

A COMPANION TO THE 2024 ACA CONFERENCE  
INTRODUCING YOUR COMMITTEE

# GRADUATE & NEW PROFESSIONAL COMMITTEE

2024 EDITION

## WE ARE CLINICIANS WITH A CALL TO COUNSEL

*A warm welcome from your magazine editor, Claire-Madeline Corso.*

BY CLAIRE-MADELINE CORSO

We discovered the call to counsel in our personal experiences in therapy, through our limited access to support, or in overcoming stigma against mental health and help seeking. And we decided that the American Counseling Association would become our community.

What we found was that part of the path to transforming others meant that we ourselves would be transformed.

And that the professional communities we belong to, would have to transform with us. It would have to evolve, to meet our needs, as we step into this profession.

I was raised in a multi-generational household in the same town where four generations of my family had lived since immigrating from Italy. The short of it is that I have had my share of stories to unpack in many hours of counseling.

That is to say that I thought that I had done the work.

CONTINUED ON P. 3

### IN THIS ISSUE

**A MESSAGE FROM YOUR  
MAGAZINE EDITOR,  
CLAIRE-MADELINE**

**FIND US ON ACA  
CONNECT**

**CREATE YOUR SELF-  
CARE PLAN**

**TELL US HOW WE CAN  
HELP YOU :)**

**MEET YOUR COMMITTEE  
(AND BE SURE TO SAY  
HI!)**

Can we skip to the good part?

# IN THIS ISSUE

# CONTENTS

4

## WELCOME

A letter from Committee Member, and Editor of this edition, Claire-Madeline Corso.

6

## BE IN TOUCH

Ways to be connected through the American Counseling Association.

7

## ASK FOR HELP

Tell us how we can best support you in your counselor development.

8

## SELF CARE GUIDE

A journaling guide companion to our talk to support you in mitigating loneliness by keeping connected.

9

## MEET YOUR COMMITTEE

Learn about your current committee members and ways to connect.





**W E L C  
O M M E**



# A Letter From The 'Editor' Claire :)

[Download your 3-step self-care plan.](#)

Keep what matters at the top of your to-do list, so everything else can fall into place along side of this.

CONTINUED FROM P. 1

I've learned that the developmental experience of becoming a counselor has less to do with doing my own counseling work (though this certainly helped) and more to do with claiming ownership over the development of my professional identity.

I had to overcome perfectionism, learn how to become flexible in managing my time and adjusting to shifting priorities, and above all learn to trust myself (Full Stop.)

So much of becoming a counselor looks like developing self-trust.

When you find yourself wanting to learn more, thinking that developing your knowledge of theories will provide a sense of mastery, I want to encourage you to remember the importance of self-trust in this profession.

Maybe you're learning to navigate the course sequence in your first semesters of the program. Maybe you're nervous about participating in residency or lining up a fieldwork site. Maybe you are in the middle of a move, or are bringing a child into your home for the first (or third) time.

One thing I know for sure is you're making daily decisions about how to balance your chosen profession with the continual newness of life.

This - all this newness - is exactly what we're presented with when we sit down with a client for the first (and for the fourteenth) time.

When we sit down with a client, what we have to lean on is the self-trust that we can do what's best for them in that moment.

I want to encourage you to see your time at W&M in the context of your development as a counselor as a whole.

When you become anxious about needing to do *#allthethings* before graduation or in those first years en route to or post licensure, I want to encourage you to remember the relational development that can only happen at *this* phase of your developmental experience.

We are your Graduate Student Representatives and **this** is your community.

We are here to support you on your path to claiming ownership over the exciting, overwhelming, life-giving parts of your professional experience. Read on to meet your committee members, learn how to connect with us, and get a sense of our regular offerings.

More importantly: tell us what we aren't yet doing and how we can best enhance your sense of connection with your colleagues. We've got a form for that, linked below.

We can't wait to hear from you.

*Claire-Madelaine Corso*  
Committee Member

## Keep Connected

Find committee members on our ACA Counseling Connect page

## How can we help?

Fill out this form to tell us here!



