Wellness Counseling

A Holistic Approach to Prevention and Intervention

Jonathan H. Ohrt • Philip B. Clarke • Abigail H. Conley

American Counseling Association

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Preface

Most people are familiar with the term *wellness*. It is likely that most people you ask would say that wellness is important to them. Unfortunately, individuals who conduct an Internet search in hopes of finding ways of improving their personal wellness will often find a plethora of gimmicks and strategies that are not effective, unsupported by research, potentially harmful, and sometimes expensive. Most helping professionals also acknowledge that wellness is important for their clients. However, various disciplines promote different definitions of wellness. Within the counseling profession, we tend to agree that wellness consists of "a way of life oriented toward optimal health and well-being, in which body, mind, and spirit are integrated by the individual to live life more fully within the human and natural community" (Myers, Sweeney, & Witmer, 2000, p. 252). In our work with clients, we have continuously recognized the importance of viewing their concerns from a holistic perspective. Each area of an individual's life inevitably affects other areas. We also believe that now, maybe more than ever, it is important to work from a prevention approach. As mental health concerns appear to be on the rise, we can help people work toward optimal wellness in an effort to avert such concerns. At the very least, prevention and wellness promotion efforts can help build coping strategies that can help alleviate or reduce the severity of unavoidable mental health concerns.

In our experience teaching wellness courses and speaking with experienced practitioners, we have received feedback that counselors believe in promoting wellness for their clients; however, they are not quite sure what wellness "looks like," or they are not interested in learning more concrete strategies to promote client wellness. This book is designed for beginning and experienced coun-

selors who are interested in conceptualizing clients from a holistic wellness perspective and in promoting wellness through prevention and intervention efforts. Each chapter contains up-to-date research and best practices within the wellness domains. We also provide concrete strategies for implementing wellness interventions throughout the book. In addition, we include "Practitioner Spotlights," where experienced practitioners share their personal experiences implementing wellness interventions. Some additional features of the book include reflection prompts to help the reader process the information, learning activities to help the reader participate in wellness strategies before implementing them with clients, and additional resources for the reader to explore related to the content in each chapter.

This book is divided into four parts. Part I consists of a chapter describing the theoretical foundations, empirical support, and domains of wellness. Part I also contains a chapter discussing the current trends and public policy implications related to wellness. Part II of the book includes wellness domains. We divided this part into five chapters: Mind (e.g., cognitions, intellectual stimulation), Body (e.g., physical wellness, nutrition), Spirit (e.g., religion, spirituality, meaning and purpose), Emotion (e.g., emotion regulation), and Connection (e.g., social support). Part III pertains to wellness counseling in action and contains chapters on assessment and conceptualization, treatment planning, and wellness interventions. Part IV is composed of chapters on wellness with specific populations and settings. Our goal for this section is to provide more depth and specific strategies for implementation. The section includes chapters on wellness across the life span, wellness counseling modalities, wellness counseling in educational settings, and wellness for counselors (i.e., self-care).

Reference

Myers, J. E., Sweeney, T. J., & Witmer, J. M. (2000). The Wheel of Wellness counseling for wellness: A holistic model for treatment planning. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 78,* 251–266.

About the Authors

Jonathan H. Ohrt is currently an associate professor and counselor education program coordinator at the University of South Carolina. He earned his PhD in counselor education at the University of Central Florida in 2010 and his MA in counselor education at the University of South Florida in 2006. He is a certified K–12 school counselor and has worked for several years providing psychoeducation as well as individual and small group counseling services to high school students in Florida. He has also provided services in a university-based counseling clinic. His current research projects are related to prevention and wellness promotion for children, adolescents, and transitional-age youths; counselor wellness; and group work.

