

Bridging the Gap: Implementing Peer-Mentoring Programs for Counselors-In-Training

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### Abstract

Counselors-in-training encumber a myriad of professional tasks. High prevalence of burnout in the helping professions (Testa & Sangganjanavanich, 2016) combined with overtasked novice counselors presents a conflict for the counseling profession, specifically at the counselor education stratification. Novice counselors may be unaware of the challenges they could face when entering the counseling profession. Peer-mentoring, as opposed to traditional, hierarchical mentoring, is explored as an option for increasing professional resilience. Wellness is explored as a construct conducive to peer-mentoring relationships in counselor education. Increasing resilience among novice counselors through peer-mentoring may serve to decrease burnout. Furthermore, peer-mentoring may increase wellness and self-care among novice counselors. The authors present peer-mentoring as a viable option for counselor education to implement in an effort to mitigate early counselor burnout. Design and implementation for a peer-mentoring program is introduced. The authors' intention of the article is to call attention to the need of support for the deeper understanding and implementation of peer-mentorship in the field of counselor education.

*Keywords:* peer-mentoring, counselors in training, professional resilience, burnout

### Bridging the Gap: Implementing Peer-Mentoring Programs for Counselors-In-Training

Practicing counselors are ground workers and representatives of the counseling profession. Individuals may choose a career as a counselor due to a desire to help others during a difficult time (Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs, CACREP, 2016). Professional counseling work includes, but is not limited to, clinical service delivery, treatment planning and case conceptualization, supervision and consultation, billing, note taking, working toward and maintaining professional licensure and credentials, continuing education, and ethical decision making – all duties to be performed while counselors are also implementing self-care and wellness practices (Blount & Mullen, 2015; Kottler, 2010). When entering graduate programs, counselors-in-training (CITs) may not be aware of the expectations and realities of the counseling profession, including how to successfully engage in school-to-work transitions. For some new counselors, unrealistic expectations about salaries, licensure processes, future employment, and non-counseling related duties may decrease work satisfaction and increase stress (Freadling & Foss-Kelly, 2013; Moss, Gibson, & Dollarhide, 2014; Neace, 2012; Prosek & Hurt, 2014; Skovholt & Ronnestead, 2003). This is problematic as fledgling counselors become overwhelmed, disgruntled, or disengaged, and ultimately, choose to leave the professional field prematurely (Skovholt & Ronnestead, 2003) or not to enter at all. The authors of the current paper posit peer-mentoring programs may serve to increase support and guidance to CITs as they prepare to navigate the counselor experience. Toward this, discussions of counselor burnout, traditional mentoring, and peer mentoring, including benefits and challenges, is provided. Suggested steps for counselor education programs seeking to implement a peer-mentoring program are then shared.

### **Counselor Burnout**

Burnout involves a lack of professional involvement, pessimism, and fatigue (Ahola et al., 2006). Fatigue refers to exhaustion related to the workplace setting and pessimism refers to a poor attitude or disinterest in work related activities (Fowler, 2015). Students in academic settings often experience heavy workloads and a high demand for productivity that could lead to feelings related to burnout. According to Fowler (2015), graduate education may influence burnout due to power dynamics and demands for production. Power dynamics among faculty may induce stress or anxiety among graduate students, which may lead to feelings of burnout. Additionally, the rigorous demands of graduate coursework may influence feelings of cynicism or fatigue for students, leading to burnout.

Individuals in the helping professions have taken steps to address burnout due to the stressful nature of the work (Fowler, 2015). Due to the emotionally taxing nature of counseling, counselors may experience burnout (Maslach, 2003) or decreased presence when working with clients (Skosnik, Chatterton, Swisher & Park, 2000). Furthermore, novice counselors are more susceptible to burnout than counselors with more experience (Testa & Sangganjanavanich, 2016; Skovholt & Ronnestad, 2003). Roach and Young (2007) examined the influence of counselor education programs on student wellness. More than half of the participants indicated their programs did not have a dedicated wellness course, with only 19% of participants specifically mentioning self-care as an important part of their training. The authors recommended more integrated and comprehensive wellness instruction and evaluation in counselor education programs.

