

Antioch University

## AURA - Antioch University Repository and Archive

---

Dissertations & Theses

Student & Alumni Scholarship, including  
Dissertations & Theses

---

2019

### The Role of Emotional Overcontrol in the Acceptance of Counselor Training Feedback

R. Erin W. Berzins  
*Antioch University Seattle*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://aura.antioch.edu/etds>



Part of the [Adult and Continuing Education Commons](#), [Counselor Education Commons](#), and the [Psychology Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

Berzins, R. Erin W., "The Role of Emotional Overcontrol in the Acceptance of Counselor Training Feedback" (2019). *Dissertations & Theses*. 528.  
<https://aura.antioch.edu/etds/528>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Student & Alumni Scholarship, including Dissertations & Theses at AURA - Antioch University Repository and Archive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations & Theses by an authorized administrator of AURA - Antioch University Repository and Archive. For more information, please contact [hhale@antioch.edu](mailto:hhale@antioch.edu), [wmcgrath@antioch.edu](mailto:wmcgrath@antioch.edu).

THE ROLE OF EMOTIONAL OVERCONTROL IN THE ACCEPTANCE OF COUNSELOR  
TRAINING FEEDBACK

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of  
Antioch University Seattle

In partial fulfillment for the degree of  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

by

R. ERIN WENZEL BERZINS

ORCID Scholar No. 0000-0002-5058-3051

September 2019

THE ROLE OF EMOTIONAL OVERCONTROL IN THE ACCEPTANCE OF COUNSELOR  
TRAINING FEEDBACK

This dissertation, by R. Erin Wenzel Berzins, has  
been approved by the committee members signed below  
who recommend that it be accepted by the faculty of  
Antioch University Seattle in Seattle, WA in partial fulfillment of  
requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Dissertation Committee:

---

Ned Farley, PhD, Chair

---

Colin Ward, PhD

---

Andrew Wood, PhD

© Copyright by R. Erin Wenzel Berzins,

2019 All Rights Reserved

## **ABSTRACT**

### **THE ROLE OF EMOTIONAL OVERCONTROL IN THE ACCEPTANCE OF COUNSELOR TRAINING FEEDBACK**

R. Erin Wenzel Berzins

Antioch University Seattle

Seattle, WA

Feedback is an essential component of counselor training, making it crucial that students receive and utilize this information effectively. This research was conducted to address the problem of counseling students experiencing difficulty with accepting feedback during the training process. Radically Open Dialectical Behavior Therapy and the concept of emotional overcontrol were used as a lens for exploring the possible correlation between measures of overcontrol and difficulty with accepting feedback within counselor training programs. This research contributed to the literature—much of which has focused on the behaviors of instructors and supervisors in the feedback process—by providing support for the perspective that student traits affect the efficacy of feedback interactions. The research questions were 1) What is the relationship between counseling student emotional control and accepting feedback within the classroom setting? and 2) What is the relationship between counseling student emotional control and accepting feedback within the supervisory relationship? A quantitative design was used, consisting of a survey tool administered to master's level counseling students. Analysis consisted of correlation and regression analyses, with additional qualitative coding used for three open-ended prompts. Results indicated that measures of overcontrol correlated significantly with features associated with feedback receptivity within the classroom setting. Results indicated that

individuals who scored higher on measures of overcontrol were more likely to experience feedback as threatening, more likely to desire privacy in the feedback process, may retain feedback less effectively, and in some cases, may believe feedback is less useful than their non-overcontrolled peers. No significant correlations were found between measures of overcontrol and feedback in the supervisory setting. In the regression analysis, approximately 34% of the variance in sensitivity to feedback within the classroom setting was explained by measures of overcontrol, indicating that this individual student trait is relevant to the efficacy of feedback interactions. Qualitative data suggested that the element of personal relationship was also a relevant variable for determining the degree to which students accepted feedback from instructors and supervisors. Implications for counselor training programs are discussed, including the recommendation that emotional overcontrol be considered when working with students who struggle with training feedback.

This dissertation is available in open access at AURA, <http://aura.antioch.edu/> and Ohio Link ETD Center, <https://etd.ohiolink.edu/etd>.

