Oral Defense Announcement
University of Missouri – St. Louis Graduate School

An oral examination in defense of the dissertation for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology with an emphasis in Clinical Psychology

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M.A., Clinical Psychology, May 2018, University of Missouri-St. Louis
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Impact of Aging Information on the Continuing Education Preferences of Behavioral Health Clinicians

Date: July 8, 2021
Time: 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Place: Remote

Abstract
The United States population is aging rapidly and the behavioral health workforce is ill-prepared to meet the concurrent rise in demand for services for older adults. Clinicians specializing in working with older adults make up a very small portion of providers and the majority of service provision falls on general practitioners. The discipline of counseling has emphasized multicultural competencies in training and practice but has not specified standards of competence for work with older adults; little is known about the interests and training preferences of Licensed Professional Counselors (LPCs). This study examined the impact of receiving foundational information about aging on continuing education (CE) preferences of LPCs in Missouri. Participants were practicing LPCs in Missouri (N = 120) recruited from a random sampling of the state registry. Inclusion criteria were being currently licensed and involved in provision of direct service. The study employed a three-group randomized controlled design with participants assigned to one of three conditions: an aging-specific reading, an Opioid Use Disorder-specific reading, and a CE requirement-specific reading. As an outcome, participants selected between an aging-specific CE or Motivational Interviewing-specific CE. Results showed that aging knowledge, ageism, and perceived competence did predict CE choice, $F(3,108) = 5.68, p < .001, R^2 = .14$. The inclusion of group classification into the model resulted in marginally significant improvement, $F(4, 107) = 5.35, p < .001; R^2\Delta = .03, p = .05$, such that those in the Aging-Reading condition were marginally more likely to select the aging-specific CE option than those in the other two conditions. Scores on the ageism measure were not statistically different between participants choosing either CE option, $F(1, 116) = 1.73, p = .19$. Higher aging knowledge was associated with greater perceived competence for working with older adults, $r = .24, p = .01$, but aging knowledge was not significantly associated with ageism, $r = -.07, p = .44$. Overall, the provision of educational reading on aging did raise interest in and choice of the aging-specific CE option. This result suggests that foundational knowledge on aging may increase practitioner’s interest in gaining competency for working with older adults.

Defense of Dissertation Committee
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