

Chapter 4

Trauma–Informed Gatekeeping Using ARCCH Model of Multisystemic Resilience

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this chapter is to provide rationale, context, and a model for merging gatekeeping and trauma-informed practice in a counselor education program. Many counselors are motivated to enter this profession by their own childhood traumas and adverse experience, and this can greatly influence their education trajectory. Therefore, when using a trauma-informed model as a foundation, these seemingly disparate approaches of gatekeeping and trauma-informed approaches merge well to benefit the counseling students, the counseling education program,

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and the profession of counseling. Guidance for these practices comes through the use of ARCCH, a multisystemic model of resilience that is trauma-informed and grounded in cultural awareness. The model will be explained, and tools from it will be included. Examples from a university employing these practices will elucidate how the ARCCH model helped guide the gatekeeping process to build strengths and uncover areas in need of support.

BACKGROUND OF TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICE AND SCHOOL COUNSELOR DEVELOPMENT

The importance of a trauma-informed approach has become paramount across society and is particularly relevant to the education of future counselors. Many students are drawn to counseling because of their own traumatic experiences (Bryce et al., 2022). They may be seeking ideas for self-healing, or perhaps have experienced healing themselves through counseling or are passionate about helping others overcome their trauma to achieve wellness. Because our profession attracts people with trauma backgrounds, gatekeepers must ensure that counselor education programs teach trauma-informed practice so that these skills are used in the profession, but also model trauma-informed practice with our counselors-in-training.

Decades of seminal research have highlighted the prevalence of trauma narratives of those choosing to enter helping professions such as counseling, social work, and psychology (Elliott & Guy, 1993; Fussell & Bonney, 1990; Murphy & Halgin, 1995; Nikčević et al., 2007; Pope & Feldman-Summers, 1992; Racusin et al., 1981). More recently, Bryce and colleagues (2022) conducted an exhaustive systematic review of 28 studies, published between 1990 and 2019, to synthesize existing literature on this topic, which identified key themes related to the influence of cumulative childhood adversity and trauma on career choice in the helping professions. The review's key findings indicate that many helping professionals and preservice counseling practitioners are motivated to pursue a career in helping due to their adverse childhood experiences, including childhood abuse and neglect, parentification, and their individual characteristics and traits developed through this adversity. They were also motivated to pursue professional helping as a career through their own experiences with counselors and social workers in childhood, loss, and a desire to remediate their childhood maltreatment and rescue others from similar experiences.

Building on this review, Bryce and colleagues then expanded this research to a qualitative study exploring the common elements of the lived experience of cumulative childhood adversity and its influence on career decision-making. The findings of this study revealed that cumulative adversity in childhood influences the decision to pursue a career in counseling and professional helping by stimulating a reauthoring

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