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Philip B. Clarke earned his MS/EdS in counseling in 2004 and his PhD in counselor education in 2012. He has been a licensed professional counselor (North Carolina) since 2006 and a faculty member in the Department of Counseling at Wake Forest University since 2011. He has worked and interned in multiple counseling settings, including a group private practice, a hospital-based intensive outpatient substance abuse program, a treatment research clinic, and a hospital-based counseling program. He has experience counseling clients with substance use and co-occurring disorders. His clinical experience has also centered on providing counseling for people diagnosed with dementia and their family caregivers. He had the privilege of taking a course in wellness counseling from Dr. Jane Myers, which sparked his interest in

the subject. He has presented and written about wellness counseling for people with substance use concerns, cancer survivors, and family caregivers of people with dementia. His scholarship also includes developing integrative counseling and experiential teaching approaches. In his classes, he strives to engage students through the use of actors to portray clients.

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Abigail H. Conley is an assistant professor in the Department of Counseling and Special Education and is an affiliate faculty member in the Institute for Women's Health, at Virginia Commonwealth University. She earned her PhD in counselor education from North Carolina State University in 2012 and her MA in counseling psychology at Lewis and Clark College in 2006. Her clinical experience is in higher education in both community college and university settings, focusing on providing counseling and advocacy services to survivors of sexual assault. Her research interests include interpersonal violence survivorship and healing, violence prevention, and wellness and resiliency. She serves as an associate editor of quantitative research for *Counseling and Values*, the official journal of the Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling, a division of the American Counseling Association.

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About the Spotlight Contributors

The contributors listed below are mental health professionals, educators, and human services center directors who authored the Practitioner Spotlights found throughout the book. In the Practitioner Spotlights, the contributors impart their knowledge and experience on wellness and wellness counseling with the purpose of illustrating and elaborating on key terms and concepts.

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Jonathan: I thank my advisor Dr. Mike Robinson for his mentorship and guidance. I am also grateful for Dr. Mark Young, who was the first person to introduce me to wellness from a professional perspective. I am grateful for my coauthors, Philip and Abigail. It is amazing that this book, that we first imagined at an American Counseling Association conference 6 years ago, will now be published. Thank you both for your hard work, flexibility, and persistence. Finally, I am grateful for my wife, Dodie, and my sons, Hayden and Maren, who all bring me great happiness and contribute to my own personal wellness.