*Keywords:* overcontrol, emotional overcontrol, feedback, feedback receptivity, Radically Open Dialectical Behavior Therapy, RO DBT, counselor training, counselor education

## Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge, with great appreciation, the many people who made this project possible:

Dr. Nicole Little, Dr. Roelie Hempel, and the RO DBT tribe, for providing expertise and for the use of the OC-TRS;

Dr. Paul King, Dr. Frank Bond, Dr. Debbie Waterman, and Dr. Megan Thompson, for allowing me to utilize their instruments to complete this project;

My committee, Dr. Ned Farley, Dr. Colin Ward, and Dr. Andrew Wood, as well as all of the faculty who have supported me throughout my education, and who have provided immeasurable encouragement, wisdom, and humor to inspire my progress;

My doctoral cohort whose kindness, understanding, empathy, and encouragement have meant so much throughout this process;

My friends and family, and especially my parents, who have always provided encouragement, reassurance, and a place of belonging;

And to my husband, Dean, who kept me going, believed in me, and endured some mighty pushback responses to feedback—but loved me enough to keep giving me feedback anyway.

Thank you.

## Table of Contents

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	3
Purpose of the Study .....	6
Theoretical/Conceptual Framework.....	6
Nature of the Study .....	10
Significance of the Study .....	12
Summary .....	13
CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW .....	14
Method .....	14
Implications.....	48
Summary .....	51
CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHOD .....	53
Operational Definitions of Variables .....	69
Assumptions.....	78
Study Limitations.....	79
Study Delimitations .....	80
Summary .....	81
CHAPTER IV: RESULTS.....	83
Summary .....	126
CHAPTER V: SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND OUTCOMES.....	128
Implications.....	129
Recommendations for Future Research .....	145



Conclusions.....	147
References.....	151
APPENDIX A.....	169
APPENDIX B.....	179
APPENDIX C.....	184

## List of Tables

Table 1. Rotated Component Matrix of the OC-TRS .....	61
Table 2. Rotated Component Matrix of the Problematic OC Behavior Questions .....	65
Table 3. Scores on Measures of Overcontrol.....	84
Table 4. Pearson Correlational Analysis of Measures of Overcontrol .....	85
Table 5. Pearson Correlational Analysis of OC Variables and Instructor Feedback Variables ..	87
Table 6. Coefficients Table: Measures of OC and Instructor Feedback Variables .....	88
Table 7. Model Table: Measures of OC and Instructor Feedback Variables.....	88
Table 8. Stepwise Regression Model for Control Variables.....	90
Table 9. Frequencies of Themes .....	119

List of Figures

Figure 1. OC-TRS Scree Plot ..... 60

Figure 2. Problematic OC Behavior Scree Plot ..... 64

## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The American Counseling Association code of ethics mandates that counselor supervisors provide supervisees with ongoing feedback and formal evaluation. Counselor educators are also required to provide ongoing feedback to students and evaluate both didactic and clinical competencies (American Counseling Association, 2014). To perform these functions effectively, teachers and supervisors need training and technical skills relevant to instruction, evaluation, and engaging effectively with adult learners. Many writers have attempted to assist teachers and supervisors to develop these skills, and a body of literature is now available which is specific to the field of counselor training (e.g. Bean, Davis, & Davey, 2014; Corey, Haynes, Moulton, & Muratori, 2010; Honda, 2017; McAuliffe & Eriksen, 2011; West, Bubenzer, Cox, & McGlothlin, 2013). Recommendations for giving feedback include strategies such as affirming, validating, questioning (McAullife, 2011a), balancing positive and corrective feedback (Swank & McCarthy, 2015), modeling (Trepal, Bailie, Leeth, 2010), and individualizing feedback to the personality style and learning needs of the recipient (Borders, Welfare, Sackett, & Cashwell, 2017).

A theme throughout much of the counselor supervision literature is a focus upon the methods with which supervisors communicate feedback (e.g. Borders et al., 2017; Nelson, Barnes, Evans, & Triggiano, 2008) and the degree to which the supervisees liked or accepted the way in which the feedback was transmitted (e.g. Coleman, Jussim, & Abraham, 1987; Duffey, Haberstroh, Ciepielinski, & Gonzalez, 2016; Trepal et al., 2010). This literature emphasizes the importance of delivering feedback in a satisfactory way. Certainly, teachers and supervisors have an ethical and professional obligation to acquire appropriate training in the effective delivery of feedback and to competently perform the functions of evaluation and instruction.

