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 Education with an emphasis in Counseling

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The Role of Counseling Trainee Adversity, Attachment Style, and Trauma-Informed Principles in Clinical Supervision

Date: July 22, 2021
Time: 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Place: Remote

Abstract
Current supervision literature suggests that supervisees with insecure attachment styles may perceive a poorer relationship with their supervisor and feel less satisfied with supervision. Studies across disciplines indicate a relationship between traumatic and/or adverse experiences and insecure attachment, however this association has not been studied within the context of supervision. This dissertation explores a structural equation model assessing the associations between student’s adverse experiences, insecure attachment, and quality of the supervision relationship. It was hypothesized that greater prevalence of adverse experiences would negatively relate to supervision relationship quality, and this relationship would be mediated by insecure attachment. The results of study 1 indicate that student experiences of adversity are related to perceptions of lower supervision relationship quality, but this relationship was not mediated by participant’s attachment to their supervisor. This suggests a need for supervisors to account for their supervisee’s past experiences with adversity as they relate to the supervision process.

Additionally, trauma-informed principles and practices have been offered as a potential foundation for relationship-focused supervision, but many publications calling for the application of trauma-informed principles are largely theoretical. To begin to establish an evidence base for the application of trauma-informed principles in counseling training programs, the second study of this dissertation explored the relationship between student perceptions of their supervisor’s adherence to trauma-informed principles and the supervision working alliance, satisfaction with supervision, and how effectively the supervisor meets the supervisee’s needs. The results of hierarchical regression models from study 2 indicate that student’s perceptions of their supervisor’s adherence to trauma-informed principles predicted supervision relationship outcomes above and beyond demographic variables. Trauma-informed principles may serve as a foundation for supervisor training which promotes positive supervision outcomes from the perspective of the student. Results, limitations, and implications for research and practice are provided for each manuscript.

Defense of Dissertation Committee
Susan Kashubeck-West, Ph.D. (Chairperson)
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