to provide such services. Perhaps, a concept often used in conducting research might help readers to better understand this challenge. Gelso (1979) introduced the *bubble hypothesis* as a way to think about balancing the importance of external and internal validity when formulating a research study. On one hand, it is essential to control the variables in a study (internal validity) in order to rule out confounding variables and competing hypotheses. On the other hand, it is important to capture the “real” environment connected to the variables of interest (external validity) in order to increase the likelihood of studying the rich context of interest and the “behavior” of interest in the natural environment. Achieving an acceptable balance between internal and external validity is frequently the best scenario to expect. In the context of the current discussion about the great diversity in how counseling is defined, how counseling is practiced, and who offers the service, a balance is also desirable. If the concepts of counseling, counselor,

and counseling psychologist are broadened to include all forms of healing and all types of healers worldwide, the external validity of these concepts would be greatly increased. If this were the case, it would be challenging to identify a profession of counseling or a professional using the title counselor or counseling psychologist. Counseling professionals are not genetic counselors or financial counselors.

In contrast, if there was a much more specific and concrete definition of counseling, and greater quality control monitoring the practice of professional counseling and the use of the title counselor or counseling psychologist worldwide, the internal validity of these concepts would be greatly increased. As a result though, few people around the world would be able to practice counseling or use the title of counselor or counseling psychologist. Striking a balance between internal and external validity in the context just described is quite challenging given the diversity in the counseling profession and the diverse cultural context throughout the world. At the very least, it is important to establish an agreed on set of competencies and base of knowledge. Then, it would be possible to consider counseling as a profession in different countries instead of thinking that anyone who is involved in healing or helping is a counselor or a member of such a profession.

There is also a need for a very basic universal declaration of ethical principles in counseling and some common training paradigm to prepare counselors and counseling psychologists. While ethics are culture bound, it would seem possible for counseling professionals regardless of where they reside to agree on basic principles such as do no harm, provide competent services, act responsibly, and demonstrate respect to clients. Having a shared basic ethical framework throughout the world could instill greater hope in potential clients; serve to network counseling professionals around a common goal; and offer the profession a shared language for dialogue, discussion, and possible important competencies. Accomplishing these tasks will not be easy. The many professional associations discussed earlier in this chapter are key to the success of such an endeavor as they are often the gatekeepers and

policymakers linked with the counseling fields around the world.

Another major challenge touched on very early in this chapter is the tension between the hegemony of the U.S. model of counseling and psychology and the indigenization of counseling and psychology elsewhere, especially in Asia (e.g., Japan, Taiwan, China) (see Leong, 2002). At this point, as stated earlier, there is a greater flow and exportation of U.S. models of counseling to other countries. One might say that there is a “McDonaldization” of counseling and psychology infiltrating countries worldwide. U.S. counseling professionals must seriously think about the consequences of continuing to uncritically export their models or accept the request of non-U.S. counseling professionals to import such models. U.S. counseling professionals must also contemplate this issue alongside the importance of respecting and embracing indigenous approaches to counseling found in other countries.

One other challenge must be mentioned, though it is discussed in much greater detail in Chapter 2 in this volume. There is a tension in the United States between counseling professionals who focus on domestic cultural issues and those who attend to international cultural topics. The reality of limited available resources to address the needs of both domestic and international populations is valid and critical to both meeting the needs of diverse clientele and securing the viability and prosperity of the counseling profession. At a recent meeting of the APA Educational Leadership Conference, one of the authors of this chapter observed that a majority of the participants informally surveyed through the use of DataMite software during a large group discussion indicated that international work would take away needed resources from the domestic U.S. population. Respondents also reported that focusing on international work would place limits on other coursework. Additionally, some respondents considered shifting the focus to international work another form of racism, where we treat “international work” as exotic and glamorous and yet ignore the same populations when they are in our own backyard (e.g., working in Mexico is

positively viewed, while working with Mexican Americans is shunned).

