

2016 Research Week Proposal

Proposal Sample

Title – Counselor Leadership Development and Mentoring: A Proposed Training Model with Graduate Counseling Students

Program of Study – M.A. Clinical Mental Health Counseling

Presentation Type PowerPoint

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Category –Experimental (Applied)

Abstract:

This presentation lays out a study being conducted to assess changes in levels of leadership development through the use of individual mentor relationships. Doctoral and graduate students have been recruited from Liberty University's Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies to be trained in core leadership values, leadership identity development and basic mentoring skills. These individuals will be assigned a mentee and will meet bi-monthly to review and discuss leadership core values and leadership identity development as defined by the Social Change Model and the Leadership Identity Development Model. All participants will receive baseline and post-testing using The Socially Responsible Leadership Scale (SRLS-R2) to determine whether leadership values increase or change. This presentation seeks to explain the nature of this study, as well as its practical and biblical rationale, and how it could impact the Department of Counselor Education and Supervision as well as other programs in the future.

There is a need for mixed-methods data to assess the impact of mentoring relationships on leadership development of both the mentor and mentee within counselor education programs. Previous studies on mentor programs have been qualitative, reflecting a need for more structured exploration that involves utilizing specific leadership development models to train, test, and observe student mentor relationships to lay a foundation for further research that may enhance the development of those entering the counseling/counselor education fields. This presentation will review themes and gaps in the literature related to leadership development and mentorship.

The short-term goal of the project is to increase individual leadership identity development in order to reach the long-term goal of the integration of leadership characteristics, self-awareness and professional identity within professional clinical practice within the general community. The aim is to begin establishing a leadership focus in both the graduate and doctoral programs that adheres to CACREP standards, starting with the creation of a mentorship program. Mentors will

be trained to relate to their mentees in such a way that both individuals experience the strengthening of values linked to social change and leadership. Growth will be fostered through discussions structured to increase self-awareness for the mentor and mentee as they meet throughout the semester. The goal of this presentation is to introduce the study, with hopes that results could be published and presented.

Christian worldview integration:

Mentorship was identified as an area for growth with significant academic and spiritual implications. While mentors will fill a gap in services as front-line academic support for first-year graduate level counseling students, the program is designed to address a deeper need for authentic community and support within the academic setting. The meta-narrative of Scripture reveals the deep importance of relationship and community to the Christian worldview. Genesis teaches that a relational God created men and women in His image to exist in relationship with Him and one another. The fall introduced sin that separated us from relationship with God, but the ultimate redemption found in Jesus' sacrificial death draws us back into relationship with our Creator. Jesus entered into the brokenness of His people's lives to be with them and to offer healing and hope. Throughout the Bible, God chose to use human agents to carry out his redemptive work of healing in the broken lives of His people. Themselves recipients of Jesus' sacrifice and God's ongoing redemption, Christians are motivated to live out redemption, meeting others in their brokenness with grace and love. In the context of Christian higher education, the mentor-mentee relationship can become a redemptive relationship that facilitates spiritual, personal, and academic growth through Christian community.

An effective mentor-training program has the potential to guide leaders in a process of developing authentic community and training new leaders that bears similarities to the process of discipleship. It is hypothesized that, as mentors develop stronger identities as Christian leaders, they will become more effective in modeling, reflecting, and practicing effective community within the mentor-mentee relationship. Such an effective community reflects major tenets of spiritual formation and Christian community including confession (recognizing need for help), empathy (humble identification with others), support (spiritually, personally, and academically), and redemption (demonstration of grace and kindness motivated by God's love). If the training program is found to be effective, the research study may hold significant implications for the broader culture by providing empirical support for a transformative mentor-mentee relationship model, grounded in and reflective of biblical principles related to the concept of community.