Any research-based practices or beneficial knowledge from the field about effective feedback should be utilized by counselor trainers as part of career-long professional growth and development. However, it must be recognized that feedback is a dyadic process, in which both the sender and the receiver play active roles (Linderbaum & Levy, 2010). An over-emphasis upon *delivering* effective feedback suggests that the *receiving* of the feedback is the responsibility of the speaker. In other words, if the receiver does not accept the feedback, the implication is that the information was not communicated “correctly.”

Student satisfaction has become a focus at many universities as schools compete for students in what has become something of a commodity market (O'Donovan, 2017). Although student satisfaction has a place in curriculum design, there is a danger in over-emphasizing student approval, particularly if students' opinions and emotions come to matter more than facts and educational standards. The mindset that students are consumers, who have the right to shape the “product” being purchased, risks diminishing educational quality and changing the environment in higher education from inquiry and knowledge-seeking to a simple business transaction (Grubb & Lazerson, 2005).

Students have increasingly been asked to evaluate the feedback received from their instructors, despite many challenges with accurately measuring feedback efficacy, not the least of which may be that students are not always aware of the long-term benefits of the feedback they receive (Price, Handley, Millar, O'Donovan, 2010). The expertise of the instructor or supervisor is lost if the student is treated as the authority about what type of feedback they should be receiving.

It is of critical importance that counseling trainees listen to and carefully consider the feedback of their teachers and supervisors; the wellbeing of vulnerable clients is at stake. As

counseling trainees develop, receptivity to feedback and a non-defensive stance toward learning are important variables in effective training and the development of counseling competence (McAuliffe, 2011b; Rønnestad & Skovholt, 2003). In order for students to learn, they must participate in the feedback process by receiving that which is offered.

Researchers have found that the ways in which recipients hear and process feedback has a critical role in the outcome of that feedback, including whether or not the recipient uses the feedback to improve performance (Rasheed, Khan, Rasheed, & Munir, 2015). Feedback which does not align with the recipient's self-perception may be disregarded as unhelpful or inaccurate, even if the feedback is delivered from a developmental perspective (Brett & Atwater, 2001). The listener must choose to receive and consider the feedback in order for it to be effective: a decision over which the other party has little control. Emerging research on the topics of bio-temperament, feedback orientation, and coping strategies offers a new perspective on the dyadic process of feedback. An inhibited temperament, characterized by rigidity and resistance to new information, may be a feature in feedback receptivity (Lynch, 2018a).

The present study emerged as a topic because the current research suggests that the field of counselor training could be doing more to enhance the trainee-instructor relationship and to improve the feedback process. The existing literature suggests that there is more work to be done to prepare counseling trainees for the vital and complex responsibility of processing feedback. This study could improve counselor training, and therefore improve counseling services for clients.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The problem this research will address is counseling students experiencing difficulty with accepting feedback during training. This problem has been identified as a leading cause of

student remediation in counseling programs (Henderson & Dufrene, 2013). Many student traits and competencies have been identified as important for the process of learning and participating in graduate-level training. Some of these qualifications, identified as critical for counseling trainees, are variables which may be difficult for students who struggle with emotional overcontrol, which this research will address. Emotional overcontrol, characterized by an inhibited temperament, will be discussed at length in Chapter 2. Features of this temperament might be presenting barriers in the counselor training environment. For example, within the field of counselor training, openness to new information and feedback (Cadieux & Wehrly, 1986; Glenn, Leppma, & Thorne, 2015) flexibility (Glenn et al., 2015), tolerance for ambiguity (Fulton, 2016; Levitt, & Jacques, 2005), and the ability to express emotions (Ridgway, & Sharpley, 1990) have all been identified as important student characteristics. Those with inhibited temperaments may be struggling with these competencies and missing important information and development during training (Lynch, 2018a).

