

COUNSELING CONNECTIONS



Western Carolina University Counseling Program

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WCU Counseling's CACREP Re-Accreditation

The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) is a specialized accrediting body that all current WCU counseling students are deeply familiar with, whereas all incoming students will soon become familiar with it via a crash course during their first semester Ethics class.

WCU graduate counseling program recently hosted three site reviewers in April, which was one of the last steps towards gaining CACREP re-accreditation, a process that CACREP asks its programs to undergo every eight years, at least.

"As many of you are aware, we've been under CACREP re-accreditation this year," said Dr. Lisen Roberts, "In September we submitted our 600 page

self-study. In January, we submitted a 50 page addendum, for things which they'd requested more clarity."

Dr. Roberts wanted to extend a "thank you" to all of the students who attended the optional re-accreditation meetings with the reviewers, and she said that even though the CACREP board does not meet until July, the unofficial word is that WCU has passed.

"Our accreditation will continue. I value the process: counselors ask clients to grow; faculty ask students to grow; and CACREP asks the program to grow," she said. "Sometimes, growing is hard. It's always valuable though, and through the challenge, we end up stronger."

The process, which involves a substantial commitment

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The Mindful Revolution: A Conversation with Scott MacGregor

On March 26, Asheville Mindful Living hosted a screening for a documentary called "The Connection" at the Fine Arts Theater in downtown Asheville, and the result was a packed house, with 240 tickets being sold. The documentary covers the science and discovery of the mind-body connection in modern medicine, and it is available for sale and download at <https://www.theconnection.tv/>

Scott MacGregor, a graduate of WCU's Clinical Counseling Program and the current owner of Asheville Mindful Living, offered to spend some time with *Counseling Connections* in order to discuss the s

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A Newer Understanding of Self-Control

In the 1960s, Walter Mischel conducted a study on delayed gratification with children, and 40 years later, he sought out the original participants of that study to see how they were doing in life. The results suggested that the children who exercised self-control and chose to "eat two treats later as compared to eating one treat now" lead more financially and emotional successful lives than did their instant gratification counterparts.

The follow-up with those study participants pointed to the idea that practiced, or innate, willpower was key to their success. Growth Mindset theory formulates a similar idea: if a student is taught to believe that struggle is essen-

tial to learning, they will be more successful than peers who may believe that the first sign difficulty often means inevitable failure.

This is a unique American ideal. It is the "bootstrap mentality" where all a person has to do to succeed is "set their mind to" a goal.

Bootstraps and willpower are not infinite resources however, according to a recent article by Dr. Roy Baumeister in *Scientific American*. There is a qualifier to the idea of infinite will, and that is glucose. In Baumeister's research, he has identified a marked increase in willpower in clients who consume calories before exercising their will, as compared with clients who con-

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... CACREP Re-accreditation (cont.)

From Page 1 from faculty, is meant to ultimately ensure that current and future students can trust that their counselor education meets high national standards, and that they will be prepared for professional licensure examinations after graduation.

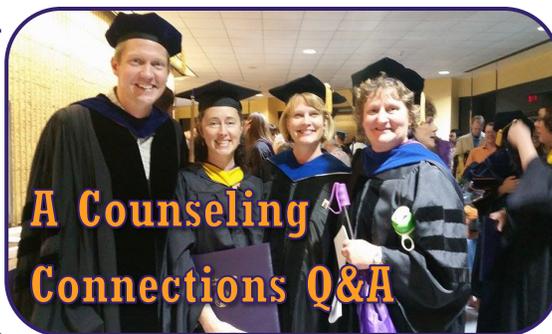
“All in all, I'd say it was a more challenging process, particularly the site visit, than we'd anticipated,” said Dr. Roberts. “At the same time, it was more affirming and growth-inspiring. That was the point, of course: to have external eyes look at our program and provide us feedback.”



Comps Advice from a WCU Grad: Sarah Wells

What exam prep do you feel paid off the most during the comprehensive exams?

Start five weeks in advance, make a schedule to cover two core subjects each week, leaving the final week for applying information to the case studies that comps will be based on. Review a couple core subjects each week by looking over notes and power points and making a study sheet or note cards with the main points/theories for each subject. At the end of the week, meet with a small study group (3-5 people) to discuss, ask questions, practice applying to sample cases. When the case studies come, make a study sheet for each case study with the main theories or ideas from each subject, as you think they might be applied to that case in particular. Some subjects will apply specific theories (theories, careers, families, DSM, developmental, cross cultural), some subjects will need to be understood more broadly (assessments, groups, helping).



Can you offer a line of advice to 1st years?