# STAY IN TOUCH

Though we are located across the country, we are walking through this experience together. Here are ways to keep connected.



## THE ACA COMMUNITY

A community within the ACA Connect area of your ACA Membership portal where you can find current members and reach out for support.



## COUNSELING CORNER

With a re-launched Counseling Today magazine, ACA is devoting a section of its publication, available for view both in print and online, to dialogues between new and established clinicians. Graduate and New Professional Committee members contribute to these posts. Have a look!



## COMMITTEE BLOG POSTS

Graduate and New Professional Committee members are creating blog posts regularly throughout the year that speak toward the developmental experience of becoming a counselor. Favorite this, and check back regularly.



# HOW CAN WE HELP?

**WE'RE HERE TO REPRESENT  
AND MEET YOUR NEEDS**

Our vision is to engage in meaningful conversation about the developmental experience of becoming a clinician, to speak toward and fill gaps in support.

**FILL OUT THE GOOGLE FORM LINKED  
HERE TO TELL US HOW WE CAN BEST  
OFFER SUPPORT**



this is a P.S.A



*non-negotiable*

# To Schedule<sup>^</sup> Time for Self-Care

Your future (or current) clients will thank you. Why? Because our job is to *\*be present\** in the counseling hour. And that means part of our responsibility (maybe our first responsibility) is cultivating presence in our own lives.

I know, I know. I gave a big 'ol eye roll when they told me this too. Like, how can I do that when I have so many responsibilities to become qualified to do this work in the first place?

But here's the thing. That sense of urgency - that need to anticipate every step in advance and always be two steps ahead - it's a trick.

This feeling of imposter-syndrome leads us to become so un-boundaried in our time that we're over-extended, burning out on our way to a full case load of clients.

This is not just your permission granted but a call to responsibility to take that longer walk with your dog. To choose to read before bed instead of scrolling Tik-Tok. To push to tomorrow what didn't get done today when you need to.

Join us in creating presence with this three-step self-care plan. Because making time for what fills your cup *\*is\** part of your responsibility as a developing counselor.

*Click Here*

for a msg. from your editor & to  
download the self-care  
worksheet.





# MEET YOUR CURRENT REPRESENTATIVES

They don't call us representatives for nothing. We are here because we desire representation in the field of counseling.

So long as there are new clinicians, there will be new clinician needs. And we are here to reflect on those needs, and represent them in any way we can.

Be them in our monthly blog posts, on the counseling corner, or in our individual advocacy work and communities, we are here to reflect on and respond to the developmental experience of becoming a clinician.

Meet us on the next pages and more importantly invite us to meet you by reaching out with questions, asks for encouragement, and opportunities to collaborate.

We are so happy you're here and hope you will stay a while.

# YOU BELONG...

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FOR THE COMPLETE LIST OF YOUR  
CURRENT REPRESENTATIVES, VISIT  
US AT ACA CONNECT

*Speak soon!*

# CLAIRE-MADELINE CORSO

## **We each have a call to counsel. This is mine:**

As a writer, I believe in the power of being heard.- of telling our story so we can transform ourselves. For me, counseling is professional practice of listening intently. It invites others' to be present to their \*own\* experience so they can realize themselves more fully - so they can be invited to be seen & to see themselves. In my own life, counseling has been a place where I've found a home within myself and I believe we all, deeply need that.

## **The conversations that most light me up are:**

Conversations about systemic failings within the healthcare system. The impact of these pressures on the individual counselors experience. And the opportunities in improving care-collaboration to mitigate these pressures, to improve client care, and mitigate isolation and stress among clinicians.

## **One thing I've most recently read and loved is:**

Joy rides Through the Tunnel of Grief by Jessica Hendry Nelson. In what feels like another life I went to graduate school for creative writing, and it is still astonishing to me that my friends create things out of words I can hold in my hands. This memoir is about the complicated relationship between grief and desire and covers aspects of the human experience including addiction, motherhood, and what it means to be a daughter.