In order for students to develop, they must be open to new learning. The capacity and willingness to reflect upon personal experiences, and particularly challenges and struggles, is imperative for trainee counselors if they are to obtain the necessary competencies for their future work (Rønnestad & Skovholt, 2003). Students with inhibited temperaments might be experiencing more obstacles to successful training than their non-inhibited counterparts. Habitual coping strategies of shutting down, avoidance, and dismissing disconfirming feedback (Lynch, 2018a) could be negatively affecting student development, use of supervision feedback, and overall student performance.

Crucially, it must be noted that existing practices common in the field of counselor supervision might not be appropriate for addressing the inhibited temperament and style of

avoiding feedback. If this temperament is indeed contributing to difficulty with accepting feedback, supervisor strategies such as validating, normalizing, reassuring, or praising supervisees could be potentially destructive to the supervisor/supervisee relationship and reinforce the supervisee's view of the feedback as invalid. Research on this temperament type suggests that inhibited people are likely to harbor secret or unexpressed beliefs about themselves as incompetent, bad, or unlike other human beings. As such, these individuals are likely to dismiss incongruent feedback and feel distrustful toward the person offering positive comments, especially early in the relationship (T. Lynch, personal communication, September 28, 2018). Individuals high in this trait may also have had many experiences with feeling pressure to be perfect and precise, creating a strong association between high achievement and a feeling of safety. Reminders to be self-compassionate or tolerant of imperfection might even activate the supervisee's threat response (Lynch, 2018a).

An inhibited student or supervisee might respond to the warm and supportive supervision communications above by dismissing the supervisor as naïve or unhelpful at best, and at worst, perhaps believe that the supervisor is intentionally mocking them. In order to effectively build rapport with an inhibited individual, and avoid reinforcing maladaptive behaviors (to be discussed further in a later section), supervisors and teachers would benefit from knowing that this particular temperament is a dynamic within the relationship and being trained on the best methods for responding. The modality of Radically Open Dialectical Behavior Therapy has been developed to assist with problems caused by this temperament, and offers skills relevant to feedback acceptance which could be taught to teachers, supervisors, and students.

In summary, students struggling to accept feedback and engage appropriately in supervision is a common problem in counselor training programs. An inhibited temperament



could be a contributing factor to this problem for a subgroup of students, but the degree to which this might be occurring is unknown.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this research project is to explore the possible correlation between measures of inhibited temperament and overcontrolled coping (termed *overcontrol* [OC] in the RO DBT literature) and difficulty with accepting feedback within counselor training programs. The emerging research on RO DBT offers promising evidence that the problematic behaviors and coping mechanisms of OC individuals can be changed. If OC is in fact contributing to difficulties for students in counselor training programs, RO DBT could provide tools and strategies for overcoming maladaptive OC behavior. RO DBT practitioners have developed training classes for OC clients which teach principles of radical openness, the process of self-enquiry, and strategies for remaining cognitively flexible during the experience of receiving disconfirming feedback (Lynch, 2018b). By exploring the possible connection between OC in counseling students and their experiences of feedback within classrooms and clinical supervision, important new learning could be acquired about the needs of counseling students. If a connection is shown, the existing tools of RO DBT could be used to address problematic student behaviors and therefore increase the success of counselor training programs.

### **Theoretical/Conceptual Framework**

Radically Open Dialectical Behavior Therapy is a counseling modality which combines elements of traditional behavior therapy, the concept of dialectical thinking, and the theory that connection with other people is essential for mental health. The concept of radical openness is rooted in Malâmati Sufism, and specifically the practice of engaging in healthy self-doubt. In the Malâmati tradition, it is believed that a person cannot reach full wellness in isolation, and that

meaningful connection with others is necessary for uncovering one's blind spots, and therefore enacting pro-social change. RO DBT emphasizes the importance of living in community, and utilizes tools such as self-enquiry and social signaling training to bring individuals into healthy relationships with others (Lynch, 2018a). The full scope of the theory and its application is beyond the needs of the present inquiry, but several important theoretical components will be discussed in detail in chapter two.