CITs may experience jarring situations that challenge their existing understanding of the human condition (Thompson, Frick, & Black, 2011). This experience could induce feelings of

fatigue or pessimism among CITs. CITs may overly invest in client outcomes, which could promote burnout (Skovolt, Grier & Hanson, 2001). CITs undergo supervision to work towards navigating the potential for burnout through self-care and wellness practices. Additionally, supervisors work to promote resiliency and self-care conversations (Thompson et al., 2011). However, in a study conducted by Thompson et al. (2011), CITs reported that supervisors did not directly discuss their over-commitment to client outcomes. Additionally, the CITs expressed a desire for more understanding and empathy from their supervisors. Similar to Roach and Young (2007), the authors recommended including comprehensive and applied approaches to self-care throughout training programs (Thompson et al., 2011). Implementation of peer-mentoring programs within graduate programs may serve as an opportunity to address identified programmatic needs and desired supports.

### **Peer-Mentoring Relationships: Characteristics, Benefits, and Challenges**

Due to high potential for burnout among counselors (Testa & Sangganjanavanich, 2016), wellness is a necessary component of the counseling profession and may enhance quality of services provided to consumers. Furthermore, counselor's have an ethical responsibility to engage in self-care activities that promote wellness in a variety of domains (American Counseling Association, 2014). In an effort to increase wellbeing, mentoring relationships serve to provide guidance and support to CITs. While various definitions of mentoring exist, mentoring is generally understood as a relationship between two people, where one individual has more power and experience than another and promotes career success of the mentee (Campbell & Campbell, 2000). Mentoring is an integral component of higher education (Ehrich, Hansford, & Tennent, 2004). Faculty and students engaged in mentoring report these

relationships to be mutually beneficial, and to include both professional and psychosocial matters (Ehrich et al., 2004).

Despite positive outcomes of faculty to student mentoring, challenges exist for faculty and students. Among these, fewer tenure-track and full-time faculty members are employed at many universities, creating increased job responsibilities and less time to devote to mentoring (Ehrich et al., 2004; Johnson, 2002). Further, mentoring activities may not be given the same weight as teaching, research, or service on faculty performance evaluations. Faculty-student mentoring relationships also carry inherent power differentials and multiple roles, which could impact the content and process of the mentoring relationship.

### **Characteristics of Peer-Mentoring**

Peer-mentoring may be a viable option to provide support and guidance to CITs to form realistic and accurate expectations about the field, to navigate coursework and clinical placements, and to maintain self-care and wellness practices. Peer-mentoring, or co-mentoring, is a relationship where individuals have different power dynamics, previous experience, and knowledge (Murdock, Stipanovic, & Lucas, 2013). The disparity between power dynamics, experience, and knowledge is likely less between peers as compared to faculty members. Co-mentoring provides an opportunity for empowerment through knowledge, support, equality, and the reduction of power-differences (Jipson & Pauley, 2000; Packard, Walsh, & Seidenburg, 2004). Peer-mentoring relationships may also provide more comfort among CITs due to the reduction of power differences seen in traditional, hierarchical, mentoring relationships.

Murdock et al. (2013) conducted a qualitative study on strengthening counseling identity through co-mentoring, and found that peer-mentoring programs benefit CITs at the master's level. Participants were asked to meet face to face at least four times a semester and write to one

another throughout the semester. Participants reported having a more grounded understanding of what it looks like to work as a counselor in practice, decreased stress, and opportunities for multicultural conversations (Murdock et al., 2013). Additionally, Moss et al. (2014) examined transformational tasks of novice and advanced counselors, which resulted in useful information regarding the benefit of mentoring. Transformational tasks include tasks that impact professional identity over the course of a counselor's career, such as working with clients or developing a realistic impression of the counseling profession (Moss et al., 2014). Participants indicated the importance of having a mentor or some form of experienced guide to aid in professional development (Moss et al., 2014). According to one participant, the mentoring relationship was the most beneficial aspect of her professional identity development (Moss et al., 2014). The authors of these studies did not report if the referenced mentoring relationships involved traditional or peer-mentoring relationships or if the mentoring occurred during or after graduate school.