## **If you dropped into my inbox to chat about counseling I am \*always\* excited to reflect on:**

\*So\* much of becoming a counselor depends on the generous mentorship of others. We look to supervisors & to leaders in the field but I think we also need to turn to one another, to learn from one another's strengths, and claim ownership over our own. I hope you'll reach out to me about ways to master organization, and how to trust what \*you\* most need each step of the way.

## **E-MAIL ME TO CONNECT!**

If you see this blue bubble it means my inbox is open and I'd love to hear from you. I share my favorite topics to the left but am always down to chat counselor-development and opportunities to collaborate on shared interests.



*I can't wait to hear from you!*

I hope you'll join me in my inbox to chat about the developmental process of becoming a clinician or ways to collaborate with the committee, and beyond. I am always so happy to hear from you and it is \*never\* a bother - only a joy.

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Connect with me on ACA Connect!

[Link to my Profile](#)

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# KELLI MCFARLAND

## **We each have a call to counsel. This is mine:**

I was blessed to know at an early age (13/14 years old) what I wanted to do career wise. My drive for the work I do will always be to serve the community at large and to see people become empowered to change their own lives.

## **The conversations that most light me up about the developmental experience of becoming a clinician are:**

Conversations about mentorship & gate-keeping

## **One thing I've most recently read and loved is:**

The Body is Not an Apology by Sonya R. Taylor

## **One non-negotiable self-care commitment I try to keep is:**

No work after 6pm.

## **If you dropped into my inbox to chat about counseling I am \*always\* excited to reflect on:**

I am always excited to reflect on mentorship and supervision.

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*I can't wait to hear from you!*

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# GWENDLYON HOOKS

## **We each have a call to counsel. This is mine:**

Definitely people. Hearing their stories and realizing that my own liberation is tied to others. We are all connected.

## **The conversations that most light me up about the developmental experience of becoming a clinician are:**

Systematizing the process pedagogically and understanding what it takes, by whom to get the 'right' information in the hands of student that will support and inspire them to integrate skills that promote quality, outcome-focused care.

## **One thing I've most recently read and loved is:**

One book I've already read and loved is *The Body Keeps The Score* (I've read it three times!). This book focuses on somatic aspects of trauma.

One book I'm currently reading is *What Happened To You*. It's about trauma and resilience and being brave enough to have the conversation.

## **One area of counseling I am most drawn to specialize in is:**

Counseling research! I love it!

## **One non-negotiable self-care commitment I try to keep is:**

Wish I had a non-negotiable, but I'm a doctoral student; everything is negotiable.

## **If you dropped into my inbox to chat about counseling I am \*always\* excited to reflect on:**

I am always excited to reflect on mentorship and supervision.

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# DANIEL VILAR PARADINAS

## **We each have a call to counsel. This is mine:**

My journey into counseling was initially sparked by the captivating theoretical insights from both psychology and counseling. However, what truly ignited my passion was the profound realization of the immense human need for connection, understanding, and guidance in navigating life's complexities.

## **The conversations that most light me up about the developmental experience of becoming a clinician are:**

I'm fascinated by the integration of theoretical concepts into practice, the cultivation of self-awareness and empathy, and the dynamic nature of the clinician's developmental process.

## **One thing I've most recently read and loved is:**

I'm currently trying to finish (with some difficulty) "A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance" by Leon Festinger. It provides very useful information and theories which are all applicable to both personal and professional lives. As part of my program, I'm also reading "Learning the art of helping: Building blocks and techniques" by Mark E. Young.

## **One non-negotiable self-care commitment I try to keep is:**

Exercise at least four times a week, and read at least 20 pages of any non-fictional book daily.

## **If you dropped into my inbox to chat about counseling I am \*always\* excited to reflect on:**

Reducing the stigma surrounding mental health and understanding diverse backgrounds.

## **E-MAIL ME TO CONNECT!**

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*I can't wait to hear from you!*

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[Link to my Profile](#)

# HANNAH CHEUNG

## **We each have a call to counsel. This is mine:**

I had a very positive experience in counseling as a teenager that was transformative. I wanted to provide that same space for others as I know how empowering it is to be heard, seen, and understood.

