Programs of Research
School of Social and Behavioral Sciences: Department of Counseling
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PHD IN ADVANCED STUDIES IN HUMAN BEHAVIOR (SHB)

Guidelines

The PhD in Advanced Studies in Human Behavior (SHB) program strengthens doctoral learners’ skills in leadership, advocacy, and program development in the field of human behavior. The program emphasizes the acquisition of research skills and is designed for learners pursuing advanced leadership, consultative, or educational roles in institutional, public, or private settings working with a variety of populations. Acceptable dissertation topics in the SHB program can span across a variety of issues and populations and should have theoretical and practical implications in the areas of leadership, advocacy, and program development in behavioral health organizations.

Appropriate Theories/Theoretical Perspectives

Here is a list of examples of appropriate theoretical perspectives. There are many more to utilize as support for the dissertation topic.

- Behavioral (classical conditioning, stages of change, role)
- Cognitive (cognitive dissonance, intelligence)
- Developmental (psychosocial, psychosexual, personality, attachment)
- Humanist (Maslow's hierarchy of needs, person-centered theory)
- Social Psychology (trait, attribution, social identity, cognitive dissonance, cognitive resource, transformational leadership)
- Learning (Jungian, social learning, Gardner's multiple intelligences)

Appropriate Topic Areas (not an exhaustive list)

- Leadership in Behavioral Health Organizations
  - Specific leadership techniques in behavior health organizations
  - Managing diversity in the behavioral health settings (cross-cultural counseling, LGBT population, social identity perspectives on diversity, gender diversity, social class diversity)
  - Leadership qualities and traits and leadership effectiveness in behavioral health organizations
  - Ethics in leadership in Behavioral Health Organizations
- Advocacy across the Lifespan
  - Children and Adolescents (development, support services, bullying, resilience)
  - Family issues (culture, parenting, support services)
  - Addictive behaviors (substances [alcohol, drugs, food], sex, gambling, shopping, technology [Internet, video games, social media])
  - Aging (occupational transition, social policy implications, end of life issues, quality of life, dying)
  - Bereavement (grief process, grief interventions, cultural mourning practices)
- Program Development in Behavioral Health Organizations
  - Program Design
    - Evidence-based practices
    - Risk and need assessment
    - Client population issues (cultural competence, treatment interventions and diversity of client population)
    - Program interventions and services
Inappropriate Topic Areas

The SHB dissertation topics should not address the clinical aspects of the above listed topics (see exception under “Guidelines” above). “Clinical is concerned with or based on actual observation and treatment of disease in patients rather than experimentation or theory (Online Etymology Dictionary, n.d., para.1). Topics that have no theoretical and/or practical implications in the areas of leadership, advocacy, or program management in behavioral health organizations are inappropriate for this program focus. Topics that are sensitive or that involve vulnerable populations will be evaluated for ethical implications and will be determined to be appropriate or inappropriate.

Field Related Journals

- American Counseling Association
- American Journal of Evaluation
- American Psychological Association
- Dimensions of Counseling
- Evaluation and Program Planning Journal
- Families in Society
- Gender and Society
- Gender and Society
- Counseling and Human Development Journal
- International Journal of Eating Disorders
- Journal of Adolescent Research
- Journal of Aging and Health
- Journal of Aging and Social Policy
- Journal of Aging Studies
- Journal of Counseling & Development
- Journal of Counselor Leadership and Advocacy
- Journal of Eating Disorders
- Journal of Evaluation and Program Planning
- Journal of Leadership Studies
- Journal of Marriage and Family
- Journal of Mental Health Counseling
- Journal of Social and Personal Relationships
- Journal, Counseling Today
- Leadership and the Humanities
- Psychology of Addictive Behaviors
- The Journal of Early Adolescence
• The Leadership Quarterly
• Youth and Society

**Important Professional Organizations**

- American Association of Behavioral and Social Sciences (AABSS)
- American Counseling Association (ACA)
- American Mental Health Counseling Association (AMHCA)
- American Psychological Association (APA)
- Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA)
- International Leadership Association (ILA)
- National Council on Family Relations (NCFR)
- National Institute of Health Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR)
- National Mental Health Association (NMHA)

PHD IN COUNSELOR EDUCATION AND SUPERVISION (CES)

Guidelines

Acceptable topics in Counselor Education and Supervision can vary greatly and may be grounded in theories that relate to the practices of counseling, education, supervision, and leadership. In developing a topic from the literature, it will be important to consult and build primarily from scholarship and research in the field of Counselor Education and Supervision. It is also essential to demonstrate the value of proposed research to CES as you develop the Topic Approval segment of your Research Plan for Chair and Departmental review and approval.

Appropriate Theories/Theoretical Perspectives

A range of theories may form acceptable lenses for research, and the selection of a theory will depend upon the topic of investigation. For example, studies focused on topics in counselor education may employ constructivist theory, social learning theory, or critical pedagogy. Studies focused on supervision or counseling may employ a developmental or counseling theory (e.g., Adlerian, behavior, analytic, existential, person-centered, family systems, rational-emotive, cognitive, multicultural, Gestalt, transactional analysis, solution-focused).

Appropriate Topic Areas

Dissertation topics acceptable for CES must relate to one or more the key roles and functions of counselor educators and supervisors. The range of possible topics is broad, so the following topic list offers just a few examples to assist you in developing a sense of relevant topics for investigation:

- Counseling
  - Specific counseling techniques, the counseling relationship, counseling specific populations, the implications of technological innovation on counseling, counseling ethics
- Supervision
  - Supervision techniques or formats (e.g., distance supervision), the supervisory relationship, supervision strategies effective in crisis counseling, fostering supervisee competence as a social justice advocate
- Education
  - The effectiveness of theoretically grounded pedagogy in fostering skills competence, cultural competence or advocacy competence, effective strategies for promoting professional identity development among counselor trainees

Inappropriate Topic Areas

Topics that do not focus on the key roles and functions of counselor educators and supervisors.

Important Journals

- Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES Journal)
• Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision (NARACES)
• Journal of Counseling and Development (ACA)
• Journal of Marital and Family Therapy (AAMFT)
• Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development (ACA)
• Counseling and Values (ASERVIC)
• The Professional Counselor (NBCC)
• Journal for Social Action in Counseling and Psychology (PSR)
• ASCD Journal (formerly Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development)
• Professional School Counseling

**Important Professional Organizations**

• Association of Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES)
• American Counseling Association (ACA)
• American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy (AMFT)
• American Mental Health Counseling Association (AMHCA)
• American School Counselor Association (ASCA),
• International Association of Counselors and Therapists
• National Association of Addiction Treatment Providers
• National Board for Certified Counselors

For a more comprehensive reference guide to key journals and associations visit the CES Library Guide