Peer relationships in work settings are associated with increased job satisfaction and decreased levels of burnout (Van Emmerik, 2002). Therefore, a peer-mentoring program for CITs may serve to decrease stress and job dissatisfaction. Peer relationships may result in more honest feedback and disclosure more closely aligned with social norms (Chui, Ziemer, Palma, & Hill, 2014). In other words, individuals may be more likely to relate to their peers with increased transparency and authenticity. In a study conducted by Chui et al., (2014), doctoral level students reported enhanced training assistance and emotional support from their peer relationships. Training assistance and emotional support may serve to decrease stress and increase overall wellness among CIT's. According to Chui et al. (2014), peer relationships appear to possess a more balanced distribution of power and less concerns surrounding evaluation than supervisory

relationships. Traditional professional mentoring relationships target professional identity development, confidence, and networking among CIT's (Taylor & Neimeyer, 2009). While faculty and supervisory mentoring relationships are beneficial, traditional mentoring relationships may present barriers to a more egalitarian relationship for CITs. Peer-mentoring relationships may provide similar components to those traditional in nature and also provide a different power dynamic.

### **Benefits of Peer-Mentoring Programs**

A counselor's work is often emotionally taxing. Due to the nature of this occupation, a counselor's wellness is crucial to personal and professional satisfaction, as burnout is high among helping professions (Testa & Sangganjanavanich, 2016). Specifically, burnout occurs most frequently for novice counselors (Skovholt & Ronnestad, 2003). The term *novice counselors* is used to describe beginning counselors within the first couple of years in the profession (Moss et al., 2014; Ronnestad & Skovholt, 2003). Novice counselors may be more susceptible to burn out due to limited counseling experience, unrealistic expectations of client outcomes, or lack of successful mentoring relationships (Skovholt & Ronnestad, 2003). Peer-mentoring relationships may aid in exposure to vicarious experience, an increase in realistic expectations, and overall wellness of CITs. Specifically, peer-mentoring relationships may provide opportunities for open dialogue regarding potentially jarring experiences with clients. Dialogue pertaining to realistic expectations may help novice counselors prepare for some of the more challenging aspects of the profession. Counselor wellness is often promoted through peer consultation. Thompson et al. (2011) qualitatively researched CITs' perceptions of self-care and burnout. Participants identified peer consultation as a primary means of self-care. Participants in this study felt supported by professional unity following consultation. The authors conclude that



non-evaluative support may also be considered as form of peer consultation, and so, an extension of self-care. In a qualitative study designed to examine themes among peer relationships during psychology training, participants reported they were more open and honest with peers than with supervisors when discussing client experiences (Chui et al., 2014). To gain support without concerns regarding performance evaluation, CITs may benefit from peer-mentoring relationships.

Beginning counselors tend to hold idealistic goals for clients. Because of overarching client expectations, novice counselors are especially susceptible to low self-efficacy (Thompson et al., 2011). Self-efficacy is an individual's belief about his or her ability to succeed or successfully complete a task, also commonly known as confidence. Many CITs intend to work hard, express empathy effectively, and help facilitate change through theory-based practice (Leiter, 1991), yet clients will not make changes based on these factors alone. CITs may struggle to reconcile differences between the goals they set for the clients and the goals the clients set for themselves. To that end, CITs may struggle with appropriate emotional boundaries and may assume too much responsibility for client outcomes. Jenaro et al. (2007) attributed low job-related self-efficacy to the complex and layered nature of client needs. In other words, beginning counselors often falsely believe they alone hold the tools necessary to create client change. Supervision is one place where CITs and novice counselors may work through false and presumptive beliefs. However, supervisees are more likely to share openly with peers than with supervisors (Chui et al., 2014). Therefore, peer consultation with a peer mentor may mitigate this phenomenon. The CIT or novice counselor may be able to share concerns around self-efficacy more openly in non-evaluative relationships. In this capacity, peer-mentoring efforts may serve to increase wellness and self-care through peer consultation.

### **Challenges of Peer-Mentoring Programs**

The implementation of any new program will come with challenges. There are potential barriers unique to the implementation of a peer-mentoring program for CITs. CITs are responsible for professional development with respect to specific knowledge, skills, and abilities (CACREP, 2016). CITs may also cope with becoming hyper-focused on evaluative procedures, which may take away from their passion for the profession. CIT angst or self-doubt may be likely to present itself in a mentoring relationship. These feelings of self-doubt among CITs may require support beyond the role of a mentor. Therefore, peer-mentors should be prepared to navigate the differences between serving as a counselor and mentor and to be able to recommend proper supervision. Additionally, the hierarchical power dynamic mentioned in the literature is less prevalent in peer-mentoring and non-evaluative relationships (Jipson & Pauley, 2000; Packard et al., 2004). Therefore, it is imperative that mentees and mentors have open conversations regarding power dynamics, potential conflicts, and possible triangular relationships with faculty and clinic supervisors.

