

**Austin Peay State University**  
**M.S. in Counseling Program Training Values Statement Addressing Diversity<sup>1</sup>**

Respect for diversity and for values different from one's own is a central value of the M.S. in Counseling program at Austin Peay State University. The valuing of diversity is also consistent with the counseling profession as mandated by the American Counselor Association's Code of Ethics (2014) and as discussed in the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) Standards (2016). Professional counselors and counselor educators actively work and advocate for social justice and the prevention of further oppression in society. They provide services, teach, and/or engage in research with, or pertaining to, members of social groups that have often been devalued, viewed as deficient, or otherwise marginalized in the larger society.

Counselor education programs and internships that supervise/employ professional counselors and espouse counseling values (herein "training programs") exist within multicultural communities that contain people of diverse racial, ethnic, and class backgrounds; national origins; religious, spiritual and political beliefs; physical abilities; ages; genders; gender identities, sexual orientations, and physical appearance. Counseling professionals believe that training communities are enriched by members' openness to learning about others who are different than them as well as acceptance of others. Professors, internship/practicum supervisors (herein "trainers") and students/interns (herein "trainees") agree to work together to create training environments that are characterized by respect, safety, and trust. Further, trainers and trainees are expected to be respectful and supportive of all individuals, including, but not limited to clients, staff, peers, and research participants.

Trainers recognize that no individual is completely free from all forms of bias and prejudice. Furthermore, it is expected that each training community will evidence a range of attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Nonetheless, trainees and trainers in counselor education programs are expected to be committed to the social values of respect for diversity, inclusion, and equity. Further, trainees and trainers are expected to be committed to critical thinking and the process of self-examination so that such prejudices or biases (and the assumptions on which they are based) may be evaluated in the light of available scientific data, standards of the profession, and traditions of cooperation and mutual respect. Thus, trainees and trainers are asked to demonstrate a genuine desire to examine their own attitudes, assumptions, behaviors, and values and to learn to work effectively with diverse populations including those based on culture, ethnicity, age, gender, gender identity, race, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, and socioeconomic status. Both trainers and trainees are expected to demonstrate a willingness to examine their personal values, and to acquire and utilize professionally relevant knowledge and skills regardless of their beliefs, attitudes, and values.

The Trainers at APSU will engage trainees in a manner inclusive and respectful of their multiple cultural identities. Trainers will examine their own biases and prejudices in the course of their interactions with trainees so as to model and facilitate this process for their trainees. Trainers will provide equal access, opportunity, and encouragement for trainees inclusive of their multiple cultural identities. Where appropriate, trainers will also model the processes of personal introspection in which they desire trainees to engage. As such, trainers will engage in and model

appropriate self-disclosure and introspection with their trainees. This can include discussions about personal life experiences, attitudes, beliefs, opinions, feelings, and personal histories. Assuming no one is free from biases and prejudices, trainers will remain open to appropriate challenges from trainees to their held biases and prejudices. Trainers are committed to lifelong learning relative to multicultural competence.

The counselor education program at APSU believes providing experiences that call for trainees to self-disclose and personally introspect about personal life experiences is an essential component of the training program. Specifically, while in the program trainees will be expected to engage in self-reflection and introspection on their attitudes, beliefs, opinions, feelings and personal history. Trainees will be expected to examine and attempt to resolve any of the above to eliminate potential negative impact on their ability to perform the functions of a professional counselor, including but not limited to providing effective services to individuals from cultures and with beliefs different from their own and in accordance with the ACA Code of Ethics (2014) and the Cross-cultural Competencies and Objectives (ACA, nd).

Members of the training community are committed to educating each other on the existence and effects of racism, sexism, ageism, heterosexism, religious intolerance, and other forms of invidious prejudice. Evidence of bias, stereotyped thinking, and prejudicial beliefs and attitudes will not go unchallenged, even when such behavior is rationalized as being a function of ignorance, joking, cultural differences, or substance abuse. When these actions result in physical or psychological abuse, harassment, intimidation, substandard psychological services or research, or violence against persons or property, members of the training community will intervene appropriately.

In summary, all members of the APSU counselor education program are committed to a training process that facilitates the development of professionally relevant knowledge and skills focused on working effectively with all individuals inclusive of demographics, beliefs, attitudes, and values. Members agree to engage in a mutually supportive process that examines the effects of one's beliefs, attitudes, and values on one's work with all clients. Such training processes are consistent with professional counselors' core values, respect for diversity and for values similar and different from one's own.

†This document was adapted from the "Counseling Psychology Model Training Values Statement Addressing Diversity" which was endorsed by the Association of Counseling Center Training Agencies (ACCTA), the Council of Counseling Psychology Training Programs (CCPTP), and the Society for Counseling Psychology (SCP) in August of 2006.