There have been some anecdotal reports in the U.S. counseling profession of racial ethnic minorities not approving of the field’s interest in international activities. From another perspective, some cross-cultural researchers outside the United States have commented that the U.S. multicultural counseling movement is about advocacy and justice, not scientific inquiry. Furthermore, some of these cross-cultural psychologists have stated that U.S. multicultural counseling professionals are preoccupied with race and ethnicity and more interested in social change than pursuing research for the sake of science.

It would seem, therefore, that the multicultural counseling movement and the cross-cultural and cross-national counseling movements might be on a collision course. As outlined in Chapter 2, however, all the movements can learn from each other, all can be enriched through respectful collaboration, and ultimately the science and practice of psychology and counseling will benefit from cross-fertilization. Some solutions focused on bringing the multicultural, cross-cultural, and cross-national counseling movements closer together are also discussed in Chapter 2. Regardless of the specific solution, what is required is the ability to think and act outside the self-serving box of each movement. In fact, the paradigms to resolve the conflicts between the movements are inside the box. It is fruitless and dangerous to believe that the counseling profession in the United States or elsewhere must choose between a domestic or international focus. Both foci are essential for the continued successful evolution of a vibrant and culturally rich and effective profession of counseling. Throughout the world, what is needed in the field of counseling is a new paradigm and a new way of thinking and acting. For as Heppner (2006) predicted, “In the future, the parameters of counseling psychology will cross many countries and many cultures” (p. 170). More specifically, the accumulative knowledge bases of the counseling profession will be grounded in the scientific and applied discoveries of counseling professionals from all corners of the world. As Leong and Blustein (2000) stated, “We need a global perspective that

recognizes and is open to other cultures in other countries, whether on this continent or across the oceans, on the other side of the world” (p. 5).

## CONCLUSION

It is rather apparent that the counseling profession is blossoming worldwide. This is good news as the rising number of psychological and other concerns experienced by people around the globe speaks of the importance of a highly effective profession that can function appropriately and successfully across borders and between cultures. There is increasing evidence that counseling professionals everywhere are waking up to the reality that they must embrace and enact both an insider or emic (culture specific) and outsider or etic (transcending culture) view about human behavior, culture, and a host of counseling theories, strategies, and methodologies. The available communication tools (e.g., e-mail, Skype) to many counseling professionals, including those located in remote regions of the world, have made it possible for a very large number of persons to actively and immediately connect and network with each other. The future success of a global integrated and collaborative counseling profession depends, in part, on maximizing the use of such tools. More important, it requires suspending biases, embracing differences and commonalities, and valuing and respecting multiple and diverse paradigms of conceptualizing human behavior, and also strategies to promote well-being and address problematic behaviors and situations. Additionally, it requires an extensive understanding of the philosophy and mechanics of cross-cultural validity to pursue valid, reliable, and useful indigenous and cross-cultural theories, strategies, and research methodologies (Ægisdóttir, Gerstein, & Çinarbaş, 2008).

We firmly believe that the counseling profession in the United States and elsewhere is at crossroads, and there is no turning back. Instead, we fully expect to witness an exponential shift in how members of the counseling profession throughout the world interact with each other and work together to serve the needs of diverse populations. As was stated

earlier in this chapter, international collaboration has a great deal of potential to strengthen the science and practice of the counseling profession, as well as greatly enhance our knowledge of the cultural context (see Heppner, 2008; Heppner, Leong, & Chiao, 2008; Leong & Blustein, 2000). Over time, such collaborative efforts will result in a tapestry of knowledge that will “put the puzzle together as an extraordinary picture of a worldwide psychology” (Heppner, Leong, & Chiao, 2008, p. 82) and counseling profession. Until that time, counseling professionals especially those in the United States must be diligent in their actions and clearly recognize that “as counseling psychology is transported to other cultures, we need to address the fundamental issues of counseling by whom, counseling for whom, and counseling for what” (Cheung, 2000, p. 130).

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