The structure of a mentoring program may enhance opportunities for open dialogue by clearly defining roles, relationships, and expectations. Open and honest dialogue regarding expectations, roles, and responsibilities is the recommended standard for mentoring relationships (Johnson, 2002). In guidelines for mentoring students on research practices, open dialogue may promote the potential for strategies to discuss conflicts or challenging situations between the mentor and mentee (Borders et al., 2012). However, in peer-mentoring relationships, open dialogue could present the mentor with a challenging situation he or she is not able to address while functioning in the role of a mentor (e.g., academic misconduct, faculty complaints, and mental health issues). Mentee-mentor discussions around topics that may be a gatekeeping issue

or better addressed by a faculty member could strain the mentoring relationship. However, the mentor and mentee could address this during role induction where the mentor and mentee openly discuss topics and expectations appropriate to the mentoring relationship.

Individuals choosing to implement a peer-mentoring initiative within counselor education programs may also present logistical challenges. Many counseling programs offer night courses to provide students the opportunity to work. Therefore, in addition to coursework, CITs may manage the demands of practicum, internship, and research during their graduate studies. Additionally, some students manage much more than what is required of them by their graduate training program. Overwhelming schedules demand that CITs prioritize their schedules. Time set aside for fostering growth and relationships often suffer first (Testa & Sangganjanavanich, 2016). Intentional structure of a peer-mentoring program and mentor-mentee matches would facilitate insulation from this problem. Nevertheless, some mentoring relationships may still struggle under the pressure to find consistent meeting times.

Finally, many graduate counseling programs are unlikely to have the bandwidth to design a rigorous selection process for well-qualified mentors due to a lack of resources (Cornelius, Wood, & Lai, 2016). Unfortunately, this means unless there is an existing concern regarding a potential mentor, the mentor would likely move forward in the mentoring program. The purpose of a peer-mentoring program is to provide preparation and support for nascent counselors rather than long term, traditional mentorship. Regardless of the student status, knowledge, skills, and abilities oriented towards positive mentorship are likely to vary across potential mentors. Additionally, peer-mentoring program sponsors should expect to provide mentoring to the mentors (Christie, 2012).

### **Peer-Mentoring Program Implementation**

This section includes steps and suggestions from the authors' experiences regarding the development and implementation of a peer-mentoring program. Peer-mentoring offers numerous benefits to CITs, including support, guidance and open communication. Challenges may also be present, including logistics or mentor suitability. Design and implementation of a structure-peer mentoring program helps leverage the strengths of peer-mentoring relationships, while also mitigating potential liabilities. Further, a formal peer-mentoring program helps peer mentors to be accessible to CITs, while also affording opportunities for peer mentors to receive mentorship support.

The design and implementation of a peer-mentoring program is a lengthy and rigorous process. The development of a peer-mentoring committee (e.g., faculty sponsor, chair, co-chair, and two committee members) may aid in the delineation of these tasks. Additionally, it may also be beneficial if the committee is comprised of doctoral and advanced standing master's students as these individuals represent the student body. With this in mind, the following suggestions are offered to counselor education programs seeking to implement peer-mentoring programs at their universities. Forwarded recommendations are based on actions the authors have taken to initiate a peer-mentoring program at a mid-sized Southeastern university. The authors suggest the following implementation steps: (a) administration of a student needs assessment, (b) drafting a peer-mentoring program proposal, (c) garnering faculty and programmatic acceptance and support, (d) recruiting participants and completing mentor-mentee matches, and (e) facilitating mentor training.

### **Student Needs Assessment**

The student needs assessment is the first step in determining whether a peer-mentoring program is appropriate for CITs and the counselor education program. The purpose of the

student needs assessment is to determine if the students are interested in engaging in a peer-mentoring relationship with doctoral students or advanced standing master's students.