Prepare! Keep study groups small. Give yourself time. Remember that your teachers prepared you well for the kind of questions they will ask. And if you review, you will not fail. A low pass is still a pass and incompletes are not uncommon....failing has only ever happened once in the whole history of the program. You are unlikely to be the second one if you study.

What was an academic difficulty you had leading up to the exams?

Remembering all of the theories and their key concepts and terminology--made study grids with columns for concepts, terms, techniques, etc.

Required Textbooks for Summer & Fall

| COURSE (SUMMER) | TEXT | ISBN # |
|---|--|--------------------------------|
| COUN 617: Addictions | <i>Beyond Addiction: How Science and Kindness Help People Change</i> (2014) | 9781476709475 |
| COUN 645 & COUN 650: COUN 672: Positive Psych. | No textbooks required <i>Integrated Care: Applying Theory to Practice</i> (2012) <i>Lyubomirsky, Myths of Happiness</i> (2014) | 9780415891325 9780143124511 |
| COUN 693: Play Therapy | <i>Play Therapy: The Art of the Relationship</i> (3rd ed., 2012) | 9780415886819 |
| COURSE (FALL) | TEXT | ISBN # |
| COUN 610: Family Coun. | <i>Family therapy: History, theory, and practice</i> (6 th ed.) | 9780133833720 |
| COUN 633: Crisis Intervention | <i>Crisis Intervention Strategies</i> . (7 th ed.) | 9781111186777 |
| COUN 635: Group Methods | <i>Groups: Process and Practice</i> (9 th ed.) | 9780495600763 |
| COUN 640: Measurement | <i>Measurement & Assessment: Assessment in Coun.</i> (5 th ed.) | 1556203187 |
| COUN 686: Practicum | No textbooks required | |
| COUN 687: Internship | <i>ACA Ethical Standards Casebook</i> (7 th ed.) | 9781556203213 |

The Mindful Revolution: A Conversation with Scott MacGregor

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nate his belief in Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), and also to briefly explain how someone who started his career involved deeply with machines could end up so passionate about the human computer, instead.

The Connection

Concerning *The Connection*, MacGregor said this in his wildest dreams, he anticipated maybe 80 to 100 people.

"Most of the people who I talked to were very excited, and I think the film did a really nice job of talking about the science," he said. "The film was not just about meditation or MBSR, but it talked a lot about nutrition, exercise, yoga, and social connection. Our relationships are really important, and we're social creatures. When we deny ourselves that connection, we suffer for it."

MacGregor began his career in information systems with IBM, making connections with computers moreso than people, and he worked for 25 years in that arena before selling a company with a business partner in 2006. It signaled a change: "I looked around and thought I'm not going to play golf or tennis for another 30."

He was particularly keen on understanding the relationship with his three daughters and said that they were his initial inspiration in attending the University of Tennessee-Knoxville's Child and Family Studies program, where he was certified in Child and Family Life Education.

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction

In addition to his family studies MacGregor also started his MBSR training under Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn and Dr. Saki Santarelli at the UMass Medical School's Center for Mindfulness around 2007, and he later became certified to teach MBSR and has carried it with him in his practices ever since, teaching in hospitals, schools, and the private sector.

"The major motivation for me was purpose. I'd worked in business, and it certainly that was a good career, but I'm not sure how much purpose outside of

supporting a family it had. I wanted to do something that was meaningful and had an impact on myself, my family, and the world around me."

"If you want to teach this," said MacGregor, "well, mindfulness is not something that you can think your way to or study for. It's really a practice of being. I don't know if I'll ever be done with the training for this program, but I do know that I've got to maintain my own practice, first and foremost. That's a covenant that I have with people who come to take the class."

The class he is referring to is his 8 week course in MBSR that he currently leads at Mission Health Systems in Asheville. Dates and times can be found on his website, AshevilleMindfulLiving.com, and there are free informational sessions held before each course, if people are interested in learning about what MBSR entails.

The definition of MBSR that UMass Medical's Center for Mindfulness espouses is "paying attention on purpose

"Mindfulness is paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally."

- Jon Kabat-Zinn

can begin to let go of some of this judgment that we learn as a culture, community, and an individual, then we can start what neuropsychologists call 'decoupling,' a process of separating that awareness from our thinking, which allows us to start new patterns of thought."