Most importantly for the present inquiry, RO DBT posits a theory of personality based on a biopsychosocial understanding of human development. Biological predisposition is believed to interact with social learning to produce behaviors and beliefs which form a personality type. Specifically, this theory focuses on a particular bio-temperament characterized by emotional overcontrol (OC). The OC temperament is expressed to varying degrees by behaviors such as restricted affect, rigidity, and over-compliance. OC at lower levels of intensity is associated with pro-social behaviors; at a higher degree, it can become maladaptive overcontrol. Maladaptive OC is associated with resistance to receiving feedback. When threatened with uncomfortable information or disconfirming feedback, the coping strategy of OC individuals is frequently to block out the unwanted stimuli, typically without indicating outwardly that the feedback is being rejected (Lynch, 2018a). OC counseling trainees might, as suggested by the research (Brett & Atwater, 2001) dismiss feedback of which they disapprove, though the supervisor might never know that this occurred. If the OC trait is a variable in feedback receptivity within counselor training programs, this would further support the premise that supervisors and teachers cannot be solely responsible for the feedback process; the giver of feedback cannot select the "correct" method for delivering feedback if the receiver conceals his or her true response.

RO DBT is of particular relevance to counselor education and supervision because in addition to offering a possible explanation of the problem of feedback resistance, RO DBT includes strategies for addressing resistance to feedback. In this model, practitioners teach OC clients to be more open and receptive to new information. This work invites the recipient of feedback to take responsibility for their part in the feedback process (Lynch, 2018b).

### **Definition of Key Terms**

- **Critical feedback:** Feedback which addresses problematic behaviors or inaccurate understandings, for the purposes of changing thinking or behavior (Wahesh, Kemer, Willis, & Schmidt, 2017).
- **Disconfirming feedback:** Unexpected or unwanted feedback (verbal, written, or environmental), which challenges the individual's preferred perspective. Disconfirming feedback may result in feelings of tension or resistance and may inspire desires to fight back, get away, or take control of the situation (Lynch, 2018a). Disconfirming feedback is likely, but not necessarily, critical.
- **Don't-hurt-me responses:** Operant behaviors which function to block, or defend against, unwanted feedback. "Don't hurt me" responses are typically nonverbal behaviors (concealing one's face, looking down, slouching, etc.) which are intended to communicate that the provider of feedback is causing pain or behaving inappropriately by giving the feedback and should stop (Lynch, 2018a).
- **Fatalistic mind:** A state of mind characterized by giving up, appeasing, or shutting down. Fatalistic mind is likely to occur when attempts to block or defend against unwanted feedback are not effective; the individual may experience the feedback as overwhelming and respond with this numbing, immobilizing stance instead. The underlying response to

feedback when in fatalistic mind is “change is unnecessary, because there is no answer” (Lynch, 2018b, p. 239).

- **Feedback orientation:** “An individual's overall receptivity to feedback, including comfort with feedback, tendency to seek feedback and process it mindfully, and the likelihood of acting on the feedback to guide behavior change and performance improvement” (London & Smither, 2002, p. 81).
- **Fixed mind:** A state of mind characterized by rigidity, insistence upon adhering to rules or past experiences, and defensiveness. An individual in fixed mind may react aggressively to feedback or may try to explain, defend, or justify behavior without considering the other perspective. The underlying response to feedback when in fixed mind is “change is unnecessary, because I already know the answer” (Lynch, 2018b).
- **Overcontrol:** A temperamental predisposition, enforced by social learning, and characterized by the ability to inhibit urges and impulses, regulate behavior and emotions, and delay gratification in pursuit of goals. At its extremes, overcontrol can become maladaptive, and is expressed as low receptivity and openness to novelty or feedback, low tolerance for ambiguity and a high need for structure, pervasive inhibition of emotional expression, and low social connectedness (Lynch, 2018a).
- **Positive feedback:** Feedback which validates the recipient, reflects strengths, or praises the recipient, for the purposes of reinforcing behavior (Wahesh et al., 2017).
- **Pushback responses:** Verbal statements or nonverbal behaviors which are intended to block, or defend against, unwanted feedback. Pushback responses can consist of demands or subtle threats, which are often concealed with statements or gestures that allow for plausible deniability (e.g. “I’m not arguing, but...”). Nonverbal pushback responses may appear as

glares, flat expressions, callous smiles, or disdainful laughter. The goal of a pushback response is to condition the other person to stop their behavior and not repeat it (Lynch, 2018a).