Additionally, the student needs assessment is geared toward understanding what topics counselors-in-training are most interested in receiving mentorship. The student needs assessment is also the initial assessment for modes of communication with a mentor, mentee expectations, and additional comments regarding mentee requests for peer-mentorship. The peer-mentoring program committee could distribute the student needs assessment through an online medium and it may include the following questions:

1. *Are you interested in working with a doctoral student or advanced standing master's student in a mentoring relationship? If so, do you have a preference?*
2. *Which topics are you most interested in discussing with a potential mentor:*
  - a. *Professional development*
  - b. *Research*
  - c. *Theoretical orientation and applied counseling practice*
  - d. *Multicultural issues*
  - e. *Wellness*
  - f. *Licensure*
  - g. *Other (Please specify)*
3. *What are your preferred methods and frequency of communication with a potential mentor? (e.g., e-mail, text, in person, weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly)*

### **Peer-Mentoring Program Proposal**

Based on the implementation of a peer-mentoring program, these authors suggest the following peer-mentoring proposal steps. The data from the student needs assessment provides

the foundation for the peer-mentoring program proposal. One purpose of the peer-mentoring program proposal is to substantiate the need for a peer-mentoring program by highlighting areas of need and interest identified in the student needs assessment. The peer-mentoring program proposal also outlines the working mission, purpose, and goal statement of the program and creates space for faculty feedback and involvement. Sample language for the purpose and goals of the proposed mentoring program could include:

*The purpose of the Counseling Mentoring Program is to provide support, resources, and information to master's level counseling students as they navigate the journey through graduate school. Specifically, the Counseling Mentoring Program aims to further enhance the graduate student experience, professional development, and professional counselor identity of master's level counseling students at the university. The goals of this mentoring program align with the department's mission for cultivating overall student growth and professional development opportunities for counselors in training. The objectives of the Counseling Mentoring Program are to:*

- 1. Promote the development of collaborative mentoring relationships among counseling students.*
- 2. Provide opportunities for increasing knowledge surrounding the school to work transition.*
- 3. Enhance professional identity and development of identity of future counselors.*
- 4. Discovering new avenues to increase community engagement, research, and leadership among counseling students.*

Creation of the peer-mentoring program also affords opportunities for the peer-mentoring program to collaborate with their local chapter of Chi Sigma Iota International Counseling Honor

Society (CSI) in an effort to gain support from other organizations designed to enhance professional development among CITs. For example, the peer-mentoring committee may choose to meet with the CSI officers to arrange a seminar on peer-mentoring or the initial meeting of the mentee-mentor matches. The collaborative efforts between the peer-mentoring program committee and the CSI committee serve to enhance the peer-mentoring program proposal. Collaborative efforts among the peer-mentoring program committee, other student organizations, and faculty members are vital to the success of the implementation of a peer-mentoring program for CITs.

### **Recruiting Participants and Creating Mentor-Mentee Matches**

Once the department faculty accepts the peer-mentoring program proposal, the next step is to distribute mentor and mentee interest surveys. The purpose of the mentor and mentee surveys at this stage of program implementation is to work towards achieving a positive mentor-mentee match. It is the hopes of the peer-mentoring program committee that thoughtful mentor and mentee surveys will promote successful peer-mentoring relationships (Lozinak, 2016).

Recommended questions for the mentor and mentee interest surveys include:

1. *What areas are you most hoping to discuss with your mentor or mentee?*
2. *What is your preferred method of communication with your mentor or mentee?*
3. *Do you have a preference regarding the education level of your mentor or mentee?*

The peer-mentoring program committee could distribute the mentor and mentee surveys through an online medium. Committee members may also find it beneficial to visit student classrooms to share information about the peer-mentoring program, answer any questions, and to solicit participants.

Once mentee and mentor participants have been recruited, the next step is to complete the mentor and mentee matches. Before initiating this process, the peer-mentoring committee should discuss the suitability of potential candidates. During the matching process, alignment of preferred modes and frequency of communication may be prioritized. Additionally, specific topics indicated for desired mentoring should be aligned to the extent possible.

### **Mentor Training**

The final step in initiating a peer-mentoring program is to conduct a mentor training. The purpose of the mentor training is to aid mentors in understanding their role as a mentor. Additionally, the mentor training is designed to discuss strategies to building effective mentoring relationships, effective traits of a mentor, and protocols for addressing challenging situations with mentors (Allen, Finkelstein, & Poteet, 2009). The mentor training is also an opportunity for the mentoring committee to meet with potential mentors in an effort to establish a connection to the program. The mentor training should be mandatory to promote continuity among mentors and the relationships they will begin to establish with counselors-in-training.