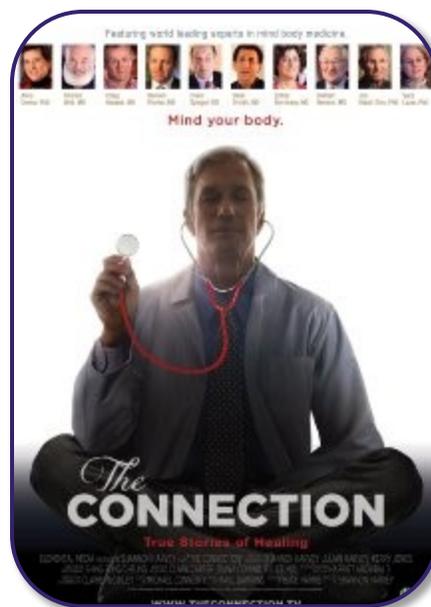
Western Carolina University

MacGregor felt that clinical training, experience, and licensing was what he required to go deeper with families after his time learning Child and Family Studies and MBSR, and that need brought him to WCU in 2010.

"I was very curious in what research had to say in how to be a good dad to daughters, and in terms of a clinical standpoint," he said, "if I really wanted to work with fathers, then I needed to train clinically."

MacGregor, when asked about his advice to current graduate students, said that his time at Western was intense, particularly during his internship, in which he was taking two or three classes and working full time, in addition to working on various projects. Ironically, he said that this would be a great time for students to focus on building the mindfulness muscle.

"Take some time. Become aware of your breath for five minutes. Or become aware of your body for 10 minutes," said MacGregor. "Be really kind to yourself. If it's only a minute that you get to yourself, and you only no-



in the present moment, non-judgmentally."

"When you begin to unpack what non-judgment means," said MacGregor, "it's really about kindness. Being in the moment with kindness and clarity. If we

... The Mindful Revolution (continued)

tice one breath in that time, then great. Start there.”

Mindfulness in Schools

A local school counselor who had attended one of MacGregor’s MBSR classes asked him if he would visit her middle school in 2014 in order to teach mindfulness to students, even though he is not officially trained to work with that age range, but he said there was enormous research that suggesting that young students could grow their working memory, a foundation for executive function, through mindfulness.

In addition, he simply wanted to educate children on the cause and effect of stress, hoping through the process of a 10 week course of his own design, that he would be able to “open the door on mind-body modalities” for students and show them how to access “a different set of tools,” such as yoga, movement, and relaxation practices.

“Kids have incredible stress on them these days,” said MacGregor. “I would love to have done a more rigorous study design, but I was there because I was asked to be there, and I want to support mindfulness throughout the community in any way that I can with the resources I have. If one of those 7th graders came away from the experience with better tools, then it was a success.”

Interested in MBSR?

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“It’s a challenge to teach it, but I would say don’t teach it until you are practicing it yourself.”

The University of California-San Diego offers a [MBSR certification](#), as well as [UMass](#). Those programs focus on adults, but for students interested in working mindfully with teen and adolescent populations, MacGregor suggested [Mindful Schools](#) and perhaps [Mind Up](#), which he has less experience with.

In closing, he offered a word of advice for WCU students interested in using MBSR or mindfulness techniques with their current or future clients.

“From my seat, mindfulness is everywhere. If you start looking, there will be more offerings of mindfulness training with perhaps not the same rigor, so I would be cautious of those,” said MacGregor. “It isn’t simply learning a cognitive behavioral technique. The instructor participates in the class. If you are not aware of what you are bringing in, then you’re not honoring all of the depth and beauty that’s possible. It means, at best, being awake and alive with each passing moment.”

For more information about Scott’s experiences with MBSR, visit the [October 13, 2013 edition](#) of the Four Seasons’ Healthcare Café podcast.

Mindfulness Apps

A s mindfulness practices proliferate throughout the culture, people can expect that technology will express this. Give one a spin!

[Stop, Breathe & Think](#)

This free app features short meditations that can be easily integrated into everyday life. Alt-country singer/songwriter k.d. Lang has even narrated several meditations that are accessible for an extra fee.

[Calm](#)

This instructional app offers “7 Steps to Calm.” On the down side, fees are required to unlock new meditations. Only one is available for free.

[Mindfulness Training App](#)

Mindfulness Training App offers access to mindfulness teachings, including those of Jon Kabat-Zinn, and it also offers access to educational resources: talks on the science behind MBSR, neuroplasticity, and the effects of mindfulness on happiness.

[Headspace](#)

A subscription-based meditation app, *Headspace* offers hundreds of hours of guided meditation and mindfulness training designed to work as a “gym membership for your mind.”

The first “foundation” course of 10 10-minute meditations is offered during the free trial membership.

A Newer Understanding of Self-Control (continued)

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sumed nothing. The human brain needs sustained glucose levels to exercise continuous self-control.

Imagine a person who is on a “crash diet.” Self-control is exercised continuously from an ever-depleting reserve of glucose. Eventually, as research has proven, crash dieters’ willpower breaks and they eat poorly again. They “fall off the wagon,” often gaining back more weight than what was initially lost.

