Chapter 14
Trauma–Informed Gatekeeping:
A Leadership Perspective

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It is important for counselor educators to focus on gatekeeping practices in a trauma-informed lens. Trauma-informed practices have been gaining popularity in mental health fields because of the number of people experiencing trauma in society and being mindful of inclusivity in the policies and procedures counselor educators create for their programs. This chapter focuses on a few concepts of leadership, gatekeeping, remediation strategies, and the challenges counselor educators/leaders face when gatekeeping. Leadership is broken down into counselor educators in leadership and leadership theory. Then, the gatekeeping section will include a focus on trauma informed practices. Next, remediation strategies of using faculty discussions, formal academic meetings, remediation plans, dismissal, behavioral assessment team(s), appeal process, and the challenges practicing trauma informed gatekeeping. The chapter will conclude with case studies to highlight information from the chapter in developing skills for practicing trauma informed gatekeeping through a leadership perspective.

INTRODUCTION: TRAUMA-INFORMED GATEKEEPING: A LEADERSHIP PERSPECTIVE

The American Counseling Association (ACA, 2014) and many state ethical boards call us to be gatekeepers to the profession. Being a gatekeeper may include remediation plans or professional disposition reviews of students. In counselor education and supervision, gatekeeping places the burden on counselor educators/faculty (ACA, 2014). When a student disagrees with the gatekeeping practices or remediation plans from faculty, they have the right to appeal faculty decisions. Those of us who find ourselves in leadership roles, such as program directors, clinic directors, clinical coordinators, department head/chair roles or deans of our colleges are placed into this line of student appeals when faculty implement gatekeeping practices. There are few gatekeeping resources exploring the role of leaders who find themselves in this position, therefore this chapter will focus on leadership theories, gatekeeping procedures, remediation strategies and challenges, and end with illustrative case studies As we discuss remediation and gatekeeping strategies, we will have two separate but essential focuses: (1) how individual faculty members can implement these strategies and (2) how leaders can use these strategies through policy, training, and leadership roles to ensure effective gatekeeping.

Leadership

Dinibutun (2020) reviewed over 100 years of academic research attempting to define leadership and asserted that the common theme of leadership was the interaction of the leader, those under their care, and the situational context to leverage improved outcomes for the organization. As counselor educators, those under our care can be other members of our faculty team and our students. Leadership training is a vital part of training counselor educators and one of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) standards, especially in Section 6.5.B: the leadership and advocate section. (CACREP, 2024). Counselor educators are also tasked with improving the outcomes of the university/college, which may look more at their unit/department than the whole university/college; however, counselor educators are also tasked with improving the counseling profession. Under the counseling profession is where our call to gatekeeping comes in. One common situation that counselor educator leaders face is being asked by administrators to consider student rights within the university while balancing the counseling profession's need to gatekeep appropriately. For example, consider a student who refuses to take feedback despite constant efforts by faculty to help them improve. A counselor educator leader might be concerned about them progressing to clinical rotations with this challenge. However, an administrator might emphasize

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