

NEIU CESA-CSI Newsletter

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Letter from the Editor

Hello Counseling Education Students!

Welcome to the 2016-2017 year!

Whether you are just joining the program or continuing your journey at NEIU, we hope that you can use these newsletters as a stepping stone to interesting and important topics in the counseling profession. These newsletters will cover a plethora of topics, but we hope to hear your voice too. CESA-CSI always welcomes submissions. You can contact CESA-CSI at any time by email: neiucesa@gmail.com **We hope that you have a great and productive year!**

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Upcoming CESA-CSI Events

October 24, 2016
6:00 – 7:00 pm, SU 217
CESA-CSI Meeting

November 14, 2016
6:00 – 7:00 pm, Location TBD
Internship Panel

December 12, 2016
6:00—7:00 pm, SU 217
CESA-CSI Meeting

Upcoming Conferences

November 3 – 5, 2016
ICA 2016 Annual Conference
Illinois Counseling Association
Springfield, IL
[Conference Brochure](#)
To register, [click here](#)

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Counseling Probably Isn't for YOU

by DJ Watson

"Counseling PROBABLY isn't for you..." As I enter my third year here at NEIU, I can't count the number of times those words have run through my head.

During my first year I looked around at my classmates who had undergraduate degrees in Psychology (my degree is in Science) and felt ashamed of my lack of knowledge. I looked at my classmates who were career changers or already working in the field in some way and knew my lack of experience put me behind them in understanding concepts and the seemingly endless acronyms. While NEIU is very diverse, I noticed that once again there were very few people who looked like me in my classes. I remember the surprise and excitement when I discovered that there would be two other black males in one of my classes. That phrase popped in my head again, *"Counseling probably isn't for you,"* when I felt buried under the weight of papers, projects, homework, trying to have a family/social life, and work. Again and again, the phrase would bubble up in my subconscious when getting critical feedback on a paper, being completely off on a diagnosis, or giving the wrong answer in front of the whole class.

The first time that thought bubbled up this year was before the fall semester even started. I got an email from one of my internship supervisors listing the schools where all the interns at my site were from: DePaul, UIC, Chicago School of Professional Psychology, Northwestern, etc. While I truly believe NEIU has a great program, I couldn't help wondering what if the other interns from these prestigious schools might run circles around me.

There is, however, a pattern in each and every one of these instances for me. I was comparing myself to others, and judging myself by my shortcomings. There will probably come a time soon (if it has not come already) when you, too, feel that *"Counseling probably isn't for you."* Some things that helped me might also help you.

- **I try to appreciate my differences.** For example, having a background in Science helps me to look at problems from different viewpoints.
- **Make friends with other students.** There is nothing like the relief that comes from talking with someone and knowing they feel as confused about the upcoming assignment as you.
- **Ask for help.** We expect our client to speak honestly with us about areas where they need help, so why shouldn't we do the same? That might mean speaking with a professor, or classmate, family, spiritual advisor, or your own counselor (free counseling services are available through the university for students), but don't try to get over all your difficulties on your own.
- Finally, **take care of yourself.** I often use the analogy of the safety talk that you get when taking a flight, "Secure your own oxygen mask before attempting to help others." Grad school will feed your mind, but it is our responsibility to make sure we feed what we need into our bodies and souls. So, next time you feel that *"Counseling probably isn't for you."* know that you are not alone, and if I can do it –you can do it.

Remember, "The sun always shines, but sometimes you have to change your point of view to see it."

Upcoming Webinars

If you are a CSI member, you have access to the CSI webinar for free!

- “Intersection of Race, Spirituality, and Domestic Violence: Implications for Counselors” (10/25 at 2:00-3:00pm)
- “Trauma & Resilience Among Undocumented Immigrants” (11/9 at 2:00-3:00pm)
- “When Good Intentions Lead to Bad Results: Identifying, Preventing, and Responding to Microaggressions” (11/15 at 2:00-3:00pm)

Alexian Brothers offers free webinars

- Technology & Teen Dating Violence (10/20 at 12:00-1:00pm) **FREE**
- Non-Suicidal Self Injury: It’s Not Just Cutting (11/10 at 12:00-1:00pm) **FREE**

If you are not a CSI member, [here](#) is a website to access free presentations and webinars on various topics or click [here](#) for another source.

Internet Gem: The National Academies Press (<https://nap.edu>)

The online archive of The National Academies Press is a treasure trove of free PDF copies of books, policy reports, and workshop proceedings. Students in all four programs in Counselor Education will find something useful for projects! Pack a lunch before you explore the site—there are rabbit holes galore.

Gems I have picked up recently include:

- *High School Dropout, Graduation and Completion Rates: Better Data, Better Measures, Better Decisions (2011)* [DOI: 10.17226/13035];
- *Investing in the Health and Well-Being of Young Adults (2015)* [DOI: 10.17226/18869];
- *Depression in Parents, Parenting, and Children: Opportunities to Improve Identification, Treatment, and Prevention (2009)* [DOI: 10.17226/12565];
- *Parenting Matters: Supporting Parents of Children Ages 0-8 (2016)* [DOI: 10.17226/21868].