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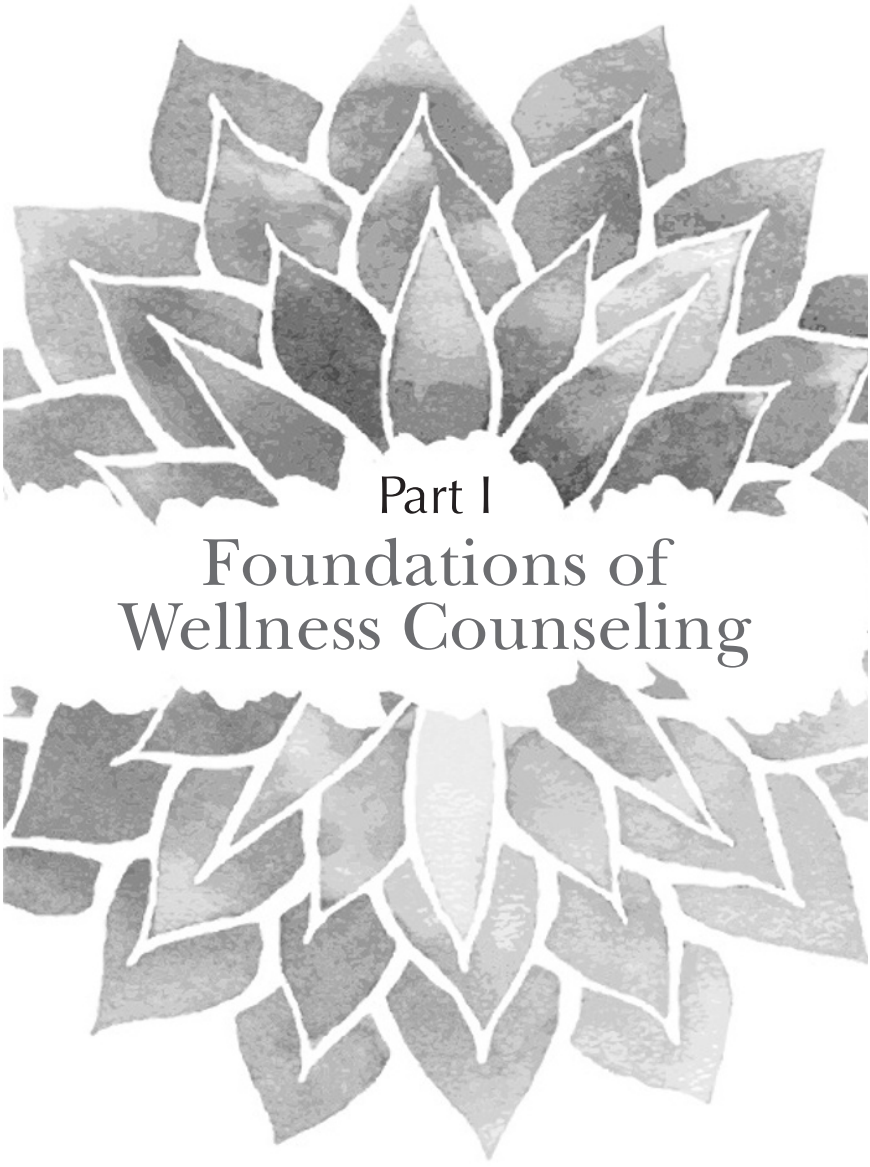
Abigail: I want to thank my amazing students and colleagues at VCU who make space for me to grow, and provide feedback on many of the ideas in this book. And, I have so much gratitude for my partner and husband, Joe; my parents, Gayle and Norm; my children, Miles and Polly; and my amazing coauthors, Jonathan and Philip, for their support and encouragement while writing this book. It was truly a labor of love. At times, late nights spent writing did not seem like the best example of wellness. However, having support to cultivate the inevitable ebb and flow of writing has given me a new appreciation for what work–life balance can look like. The word "balance" in this sense is a misnomer, really, because a fulfilling work–life ratio is anything but balanced—it's finding a way to make time for the things that need attention (sometimes that is writing, sometimes that is rocking a teething baby all night), leaning on others to help pick up the slack during the transition, being okay with asking for help, and finding ways to create space for joy and replenishment in between it all.



Part I
Foundations of Wellness Counseling

Chapter 1

Introduction to Wellness Counseling

When one tugs at a single thing in nature,
he finds it attached to the rest of the world.

—John Muir

• • •

Discovering theories and frameworks for counseling that fit for you and your clients is, in a weird way, like reconnecting with a long-lost love that you had never met. You are beside yourself with excitement that your paths have crossed. You share similar values and enhance each other's ways of navigating life's challenges. You enjoy spending time with this new love. As a college student trying to figure out what type of post-college helping professional education I (Phil) wanted, I searched desperately for a metaphorical connection. A friend of mine mentioned that she was applying to counseling programs. I read about many different counseling programs and their definition of counseling. I discovered the word "wellness" in many of the descriptions. "Counselors do that?" I thought to myself. "I thought they just focused on symptoms and what was going wrong with people." This idea of wellness resonated with my beliefs and values, even without a day of counselor training under my belt. Like new love, there were sparks, and I was definitely interested. The romance blossomed as I got to study with and serve as a graduate assistant for Jane Myers, one of the great scholars who has advanced our understanding and practice of wellness counseling. Wellness "completed me" as a pro-

fessional. It was and is a significant part of my counselor identity—and just like a healthy romantic relationship, it made me want to be my best self as a counselor.