- **Radical openness:** The combination of three core capacities, believed to be essential to be emotional wellbeing. These three capacities are 1) receptivity to new experiences and feedback, for the purposes of learning, 2) flexible self-control in order to adapt to a changing environment and circumstances, and 3) intimacy and connection with at least one person (Lynch, 2018a). For the purposes of this research, the areas of most importance are receptivity to feedback and flexible self-control.
- **Self-enquiry:** A process of engaging with aversive stimuli for the purposes of learning. The process consists of a) noticing the presence of disconfirming feedback, b) pausing to examine the feedback and one's reactions, and c) engaging in nonjudgmental self-questioning in order to learn from the feedback (Lynch, 2018a).

### **Nature of the Study**

This research project was conducted using quantitative methods. Data was collected via an online survey tool, distributed to master's level counseling students. Participants were recruited by way of the CESNET listserv, the COUNSGRADS listserv, and individual e-mails to program department chairs which requested that the survey be passed to appropriate groups of students. This inquiry addressed two research questions, discussed below, pertaining to overcontrol and feedback. Participants completed five measurement instruments (three pertaining to overcontrol, one to the supervisory relationship, and one to feedback within the classroom setting), eight other quantitative questions, three open-ended questions, and demographic data. Data was analyzed using the Pearson product-moment correlation and

regression, for the purposes of examining possible relationships between measures of overcontrol and measures of satisfaction with supervisory and teaching feedback.

This design was selected in order to examine the phenomenon of overcontrol and feedback within a broad sample of counseling students. Any given educational or clinical environment might represent a unique feedback “culture,” because each training environment establishes its own norms, relies upon its own policies, and is unique in regards to the personalities of the individuals making up the program. Distributing a survey to numerous schools was intended to reduce the effects of environmental bias. Pearson product-moment correlation was chosen as an analytic tool because it is a widely used test for the purposes of measuring linear associations between two continuous variables (Puth, Neuhäuser, & Ruxton, 2015).

### **Research Questions**

- RQ1: What is the relationship between counseling student emotional control and accepting feedback within the classroom setting?
- RQ2: What is the relationship between counseling student emotional control and accepting feedback within the supervisory relationship?

### **Hypotheses.**

- H<sub>0</sub>1: There is no relationship between the degree of emotional control present for the student and the student’s openness or receptivity to feedback in the classroom.
- H<sub>1</sub>: Students who rate higher on scales of emotional overcontrol will express less interest in teacher feedback and more negativity toward receiving feedback from teachers.
- H<sub>0</sub>2: There is no relationship between the degree of emotional control present for the student and the student’s openness or receptivity to supervisor feedback.

- H2: Students who rate higher on scales of emotional overcontrol will express more negative emotions toward supervisory feedback and less satisfaction with the supervisory relationship.

### **Significance of the Study**

Counseling students receive feedback throughout their training, beginning with their first courses. Much of this initial and ongoing feedback should be contributing directly to skills development, ethical decision-making, and professional growth. Counselor training programs, therefore, have a vested interest in understanding the degree to which students can receive and accept feedback from the start of the schooling process through formal supervision periods such as practicum and internship. This study is intended to provide new data about the degree to which students may be accepting the feedback which is offered by teachers and supervisors, and the degree to which OC might relate to receptivity to feedback.

The information from this research is primarily intended for counselor educators and supervisors, for the purpose of informing training practices. Educators and supervisors can use this data to better identify students who may be struggling to accept training feedback, and to better understand the learning needs of OC students. It is also hoped that this study will help educators and supervisors be better equipped to assist students in improving their receptivity to disconfirming feedback, allowing for more training feedback to be integrated into students' learning.

This research also furthers the literature pertaining to self-report measures of OC, and can be used by other investigators wishing to explore this subject or use these measurement tools. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, this study is the first to utilize the Personal Need for Structure, Acceptance and Action Questionnaire-II, and the OC Trait Rating Scale to measure

the OC trait within the population of counseling students. Future researchers wishing to examine OC and students may be able to use this data to inform their own research designs and potentially improve upon the self-report tools.