## **The conversations that most light me up about the developmental experience of becoming a clinician are:**

I love talking about the ways in which being part of this profession has shifted my worldview and experience with how I interact with others.

## **One thing I've most recently read and loved is:**

The Gift of Therapy: An Open Letter to a New Generation of Therapists and Their Patients by Irvin Yalom

## **One area of counseling I am most drawn to is:**

I enjoy working with individuals who are marginalized and may not have the space, voice, or privilege to express themselves in an environment of non-judgement and care otherwise.

## **One non-negotiable self-care commitment I try to keep is:**

I rely heavily on my calendar, and I will schedule blocks of time specifically for me to decompress or engage in an activity I enjoy such as reading, hanging out with friends, or going to an event.

## **If you dropped into my inbox to chat about counseling I am \*always\* excited to reflect on:**

I love talking about ways we can make counseling as a whole more approachable for individuals who may face barriers to engaging in treatment.

## **E-MAIL ME TO CONNECT!**

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*I can't wait to hear from you!*

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[Link to my Profile](#)

# SAMANTHA CONNER

## **We each have a call to counsel. This is mine:**

While navigating the K-12 system as a child, I noticed how much of an impact my school counselors had on my educational experience. I knew I wanted to have a positive impact on students navigating this complicated, complex, and uneven system. As someone who grew up in a family system that stigmatized mental health treatment, I understand how students without access or support feel. I pursued a career in the school-based mental health field in order to increase access.

## **The conversations that most light me up about the developmental experience of becoming a clinician are:**

I have found myself "lighting up" when discussing visualizing progress with students in supervision. It was scary engaging in practices I have never done before with students. Sometimes, I found myself doubting myself or the interventions I was facilitating. Seeing students not only share the changes they have made, but also seeing these changes positively impact their experience at my internship site has been eye opening and has made me so incredibly proud of my student's hard work.

## **One thing I've most recently read and loved is:**

Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? A couple weeks ago, I finished reading the revised and updated version of Dr. Beverly Daniel Tatum's novel. This book feels especially relevant to my experience in counseling, considering the impact of a student's race on their experience at my current school counseling internship site. This book was eye opening, and I would highly recommend all clinicians working with school-aged clients read this novel.

## **One non-negotiable self-care commitment I try to keep is:**

after 8pm and before 8am, I set a boundary with engaging in school work for time and grace to engage in self-care.

## **If you dropped into my inbox to chat about counseling I am \*always\* excited to reflect on:**

As someone currently completing their internship in a state that has passed policies in the past year that have harmed LGBTQ+ students, I am consistently looking for ways to engage in advocacy and support students more holistically.

## **E-MAIL ME TO CONNECT!**

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*I can't wait to hear from you!*

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# ODALIS ROMERO

## **We each have a call to counsel. This is mine:**

I was a special educator prior to a counselor and found there was a need for counselors serving individuals in with autism. I also saw a great need for counselors who spoke Spanish and understood trauma, especially as a Latino/a. Therefore, I feel a great desire to help individuals heal, especially those in with a disability, immigrants, and Latino/as.

## **The conversations that most light me up are:**

I really enjoy discussing self care and networking with other professions because even though as professionals we are called to help others and teach to have support systems, I have noticed as a student and clinician, we seldomly do this ourselves.

## **One thing I've most recently read and loved is:**

The Myth of Normal by Gabor Mate, a book discussing how to overcome trauma.

## **One area of counseling I am most drawn to is:**

I love working with children and teens, however, I also love helping individuals who have overcome traumatic events heal, which is why I got EMDR trained.

## **One non-negotiable self-care commitment I try to keep is:**

I have to pray and listen to worship music every morning to start my day.

## **If you dropped into my inbox to chat about counseling I am \*always\* excited to reflect on:**

It would be a tie between self care and advocacy.