However, it was not until I obtained my master's degree and went into the real world of counseling that I truly appreciated how important wellness counseling was to me. Much of my work at the time was at an addictions treatment center working with clients diagnosed with co-occurring disorders. The most common struggle I saw across clients was not necessarily relapse into addiction or mental health symptomology but deficits in, and barriers to, wellness. Issues of lifestyle imbalance (e.g., poor nutrition and sleep habits, lack of meaning and purpose, spiritual bypass, conflict with family or friends or outright lack of social support, inability to identify and make sense of emotions, insufficient intellectual stimulation) not only severely detracted from my clients' lives but also seemed to perpetuate an ongoing cycle of addictive behaviors and mental health concerns.

The above is an excerpt from my story with wellness. There is a lot more to this subject matter than what I just described and that we (Jonathan, Abigail, and myself) capture in this book. The purpose of the book is to (a) provide a comprehensive overview of the theoretical background and empirical support for wellness counseling, (b) discuss current trends in wellness, (c) provide practical strategies for clinical application of wellness concepts, and (d) describe wellness counseling interventions for specific populations and settings. This book is applicable for counselors and counseling students who seek to better understand clients' holistic wellness and integrate wellness-based interventions in their practice; it also applies to educators who are teaching a course on wellness counseling or incorporating it into existing courses. In the upcoming sections, we explore the relevance of wellness and wellness counseling for all counselors. We then outline the contents and structure of this book. Along the way, we encourage you to reflect on what led you to read these pages at this time as well as your own perceived and lived benefits of wellness and wellness counseling.

The Value of Wellness

Wellness Is Who We Are

What does wellness mean to you? How do you define wellness? What are the key pieces that motivate you to work toward being well or your best self? These are a few of the essential questions that wellness counselors ask our clients. It is equally valuable for counselors to be

able to define wellness and wellness counseling. First, any counselor who adopts wellness counseling as one of their counseling approaches needs to describe what it is during the informed consent process, meriting some definition of terms. Second, counselors may need to justify use of this approach to insurance providers. Additionally, clients may desire a starting point for operationalizing wellness to empower them to discover how they would define it. Myers, Sweeney, and Witmer's (2000) definition of wellness is a helpful point of departure in understanding this concept: "a way of life oriented toward optimal health and well-being, in which body, mind, and spirit are integrated by the individual to live life more fully within the human and natural community" (p. 252). We explore different definitions and offer our own definition of wellness as you proceed through the book. Moreover, we hope that you begin to formulate your own definition along the way.

As health care trends continue to move toward holistic and integrated care models, it is important for counselors to communicate their counseling philosophy and approaches to other professional helpers involved in their clients' care. The term "wellness" is in the definition of counseling: "Counseling is a professional relationship that empowers diverse individuals, families, and groups to accomplish mental health, wellness, education, and career goals" (Kaplan, Tarvydas, & Gladding, 2014, p. 368). It is an inextricable part of our professional identity. Hence, all counselors should be able to articulate what wellness is to consumers, government officials, and other helping professionals (Myers, 1992). Maintaining wellness at the forefront of counseling may aid in reducing the stigma of receiving counseling, potentially resulting in more people seeking and receiving services.

The World Needs Wellness Counselors

The world needs counselors skilled in wellness approaches now more than ever. According to an American Psychological Association (APA) survey, nearly one in four people rated their stress as an "8" or higher on a 1–10 scale in 2015 (APA, 2016). The high stress appears to be having a trickle-down effect, manifesting in symptoms including anxiety and melancholy (APA, 2016). Youths are unfortunately not free from the effects of stress, as evidenced by 31% of caregivers of K–12 students reporting high stress associated with school in their child or adolescent (National Public Radio, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, & Harvard School of Public Health, 2013). Older students were placed in the high-stress category by their caregivers

with more frequency than younger students. These findings were corroborated in a study of 11th graders (n = 128), 49% of whom endorsed feeling "a great deal of stress" every day—26% with depressive symptomology (Leonard et al., 2015). Further, more than one third of the sample had been intoxicated on alcohol or drugs in the previous month.