None of these float your boat? Take a look at the full [Behavioral and Social Sciences](#) collection and then mosey over to the [Health and Medicine](#) selections.

- Dr. Laura Tejada

Interested in writing an article for the CESA-CSI newsletter?

Contact Aleksandra Kapustka
(akapustk@neiu.edu)

CHI SIGMA IOTA (CSI)

CSI is a national honor society which serves Counselor Education students. The NEIU chapter Chi Epsilon Sigma was reactivated last year. There are various benefits to becoming a member, including free online webinars, indication of academic excellence on resume, *Journal of Counselor Leadership and Advocacy* subscription, and scholarships.

In order to be eligible, Counselor Education students must have completed a minimum of 9 credit hours and have a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher.

Interested? Contact neiucesa@gmail.com for more information.

Silence

By Dr. Laura Tejada

One of the most important and most difficult skills of doing good therapy is learning to embrace silence in session. It's hard because our modern world is not conducive to silence. It's not just the noise of the city and suburbs. No matter where we are, our world is filled with chatter from electronic **DEVICES OF DISTRACTION**. We become uncomfortable with silence to the point we can't function without some sort of noise. When there is silence in session, counselors in training rush to fill it up with their own inane chatter, usually a rapport-killing closed question or an inappropriate self-disclosure.

We have to learn how to be at ease in silence if we ever want to master the art of counseling.

How do you learn to embrace the silence? You invite it into your life. Dare yourself to walk to the corner grocery store without your earphones and music. Drive to school--all the way to school--without the radio or a CD going. Sit on the bus with no electronic distractions and simply be on the bus. Can you do it? If you can even contemplate this, bravo.

Push it to the next level. How long can you go without electronic chatter or device distraction?

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Upcoming Conferences

February 23 & 24
Illinois Association for Play Therapy 2017 Conference
Association for Play Therapy – Illinois
Itasca, IL

March 16-19, 2017
ACA 2017 Conference & Expo
ACA - American Counseling Association
San Francisco, CA

July 8-11, 2017
ASCA Annual Conference
ASCA - American School Counseling Association
Denver, CO

April 7, 2017, 8:00am - 4:00pm
2017 ISCA Annual Conference
"The Power of Counselor Connections"
ISCA - Illinois School Counseling Association
Bloomington, IL

March 10-12, 2017
2017 IMHCA Annual Conference
IMHCA - Illinois Mental Health Counselors
Northbrook, IL

April 7, 2017
2017 Conference
IAMFT - Illinois Association for Marriage and Family
Therapy
Location TBA

Get Involved with CESA Today!

Send us an email at neiucesa@gmail.com
Sign up for our [Facebook Group](#)
Visit our [website](#)

Come to our next CESA-CSI meeting!
October 24th @ 6:00pm SU 217
December 12th @ 6:00pm SU 217

Silence (cont.)

By Dr. Laura Tejada

Can you last more than 30 minutes in silence? (And I don't mean with the sound effects and music turned off on your device while you try to get to the next level on your favorite time-waster game.) Can you exist comfortably with your own silence more than once a day, just because you can, not because you are trying to be "mindful"?

Get ready for some bluntness here: If you can't go an hour without electronic chatter and distraction--in your home, in your car, in your own company--then it's time to learn how to do so. Don't get me wrong. I love my devices and I love my distractions. (Helloooooo, *Two Dots!* I will crack Level 380 one of these days!) But time with devices is balanced by time in silence, just like our time in session interacting with clients is balanced by silence as they sort out their thoughts and emotions. We can't bring this much-needed silence to our clients if we can't bring it to ourselves. It's that simple. And that challenging.

Trend Alert: Mindfulness Practice

By Aleksandra Kapustka

Mindfulness is still a trending concept in counseling. However, what does it mean when we say *mindfulness* and how do we practice mindfulness?

There is no universal definition of mindfulness. However, definitions revolve around the idea of paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, without judgement (Stop → Listen → Breathe). Along with the flexible definition, there are many types of ways to practice mindfulness (i.e., coloring, meditation, eating, journaling, yoga, etc.). The most common technique used by counselors involves belly breathing. Belly breathing, also known as diaphragmatic breathing, fills your lungs fully, slows the breathing rate, and potentially helps you relax. Now, there is a wonderful book (with pictures) about different techniques that one can implicate with clients including belly breathing.

Mindfulness Skills for Kids & Teens: A Workbook for Clinicians & Clients with 154 Tools, Techniques, Activities & Worksheets by Debra Burdick

I recommend this book because it not only addresses a wide range of ages and different ways of practicing mindfulness – but the author includes brain development (through explaining neuroplasticity and having activities for the kids to address the prefrontal cortex, amygdala, and insula). This book not only presents this information in an understandable for the counselor, but for the kids too.