This is true for addictions of many kinds. In a study that asked smokers to rate their urges to smoke during a period of smoking abstinence, the expected result was that the urges would increase exponentially over time, and that eventually, some of the participants with “weak wills” would succumb to the urges. In

truth, the urges were inconsistent and fluctuated greatly.

The people who relapsed did so not because they were “weak willed,” but because in a moment where the urge to smoke was relatively weak, the client had already exercised a lot of their self-control beforehand doing unrelated tasks or fighting against stronger smoking urges and had depleted their reserves.

Baumeister said his research into willpower was controversial at first, and that researchers who disagreed with his findings published tests showing that monetary and emotional reward fueled participant willpower as well as calorie consumption did, re-establishing the

idea that “where there’s a will, there’s a way.” These studies showed that humans were able to amplify their body’s glucose production if motivated enough to do so, but it was not a long term gain.

A subsequent study conducted by

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Photo Credit:
Discovery.com

A Newer Understanding of Self-Control (continued)

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one of Baumeister's former students focused on that long term effect and found that even with financial or emotional incentives, willpower could be depleted over time, and that participants who believed that willpower was infinite going into the experiment actually performed worse than the participants who had no such belief, because they used an amplified amount of energy initially.

How can this knowledge pertain to counseling?

First, a healthy diet is integral to addiction counseling, because it helps the

client to sustain self-control over a longer period of time. Educating clients about how temporarily low glucose levels may affect their decision making process in times of stress may also be helpful in preventing relapse.

Second, with students, willpower and growth mindset may need to take a backseat to the hierarchy of needs. If a student is hungry, they may not biologically be prepared to persist through difficult situations or problems.

Third, Baumeister suggests that with addicts, it may be helpful to explore the

idea that they may be very strong-willed instead of assuming that they are weak-willed. Several recent studies have acknowledged that for many addicts, it takes an incredible degree of planning and an execution of difficult strategies to maintain an addiction in addition to other life responsibilities, such as work or family.

For more information, visit: <http://www.scientificamerican.com/magazine/sa/2015/04-01/> -or- <http://www.apa.org/monitor/2012/01/self-control.aspx>

Counseling Calendar: Summer Events



May 15-17: 16th Annual Clinical Hypnosis Workshop for Healthcare Professionals
<http://nccounselingassociation.org/2014/11/17/16th-annual-clinical-hypnosis-workshop-for-health-care-professionals-enhancing-possibilities-for-healing/>

June 7-11: 25th Annual AI Greene Addictions Institute at Appalachian State University
<http://agai.appstate.edu/sites/agai.appstate.edu/files/AGAI%202015%20Brochure%20PDF.pdf>

June 22-26: Multicultural Play Therapy Center Conference at UNC-Charlotte
Pre-register at <http://oeo.uncc.edu/playtherapy>

Letter from the Editor: Be Kind, Unwind

The mind and the body have always been connected, but lately it feels as if a corner has been turned, and the general public is starting to acknowledge it.

My first experience with seeing this mind-body connection was when I was very young. I remember watching a TV documentary and seeing Buddhist monks having towels soaked in ice-water draped on their backs. In minutes, the towels began to steam as the monks meditated and self-regulated their body temperature.

I thought that was exciting stuff, and I hoped to be that focused. As it turns out, I was instead gifted with the difficulties of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and through some testing that I completed in WCU's own Psychology department just this past semester, I learned about it, that it was

specifically "Inattentive" type.

Suddenly, all of the times that I struggled to recall details from a book I had just read seemed to make sense. Conversations like the following clicked: "Why are the keys in the freezer," she'd ask? "Great question," I'd reply. The bouncing legs. The nervous movement. And the stress tied in to not knowing why certain things were so difficult for me to do when I saw others succeeding at them all the time.

Still, these "quirks," as I imagined them, did not stop me for long. I learned coping strategies through necessity. I could listen to you, sure, but I could listen *better* while drawing a picture in my textbook and just hearing your words. I could speak well to others, because it was movement and action, and translating that, I often write

as if I am talking to someone. I pace while studying. I read things out loud. And the list goes on and on.

The point is that our minds, so complex, do not always work the way we imagine they *should*, and neither will our clients'. When I think about how much better I feel understanding myself, well, it gives me hope that we can bring the same sense of peace and identity to everyone we touch.

This Summer, be kind to yourself. Find a place where the pressure is off to constantly do this or that, and allow yourself a few moments (or days) of just being. We may not all achieve Buddhist self-regulation levels, but through understanding, we may instead find something better - peace.

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