In 2015, the National Survey on Drug Use and Health produced findings that 43.4 million American adults have a mental disorder (Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, 2016). Several studies have demonstrated that there is a strong relationship between mental and physical health (Baughman et al., 2016; Razzano et al., 2015; Scott et al., 2016). For instance, in a sample of 457 people with mental disorders, 44% had hypertension (Razzano et al., 2015). In another study, almost two thirds of individuals with mental illness noted having chronic pain (Baughman et al., 2016). Participants also reported "not feeling very healthy" for an average of 15.7 days in the previous month (Baughman et al., 2016, p. 428).

There are several encouraging factors that accompany this concern; the primary one is that wellness issues are drawing the public's attention. According to Mattke et al. (2013), more than half of all employers with 50 or more employees offer a wellness program. Workplace wellness programs often include an initial wellness evaluation, dissemination of health information, and individual or group sessions led by a helping professional (Baicker, Cutler, & Song, 2010). Although most wellness programs center on physical health (Baicker et al., 2010), 41% of employment places have an Employee Assistance Program, enabling counselors to address mental health and other aspects of well-being (Mattke et al., 2013).

The well-being of young people is being addressed on several levels. Given Lai, Guo, Ijadi-Maghsoodi, Puffer, and Kataoka's (2016) statement that "schools are the most common entry point into mental health services in the United States" (p. 1328), efforts to enhance child and adolescent wellness are occurring through school-based mental health programs as well as through the infusion of mindfulness (Semple, Droutman, & Reed, 2017) and spirituality (Gibson, Dixon, & Myers, 2012) into the classroom. Many universities provide wellness programs for their students. Program staff can support the well-being of college students in several ways, such as distributing information as well as hosting campus events and screenings.

Medical and mental health professionals are working together in providing client services. These integrated care approaches include counselors as part of a team that conceptualizes and treats clients

holistically, thereby improving care results in individuals with both mental and physical health concerns (Gerrity, 2016). Counselors are supporting clients in transcending illness and moving toward wellness. For instance, several years ago, I (Phil) was on a research team that examined the outcomes of Finding Your New Normal, a wellness-based support group for female breast cancer survivors (Shannonhouse et al., 2014). The qualitative findings revealed that for some group members, Finding Your New Normal helped "reintegrate [their] sense of self after a cancer experience" (Shannonhouse et al., 2014, p. 19). Research and life experience tell us that the stresses and struggles of life are not going away any time soon. Additionally, the advent of new technologies presents challenges and opportunities for the well-being of the public. However, there is a wave of recognition that the world needs wellness, as indicated by the use of integrated care in medical, mental health, and school settings. Wellness programs in the workplace and on college campuses also support this trend. Counselors must be informed on wellness approaches to best serve their clients, propel the identity and value of the counseling profession forward, and be active participants in the wellness wave that continues to rise.

The Wellness Platform

I (Phil) was co-lecturing in an advanced skills/crisis counseling class of 16 second-year master's students. The lecture topic was on the early stages of the goal-setting process with clients. These students had completed a practicum in which they had worked with their first clients and were now embarking on their internship in which they were seeing clients on a weekly basis. One of the students raised her hand asking, "How do we begin to set and discuss goals with clients when they don't have any goals, don't know their goals, or have vague goals?" I paused for a moment, nodding my head in agreement when the light bulb went off for me. Although the topic of my lecture was not on wellness counseling, I responded that it is one of the best solutions to this conundrum.

