

Chapter 12


Trauma-Informed Gatekeeping With International Students

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

While research on counselor training practices have primarily looked at the experiences of American students studying in U.S.-based counselor education programs, there is a need to understand the experiences of international students in counselor training programs. An emerging body of literature has begun to investigate various experiences of international students; little research however has looked specifically at the experiences of international students with the gatekeeping process. This chapter aims to address these critical questions by reviewing research on the experiences of international students. It will then delve into the definition of trauma-informed gatekeeping and its relevance to international student populations. Finally, the chapter will conclude by offering counseling programs actionable strategies for implementing trauma-informed gatekeeping approaches to working with international students.

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INTRODUCTION

At its inception in 1952, the face and leadership of the counseling field was composed primarily of White men. As the field evolved and prioritized having professional counselors reflect the diversity of the population it serves, the face of the counseling profession expanded. In maintaining a commitment to diversifying the field, the internationalization and globalization of counseling has further evolved the profession as the counseling field is in the midst of revolutionizing from a Western-based practice to a global phenomenon (Lorelle et al, 2012). Central to the expansion of the counseling field is the ability to train and develop counselors. While research on counselor training practices has primarily examined the experiences of American students studying in United States (U.S.)-based counselor education programs, there is a need to understand the experiences of international students in counselor training programs. An emerging body of literature has begun to investigate these experiences with studies exploring international students' experiences. Some areas explored include their sense of belongingness (Mohamad & Manning, 2024), acculturation and identity (Behl et al., 2017; Interiano & Lim, 2018; Leong, 2015), leadership and professional development (Kuo et al., 2021; Xiong & Young, 2023), career barriers (Domínguez et al., 2022), well-being and mental health (Clarke, 2023; Girmay, 2019; Hyun et al., 2007; Nyunt et al., 2023; Shadowen et al., 2019; Wu et al., 2024), use of coping strategies (Domínguez et al., 2022; Ickes et al., 2015; Woo et al., 2015), and experiences during practicum, internship, and supervision (Garrison et al., 2022; Jang et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2022; Park et al., 2019; Xiong et al., 2022). Little research, however, has examined the experiences of international students with the gatekeeping process.

The internationalization of counseling reflects increased economic, political, technological, and cultural connections that may expand international students' pursuits of counselor training. As the gatekeeping process has significant implications for students' admission, progression, entry and/or dismissal from the counseling field, an increased understanding of gatekeeping interventions and practices with international counseling students (ICS) is warranted. Such an understanding can aid in counselor educators' increased application of gatekeeping practices that are culturally responsive and inclusive of ICSs.

The decision to pursue graduate education abroad and leave behind the comfort of familiarity is profoundly life-changing. Attending a graduate program outside of one's home country provides numerous developmental opportunities such as furthering one's intercultural competence, broadening one's worldview, enhancing personal development, and expanding future career prospects (Ng et al., 2017). Over the past several years, enrollment data has shown a consistent increase in international students attending universities in the U.S. (Open Doors, 2023). For instance,

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