### **Summary**

Feedback is an important part of the learning process, and providing feedback is an ethical requirement for counselor educators and supervisors (American Counseling Association, 2014). The research literature to date has focused on delivering feedback in an acceptable manner (Coleman et al., 1987; Duffey et al., 2016; Trepal et al., 2010), with insufficient attention paid to the role of the recipient in hearing and using feedback. Research suggests that temperament, and specifically the inhibited, overcontrolled temperament, might be an important variable in openness to feedback (Lynch, 2018a). This dissertation project utilized quantitative research methods to explore a possible correlation between measures of overcontrol and willingness to accept feedback. Results and implications will be discussed.



## CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will discuss themes which were generated from the research literature, as well as the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study. This chapter contains a review of the literature pertaining to feedback and feedback receptivity, feedback orientation, and the use and meaning of feedback within both the classroom and supervisory settings. The theory of Radically Open Dialectical Behavior Therapy (RO DBT) will be used as a lens for interpreting overcontrol and the use of feedback within counselor training programs, and is expanded upon here. The theoretical conceptualization section will include discussion of emotional control and the correlations with neurobiology and biotemperament. Chapter two concludes with an exploration of the gaps in the research literature and an explanation of the ways in which the present study will contribute to the field of counselor education.

### Method

This literature review was conducted using several databases and a snowball method of article review, consisting of identifying additional sources from the literature as it was read. The databases used were EBSCOhost PsychINFO, EBSCOhost Education Complete, and ProQuest Psychology. Additional articles were retrieved by an interlibrary loan service. Search terms were: counseling (and) supervision (and) feedback, counseling supervision, supervision critical incidents, openness (and) feedback (and) supervision, supervision feedback, emotional overcontrol, inhibitory control, cognitive control (and) feedback, corrective feedback, maladaptive emotional control, emotional regulation (and) feedback, emotional inhibition (and) feedback, receptivity (and) feedback, feedback receptivity, openness (and) feedback, supervisor (and) feedback, classroom (and) feedback, professor (and) feedback, higher education (and) feedback, college (and) feedback, and student remediation (and) counseling. New search terms

were identified as they appeared in articles related to previously used search terms. The term effortful control was also searched but eliminated because this language appears to be used primarily to identify adaptive coping and control, which is not the research focus.

### **Feedback Research**

Feedback is information provided by another person pertaining to aspects of one's performance or understanding of a topic. Feedback can take many forms, including restructuring the recipient's understanding, providing correct information to counter a factual error, directing the recipient toward a course of study or inquiry, or offering alternative data or perspectives (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

Feedback is a construct of interest to many fields, and much of the research is found in the literature of organizational development (e.g. Earley & Stubblebine, 1989; Ilgen & Knowlton, 1980; Zheng, Diaz, Jing, & Chiaburu, 2015), occupational psychology (e.g. Bennett, Harold, & Ashford, 1990), communication (e.g. Geedes & Linnehan, 1996; Trees, Kerssen-Griep, & Hess, 2009), and business and human resources (e.g. Kacmar, Wayne, & Wright, 1996; Larson, Glynn, Fleenor, & Scontrino, 1986). For the purposes of this literature review, sources from the fields of counseling and counselor preparation were used as often as possible, but works from these related fields were included to provide a more comprehensive review of the topic. Like employees in a workplace, counseling students receive feedback related to tasks and job performance from persons in positions of authority.

Feedback is considered *positive* when the information provided supports or validates the thinking, behavior, or task performance of the recipient. *Critical* feedback addresses problematic behaviors or inaccurate understandings, with a goal of changing the recipient's behavior or

knowledge base (Wahesh et al., 2017). Research suggests, however, that positive and critical feedback are not two ends of a continuous spectrum.