Wellness counseling provides a concrete platform or launching pad for discussing client-presenting concerns and goals. If I am working with a client who is unsure of what they would like to work on in counseling, I often present a paper copy of a wellness model. The client and I can then discuss strengths and stressors across the domains of the client's life (Myers & Sweeney, 2006; Sweeney & Myers, 2005. This exercise regularly results in increased clarity for the client and a focus for counseling. It also facilitates insight

about (a) issues that feed into the presenting problem, (b) how this problem trickles down into other facets of the client's wellness, and (c) strengths that have been maintained in spite of the presenting concern (Clarke, Adams, Wilkerson, & Shaw, 2016; Myers, Clarke, Brown, & Champion, 2012). This incident was one of those rare moments as an educator when, instead of responding with "It depends . . . ," I had a clearer answer.

Counseling With the Whole Person

Human beings are incredibly complex. You are probably saying to yourself that this is one of the most obvious and clichéd statements that one can make. Yet, as helping professionals, we often consciously or unconsciously reduce our conceptualization and approaches with clients to isolated symptoms. We target our treatment plans at one aspect of a client's life, and we neglect to recognize the interplay/interconnectedness of the different components that compose the well-being of our clients.

The wellness counseling approach reminds the counselor to attend to the multiple aspects of each client. Hence, when I am counseling a client and reflect on the wellness model during an intake session or goal setting, I am prompted to ask not only about the presenting concern but also about factors such as the client's religion/spirituality; gender; and physical, emotional, social, and mental well-being. As noted previously, filling in pieces of the painting of the client's life informs both the counselor and client about (a) areas of the client's life affected by the presenting concern, (b) areas of the client's life exacerbating the presenting concern, and (c) areas of strength that can be channeled toward addressing the presenting problem (Clarke et al., 2016; Myers & Sweeney, 2004).

Wellness as a holistic approach positions counselors to be a part of integrated care teams. As part of integrated care models in which multiple helping professionals work in the same setting or collaborate on client care (Hooper, 2014), wellness counselors will be grounded in conceptualizing the importance and processes of these treatment teams. I landed a job launching a co-located mental health clinic in part because my interest and background in wellness counseling merged with the director's vision for his integrated care program.

Strength and Prevention Based

A lot can get lost in the counseling process. One of the first things to be neglected is client strengths. Most of you reading this book can relate to feeling overwhelmed when a client walks in your office for a first

session with many different presenting concerns, and a parallel process occurs in which you feel as lost as your client. Where do we begin, and what do we work toward? It is easy for counselors to experience cognitive constriction, overlooking clients' strengths when they present with extensive stressors. Wellness keeps both client and counselor anchored, grounded in the strengths possessed by the client. Without recognizing and mobilizing these client strengths, the counselor might be lost at sea, and the client might drift away, literally, from returning for further sessions. Attending to strengths can be empowering to clients. It sends a meta-message that things can get better—and hope is a big slice of the counseling pie (Asay & Lambert, 1999).

Client strengths and resources are essential elements in the counseling process. You may already be familiar with the data on common factors that show that 15% of counseling outcomes are related to what the client expects from counseling, 15% to the counselor's techniques, 30% to the helping relationship, and 40% "to factors outside of therapy" (Lambert & Barley, 2001, p. 358). The outside-of-therapy factors can include both client struggles and strengths. As shown later in this book, a significant portion of the wellness approach pertains to a rigorous exploration of the client's strengths as both prevention and response strategies in wellness counseling.

Applicable Across the Life Span

Wellness counseling fits mental health needs across the life span. More than one in five children have experienced two or more adverse childhood experiences, such as being present during an occurrence of domestic violence, having an incarcerated parent, or residing with an individual who abuses substances (Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative, 2013). The ripple effect for some children can spread to different aspects of their well-being. Building wellness into support systems for children, such as the school environment, has shown promise (Villalba & Myers, 2008). For instance, 55 elementary school students attended three classroom guidance sessions filled with wellness activities and information. Increases in well-being resulted across several wellness factors (Villalba & Myers, 2008).

