

### *Counseling Psychology Training Values*

The Counseling Psychology Program at the University of Nebraska - Lincoln is a multicultural community of diverse racial, ethnic, and class backgrounds, national origins, religious, spiritual and political beliefs, physical abilities, ages, genders, and sexual orientations. Our educational activities and everyday interactions are enriched by our acceptance of one another; as members of the Counseling Psychology community, we strive to learn from each other in an atmosphere of positive engagement and mutual respect. The program expects that students will be respectful and supportive of all individuals, including, but not limited to clients, staff, peers, and faculty who are different from themselves in age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, spirituality, sexual orientation, disability, language, and socioeconomic status. It is expected that students and faculty will work to create a climate of safety and trust for all concerned.

Because of the necessity to maintain this atmosphere, bigotry will not go unchallenged within this community. We educate each other on the existence and effects of racism, sexism, ageism, homophobia, religious intolerance, and other forms of invidious prejudice. When such prejudice results in physical or psychological abuse, harassment, intimidation, or violence against persons or property, we will not tolerate such behavior, nor will we accept ignorance, joking, or substance abuse as an excuse, reason, or rationale for it.

All who work, study, and teach in the Counseling Psychology community should be committed to these values as an integral part of the program's focus, goals and mission.

As a profession, Counseling Psychologists not only disavow oppressive attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors, but actively work to advocate for social justice and against oppression. Indeed, because Counseling Psychologists often work with individuals who have been "marginalized," we seek to train students who will advocate for and positively embrace all demographic diversity. Respect for diversity in all forms is a central value of our program, and thus one expected of all students. In other words, respect for values different from one's own and the valuing of diversity in general is expected of all students who are accepted into the program.

The program faculty recognizes that no individuals (whether they be faculty, students or staff) are completely free from all forms of prejudice. Furthermore, it is expected that there will be a range of attitudes and values concerning controversial issues. Nonetheless, enrollment in the program is seen as a commitment to the social value of respect for diversity and to the process of self-examination so that such prejudices may be evaluated in the light of available scientific data, standards of the profession, and traditions of cooperation and mutual respect. Both the American Psychological Association Ethical Principles and Accreditation Guidelines specifically state that psychologists have an ethical mandate to be culturally competent, which means that they develop the ability to work with diverse clients of all types. In addition, the APA Ethical Principles state that psychologists (including students in training) must both examine and try to eliminate the effects of biases from their work. We understand that students will not enter the program free from bias. Nevertheless, successful completion of the program requires a genuine desire to examine one's attitudes and values and to learn to work effectively with "cultural, individual, and role differences including those based on age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, and socioeconomic

status” (APA Ethics Code, 2002, Principle E). Stated simply, being unwilling to examine the effects of one’s attitudes and values on one’s work is unacceptable.

Students are required to honor not merely the Ethics Code of the American Psychological Association (APA), but also to be familiar with and to abide by the various Guidelines published by the APA, which address issues of diversity including but not limited to the: *Guidelines for Psychotherapy with Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Clients*, the *Multicultural Guidelines*, and the *Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Older Adults*. All of these guidelines are found on the APA website (www.apa.org).

The practice of counseling requires significant self-disclosure and personal introspection for the person receiving counseling. Counseling students must become very familiar and comfortable working with the process of individual self-disclosure and introspection. Therefore, it is an essential training component of the Counseling Psychology program to provide assignments and classroom experiences that call for our students (i.e., counselors in training) to self-disclose and personally introspect about personal life experiences to an extent not expected in other academic disciplines. Specifically, while in the program, students will be expected to engage in self-reflection and introspection on their attitudes, beliefs, opinions, feelings and personal history. Students will be expected to examine and resolve any of the above for potential negative impact on their ability to perform the functions of a psychologist. Given the impact of one’s personhood on professional skills and identity as a psychologist, most classes include self-reflection and introspection as part of the learning process. In these classes, students may be encouraged to discuss such reflection and introspection with peers for the benefit of learning; nevertheless, no student will be forced to disclosure issues in a classroom setting that they prefer to keep private.

In summary, we require that our students be willing to engage in self-disclosure and personal introspection, and to learn to interact in an ethical and facilitative manner with individuals who are both culturally similar as well as different from themselves, in terms of both demographics and values. The Counseling Psychology faculty is committed to and expects an atmosphere of respect and confidentiality among our students

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(This statement has been adapted from the following other Universities and/or Counseling Psychology Program Statements: University of Missouri – Columbia, Auburn University, Miami University of Ohio, and the University of North Dakota, and was approved by the Counseling Psychology Faculty on 4/13/05).