**Four Takeaways**

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**Takeaway One**

The talk about mental illness and the watching of the videos was very influential. When the class talked after the schizophrenia, OCD, and PSTD simulators, I had many thoughts relating to the expression of mental illness. The videos compounded with my own experiences. The discussion that ensued made me feel validated from the positivity, foremost. The discussion also made me more aware of other’s empathy for the conditions, too. As a result of listening to others I broadened my definition of what mental illness can look like for different people. One’s own definition of mental illness and the picture of what it resonates as in a person can differ from another’s. What I will do as a result of this discussion is not form an opinion hastily. If someone doesn’t inherently meet my criteria for what mental health issues looks like, I will be understanding. I will broaden my definition, rather than making them bend to my idea of what mental health. There is no limit to the ways symptoms can be expressed, and what I have experienced and seen in others isn’t the limit itself.

Additionally, from the same day, we discussed school counseling. I brought up that when it comes to trauma-informed school staff, of that we as a society need to be wary of the all expectations placed. I noted the massive burnout that teachers are feeling, and how they are quitting the profession in droves. A classmate said something to the likes of “if you’re not ready to be trauma-informed, you shouldn’t be a teacher.” This made me feel that we as a society, and especially as counselors, shouldn’t be placing the world on teachers to complete by themselves. It is important to see when another profession that counselors work with closely is having problems, and how to help. Counselors, especially school counselors, are constantly dealing with the ramifications of the educational system

**Takeaway Two**

The panel discussion held on October 14, 2024 was insightful. I talked to the two community service board (CSB) panelists, Colleen and Nick, both individually. A common word of advice from the two CSB panelists was “know what you’re getting into.” My reaction to this was one of caution yet relief, as I have worked with the population that comes to CSBs before, multiple times. There was an element of caution, though, because of how there is always something or someone new that a counselor hasn’t experienced that can come in through the CSB doors. Some things from the panel discussion that I picked up on were that the labelling of CSBs as having resistant clients starts with counselors. This notion was a result of a question that I asked. This interested me because it made the concept new for me. It was a whole new way of looking at things, verbalized. My conception before this program was that clients give resistance when they are not interested in changing their ways or feel threatened. This statement challenged that belief for the better. A counselor’s pre-conceived notions about a client can shape the therapeutic alliance drastically. Another thing that a panelist said that struck me was that the counselor doesn’t have to solve resistance. I never framed resistance as something that can just be, and I now realize that the counselor and client who is experiencing resistance can co-exist, rather than tackling the “problem.”

An additional thought from the panelists is that to manage one’s disappointment when things like relapse happen. Relapse is a broad concept and can apply from substance use and abuse to self-harm. I now realize the importance of not internalizing things like relapse. I struggled with this at my previous residential job, wherein my kids would go home and relapse. It was eye opening to hear that there are a lot of other, extraneous, factors, that come into the picture of relapse.

**Takeaway Three**

When we were talking about chapters five and six, several things stuck out to me. I presumed the instrument of change to be the client, as they can go through the five-step change model. It was a new notion to me that the counselor was the instrument of change. It adds up, as the client comes to a counselor because they need help changing. Another, related, interesting point is how important “the way of being” is. Something that was brought up for this through class discussion was that a counselor’s way of being could work well for one client and not work well for another client. A counselor’s strengths could be something to work on when it comes to one client, but not another. This was significant for me because this added to the shifting of my perception on counselor identity. Counselor identity now for me is more porous, as I now see that the client has an influence into what theory and way of being would be expressed. I knew a little of this going into class, but this just reinforced this idea and helped it grow stronger.

Some other things that are true from this day’s class discussion was that using the word resistance could potentially be an issue, and that some counselors doesn’t use the word resistance at all. This is an important idea to me because in my previous experience in the mental health field, I have dealt with all kinds of resistance from my clients. It was engrossing to hear this idea of resistance being negated because it challenged what I have learned so far in my academic and professional journey. My understanding of resistance has been reinforced throughout my academic and professional journey. The strengths-based perspective is something that is new to me, but it something I will implement quickly and effectively. The inverse of “problem behaviors” that I have been dealing with through my old jobs can be effectively be lessened by focusing on building up, rather than focusing on deficits.

**Takeaway Four**

The element of supervision in counseling is something of necessity and growth. The concept of supervision, additionally, is a new concept to me as well. I didn’t know that much about supervision before this program. After the class on supervision, I learned of the benefits of supervision throughout the career of a licensed professional counselor (LPC). This reinforced the ideas that I had already, as a LPC should be a continuous and lifelong learner. Another interesting point was avoiding groupthink from supervision. People like consultants can mitigate this groupthink, also. These concepts shifted my perspective by how supervision is a continual process that never really ends. Supervision is a mindset and a humbleness that one carries with them through their professional development. As a result, I will apply this learning by being more intentional with my participation in supervision. The intention behind being a supervisee can differ, depending on the professional developmental stage, though. However, the intention can stay steady by having a humbleness and a willingness to learn. Additionally, intentionality in being a supervisee can look like being prepared and communicating my needs as well. Supervision cannot be a one-sided process that the supervisor is putting the effort into only. Furthermore, being receptive to feedback is one of the most crucial facets of supervision. This facet goes both ways, as it applies to both to the supervisor and supervisee. We went over this in class, too. This concept of being receptive to feedback stuck with me because I also agree that it is the most crucial step in being in a supervisory relationship. I felt confirmed by this notion in class. My interest in the profession was furthered because I feel that my values and core ethics align a lot with the counseling profession. Altogether, a LPC should be in possession of a viewpoint that never stops growing. The importance of supervision was a huge takeaway for me and it was enlightening to see it in a perspective of an accessible growth that never stops.