Members of the peer-mentoring committee may wish to open mentoring training sessions with introductions and icebreaker questions addressing mentors' motivation to serve as a mentor, previous mentoring experiences, including successes and challenges, and expectations or concerns mentors may have about the program. When discussing the roles and responsibilities of mentors within the peer-mentoring program, special consideration should be given to distinguishing peer-mentoring from other relationships (i.e., counselor, supervisor, friend, classmate) the mentors may be familiar with. Mentors should understand that while mentors strive to maintain mentee privacy, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed within the mentoring relationship. Potential peer-mentor roles discussed with program participants may include:



- Professional guidance (Navigating licensure attainment, developing professional relationships, ethical concerns, etc.)
- Self-care encouragement (Engaging in dialogue designed to promote and ensure self-care practices on behalf of the novice counselor)
- Wellness support (Normalizing stress of learning to be an effective counselor, preparation for later work-life balance, challenging habits that may impair wellness)
- Individual growth (Model ethical behavior, build self-efficacy, fuel motivation, aid mentee in setting goals, act as a sounding board for difficult situations)
- Partner (Model openness to change, willingness to improve along with new counselors, dedication to regular, focused meetings)

The mentor training should also provide mentors with resources and strategies to establish effective mentoring relationships. Ideas include: (a) discussing expectations and goals with mentees; (b) sharing background information with mentees; (c) routinely checking in with the mentee; (d) working toward developing trust, equality, and shared power within the relationship; (e) identifying common points of connection; (f) remaining flexible and open to other points of view; and (g) conceptualizing the developmental process of the mentee. Templates for creating a mentoring plan may also be reviewed (see Allen et al., 2009).

Finally, attention should be given in the mentor training to how to address challenging situations as they arise. Mentors should be reminded of the professional nature of mentoring relationships and the ethical guidelines regarding mentoring relationships. Specifically, mentors should adhere to the *ACA Code of Ethics* (2014) with respect to dual relationships. Limits of confidentiality with the mentoring relationship should also be transparently outlined. Specifically, mentors and mentee should be aware that concerns related to student conduct,

competency, or professional performance may be shared with faculty members. Further, specific course or faculty concerns are not appropriate to discuss within the mentoring relationship. The following vignettes were developed to support training and dialogue around potentially challenging situations:

- *Rebecca has been in a mentoring relationship with her mentor Joseph for a couple of semesters. Over time, Rebecca began to contact Joseph more frequently, ask questions not related to mentoring topics, and asked Joseph to go out to dinner with her. If you were Joseph, how would you address this situation?*
- *Stephanie and Caroline are in a mentoring relationship. As a mentor, Stephanie has established rapport, trust, and open communication with Caroline. Caroline has been struggling with the demands of her schoolwork, her relationship with her boyfriend, and her home life. Stephanie and Caroline meet for their usual mentoring meeting and Caroline tells Stephanie she is having thoughts of hurting herself. How should Stephanie move forward in this situation as a mentor?*
- *Jacob meets with his mentor, Timothy, every other week. Over the past couple of weeks Jacob has hinted at a concern he has had with a fellow student's academic honesty. Jacob eventually tells Timothy that one of his classmates has been cheating on exams in one of their courses. How should Timothy handle this situation?*

### **Conclusion**

The implementation of a peer-mentoring program requires ongoing attention to program evaluation through research and feedback. Peer-mentoring program committee members should research the implementation of mentoring programs in other disciplines to gain insight into

additional mentoring practices. Research regarding other peer-mentoring program implementation serves to enhance the possibilities for peer-mentoring programs across counselor education programs. Program evaluation through mentor and mentee satisfaction surveys is a possibility for assessing program effectiveness. Additionally, mentor and mentee surveys serve to provide data regarding mentee and mentee concerns. The information obtained from program evaluation efforts is useful for adjusting the structure of the program to meet the needs of the mentors and mentees.

Counselors engage in a variety of administrative, clinical, and supervision tasks throughout their careers. Some novice counselors may face challenges adjusting to the realities of salaries, workplace settings, and required duties when making the school-to-work transition (Freadling & Foss-Kelly, 2013; Moss, Gibson, & Dollarhide, 2014; Neace, 2012; Prosek & Hurt, 2014; Skovholt & Ronnestead, 2003). These experiences could lead to feelings of burnout among counselors. It may be beneficial for CITs to receive additional guidance and support regarding these issues as they prepare to enter the workforce. Peer-mentoring relationships may promote opportunities for navigating the new counselor experience and increased wellness among CITs.

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