The presenting concerns of the adolescent clients who enter your office may affect them across all aspects of their well-being. Adolescents ($n = 114$) attending outpatient counseling scored lower on wellness than the 1,142 adolescents who formed the norm group for the Five Factor Wellness Inventory—Teenage Version that was used in the study (Watson & Lemon, 2011). Yet again, however, wellness approaches are increasingly being incorporated to address critical problems.

For example, Saul and Rodgers (2016) recommended wellness-based, holistic approaches to weight-loss-focused approaches in addressing childhood obesity. These approaches ranged from family involvement to fostering self-esteem and social skills, to mindful eating.

The well-being of older adults is of paramount importance. The high rates of substance abuse among aging populations is concerning because substance use can exacerbate health issues and be dangerous in combination with medication (Kuerbis, Sacco, Blazer, & Moore, 2014; Mattson, Lipari, Hays, & Van Horn, 2017). However, researchers have found a positive relationship between aging into older adulthood and wellness (e.g., Blanchflower & Oswald, 2008). Furthermore, rates of mental disorder are at their lowest in older adulthood (Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, 2016). Wellness counselors build on the strengths of older adult clients, aid them in pursuit of the full spectrum of goals inherent in a wellness perspective, and prevent the magnified effect of any mental health problems (Fiske, Wetherell, & Gatz, 2009).

Applicable Across Presenting Concerns

Wellness counseling is a versatile approach for working with clients. Wellness is frequently assumed to be appropriate for prevention or clients with subclinical or lower severity mental health concerns. However, we argue and demonstrate that wellness counseling can be effective as prevention or intervention. As a form of prevention, wellness counseling allows clients to examine components of wellness that they would like to improve; it also highlights and strengthens areas where clients already have success to aid in future times of stress and coping. However, wellness counseling can also be helpful to clients affected by trauma, addiction, depression, anxiety, and a range of issues. The reason is because wellness counseling presents a framework for client and counselor to understand the precipitating factors underlying symptomology and to devise holistic treatment plans and interventions. The relationship between environmental context—such as experiencing a lifetime of systematic racism, early childhood experiences, family dynamics, genetic predispositions, and individual brain chemistry—and the unique way we each process our lived experiences has a profound effect on the health of mind, body, spirit, emotion, and connection with others. In sum, the world needs wellness!

Wellness Is Transtheoretical and Honors the Change Process

Wellness is also versatile because it is transtheoretical. In other words, it can serve as a framework within which other theories or interven-

tions can be used. For instance, wellness counseling can include using a model as a framework for treatment planning (e.g., Clarke et al., 2016), but the intervention selected to achieve the wellness goals can be anything from cognitive behavior therapy to acceptance and commitment therapy.

Unlike many other interventions, wellness counseling honors the stages of change (Myers & Sweeney, 2005a, 2005b). Wellness counseling recognizes that each client comes to counseling with a different level of importance, confidence, and readiness for change (Miller & Rollnick, 2012). If a counselor pursues setting a change plan with the client too quickly, the outcome is less likely to be positive. Given this reality, the wellness counselor thus focuses the intervention on what is most important to the client. The wellness model offers a framework for identifying areas of clinical relevance to the client (Myers et al., 2012), which also prevents a resistance dynamic from emerging between client and counselor (Miller & Rollnick, 2012).

It is apparent that at a crowded table of different approaches that counselors can select from, wellness counseling should hold a prominent seat. The benefits of wellness counseling described here are but the tip of the iceberg regarding the utility of this approach. There are probably several advantages to wellness counseling that you would add to this list, and we encourage you to reflect on those.

Wellness Is for Counselors Too!