## **E-MAIL ME TO CONNECT!**

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*I can't wait to hear from you!*

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[Link to my Profile](#)

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# PATRICE BRYAN

## **We each have a call to counsel. This is mine:**

Improving outcomes & filling in service gaps for underserved Black and Brown communities.

## **The conversations that most light me up about the developmental experience of becoming a clinician are:**

Countertransference & Supervision!

## **One thing I've most recently read and loved is:**

This book is on my to-read list! Reenvisioning Therapy with Women of Color: A Black Feminist Healing Perspective

## **One area of counseling I am most drawn to specialize in is:**

Trauma Therapy(ies)

## **One non-negotiable self-care commitment I try to keep is:**

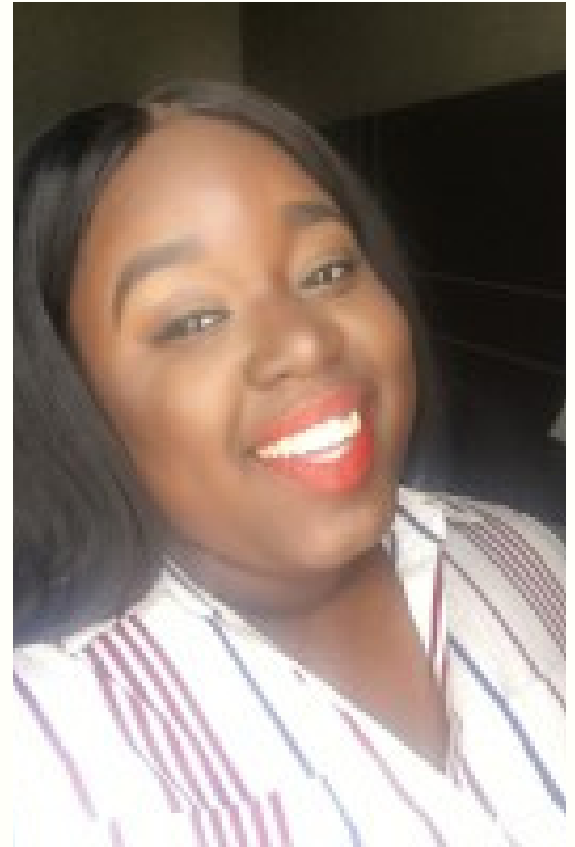
Hard boundaries on work vs. personal life, with regard to how I spend scheduled & unscheduled time.

## **If you dropped into my inbox to chat about counseling I am \*always\* excited to reflect on:**

I am always excited to reflect on mentorship and supervision.

## **E-MAIL ME TO CONNECT!**

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2024 EDITION

# PRAVEEN KUMAR RUDRA

## **We each have a call to counsel. This is mine:**

Growing up in a cultural background that stigmatizes mental health struggles, I witnessed firsthand the silence and isolation it can create. It wasn't until I faced my own challenges that I understood the immense power of seeking professional help.

There was a significant hurdle to overcome – the ingrained cultural belief that mental health issues are a sign of weakness. But when I finally took that leap of faith and entered therapy, it was transformative.

It ignited a passion within me to help others from similar backgrounds. I realized the importance of dismantling stigma and creating bridges towards mental health resources.

## **The conversations that most light me up are:**

Hearing from new professionals about their experiences translating classroom knowledge into real-world application is fascinating. The emotional toll of working with clients in distress and how other respond to these situation by prioritizing self-care is encouraging.

## **One thing I've most recently read and loved is:**

The Gift Of Therapy By Irvin Yalom

## **One area of counseling I am most drawn to specialize in is:**

Multicultural Counseling

## **One non-negotiable self-care commitment I try to keep is:**

No Emails or Phone after 5:00 Pm and Weekends Until Monday Morning.

## **If you dropped into my inbox to chat about counseling I am \*always\* excited to reflect on:**

Faith, Culture and its influence on Counseling clients from Diverse Backgrounds.

## **E-MAIL ME TO CONNECT!**

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*I can't wait to hear from you!*

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*Stay A While.*