Learning wellness counseling can be doubly helpful for counselors. It provides a self-care approach for the counselor that can be applied throughout one's career, and the experience of incorporating wellness into one's own life can facilitate continual improvement as a wellness counselor. Compassion fatigue and burnout have been identified as two possible enemies of counselor wellness (Lawson, 2007; Thompson, Amatea, & Thompson, 2014). The question is then, how can counselors stave off these threats? Wellness offers some answers. For example, counselors who hold favorable views of their place of employment and who are high in mindfulness and constructive coping skills report less compassion fatigue and burnout (Thompson et al., 2014). If you are in a position of leadership for a mental health site, these research findings underscore the relevance of organizational wellness. For counselors, mental wellness and holistic coping skills appear to be beneficial. These topics are covered throughout this book. Hence, as you progress through the chapters, consider how you might integrate the wellness principles and practices from this book in your own life. You may find that this expedites your learn-

ing process while enhancing your wellness as a counselor. In Chapter 15, "Wellness Counseling for Counselors," the literature on this topic is reviewed, and specific recommendations for counselor self-care are presented. To conclude this chapter, we provide a road map of this book, highlighting what you can expect from each chapter.

Conclusion

It is our intention that this book serve multiple purposes: provide meaningful information to both novice and experienced counselors, offer resources that can used with clients, and include learning materials that counselor educators can incorporate in most classes and supervision. This book is interactive; hence, there are learning activities and reflection prompts throughout. Counselors and counselor educators may find these activities and the discussion prompts useful in gaining depth of understanding and applying concepts. Beginning in Part II, wellness boosters are presented. Wellness boosters are activities that clients can do that result in increased short-term wellness in one or more domains. They represent the distillation of tenets of well-being in a given area into simple and typically brief self-help interventions that can have a high-level positive effect in a short period of time. Counselors can also engage in the boosters to enhance their own wellness. The case examples infused throughout illustrate clinical application of wellness counseling principles and practices. Resources are paired with most chapters and may be integrated into the counseling process with clients.

You may have chosen to read this book for many reasons. Perhaps your path to wellness counseling was similar to mine. You may be a counseling student in a wellness class preparing to dive into the deep waters of this philosophy and approach. You may be an experienced counselor looking to add a holistic perspective to your tool belt of interventions. You may have realized that wellness is one of the missing links in your counseling approach. Some of you have been using wellness-related approaches with your clients and want to enhance your knowledge and skill set. Regardless of your reason for picking up this book, we look forward to journeying with you toward identifying helpful ways to support our clients' well-being.

Reflection Prompts

1. Why is (or why will) wellness counseling (be) important for you in your work with clients?
2. What are the benefits of using wellness counseling? What are the challenges?

3. In what ways are you already incorporating wellness counseling into your work with clients?
4. Why do you believe that wellness is relevant to the identity of counselors?
5. How would you describe wellness counseling to a client?
6. What information about wellness counseling are you hoping to learn through this book?
7. What value-added is provided by counselors using wellness approaches to the mental health landscape?
8. What counseling theories do you use most often and interest you the most? How might these theories integrate with wellness counseling?

Learning Activities

Interview

Interview a peer or colleague. Ask him or her about:

- Ways they incorporate wellness into their work with clients
- Challenges they have faced
- The benefits of wellness counseling
- How wellness counseling fits with their identity as a counselor

Organizational Assessment

Conduct an assessment of your agency, school, or private practice regarding application of wellness in your site's policies, procedures, philosophy, and work with clients. Identify areas of strength and areas for growth.

Resources

American Counseling Association's Task Force on Counselor Wellness and Impairment

http://www.creating-joy.com/taskforce/index.htm

This website operationalizes impairment and provides links to literature, assessments, and skills for enhancing wellness to prevent impairment.

American Psychological Association, Stress in America

http://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/stress/index.aspx

A presentation of data collected by the American Psychological Association since 2007 on stress levels, underlying reasons for stress, and ways of dealing with stress.

Healthy People 2020

https://www.healthypeople.gov/

This website contains data on a variety of variables related to wellness and national goals for improving health.

National Survey on Drug Use and Health

https://nsduhweb.rti.org/respweb/homepage.cfm

A comprehensive and frequently cited data set on mental health and substance use outcomes across the life span.

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