Geddes and Linnehan (1996) examined the dimensions of positive and critical feedback by asking business students to categorize feedback messages. The results suggested that critical feedback might be a more complex cognitive experience, perhaps requiring more processing time, attention, and effort. Participants in this study were able to sort positive feedback into two categories, but identified four categories of critical feedback. Ambiguous messaging was associated with critical feedback, suggesting that vague or unclear feedback was being interpreted as negative, perhaps due to perceptions that the deliverer was concealing or delaying criticism. Corrective feedback that was delivered without disparagement was categorized as positive by some study participants, suggesting that help was welcomed, provided that it was not unkind. Mixing positive and critical feedback together was perceived by most participants as confusing (Geddes & Linnehan, 1996).

Tone or valence, as well as emotional affect, have been observed to influence the degree to which feedback is accepted by the recipient. In a study of business students ( $n = 125$ ), subjects perceived feedback as more useful when their emotional reactions to the feedback were positive. Subjects also viewed feedback that they enjoyed receiving as being more accurate. Positive feedback was more likely to be judged as accurate feedback, and the more discrepancy there was between the subject's positive self-evaluation and the supervisor's negative evaluation, the less accurate the supervisor's feedback was perceived to be and the more negatively the subject tended to respond. Interestingly, although negative feedback was likely to result in negative emotions from the recipient, positive feedback was not likely to generate a positive

emotional response from the receiver, suggesting that negative valence has more effect than positive demeanor (Brett & Atwater, 2001).

The cognitive structures of feedback also appear to be related to attentional focus. Kluger and DeNisi (1996) conducted a meta-analysis of 131 studies of feedback interventions. From this work, the authors developed the Feedback Intervention Theory (FIT), which provides a framework for understanding feedback behaviors. The FIT model offers the perspective that feedback affects the recipient's behavior by changing the locus of attention. Kluger and DeNisi stated that feedback directs the recipient's attention to one of three types of processes: task learning, task motivation, and meta-task processes. Task learning processes relate to new skill development and task motivation pertains to interest and goal achievement. Meta-task processes relate to emotion; when attention is directed to this area, the recipient of feedback engages in affective processes such as evaluating the self, assessing the feedback giver, and considering the task within a broader meaning or context. Individuals who are higher in anxiety have been found to be more likely to respond to feedback by shifting their attention away from tasks and toward meta-task processes that focus on themselves (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996). Feedback is generally ineffective for learning when the recipient directs attention away from task learning processes and toward meta-task processes (King, 2015).

According to the FIT research, when a recipient of feedback perceives a gap between their own performance and the feedback, "the discrepancy can be eliminated by changing behavior to change the future feedback, by changing the standard so it matches the present feedback, by rejecting the feedback, or by escaping the situation (physically or mentally) that signals discrepancy" (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996, pp. 259-260). When meta-task processes are activated, such as by critical feedback, the recipient might try to reduce the threat they perceive

toward themselves by abandoning the task or attempting to restore a positive sense of self by rejecting the feedback or the feedback giver (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996).

Despite the finding by Geddes and Linnehan (1996) that corrective feedback can be positive, the type of avoidant or dismissive reaction described by Kluger and DeNisi (1996) appears common. In fact, in the meta-analysis, Kluger and DeNisi identified that feedback interventions were detrimental to task performance about a third of the time. Zheng and colleagues (2015) conducted a study within a corporate setting, examining the structure of supervisor feedback, including the themes of positive or critical valence. The researchers speculated that both positive and critical feedback would contribute to improved task performance, based upon the assumption that quantity of feedback is more important than tone (the hypothesis was that positive feedback would be reinforcing and critical feedback would provide workers with data about ways in which to improve). The results of this study, however, indicated that only affirming feedback was positively correlated with task performance (Zheng et al., 2015).

A significant number of research studies have attempted to identify strategies for delivering feedback in such a way that the recipient will accept the information and use it appropriately (e.g. Borders et al., 2017; Henley & DiGennaro Reed, 2015; Nelson et al., 2008; Trees et al., 2009), often focusing on the preferences and emotions of the feedback recipients (e.g. Coleman et al., 1987; Duffey et al., 2016; Trepal et al., 2010). This research seems logical, given the problem of feedback rejection and the emotional nature of receiving feedback. Recipients' emotions, as suggested by FIT, have been found to contribute to feedback acceptance and interpretation. Critical feedback may even damage a supervisory relationship. In a laboratory setting, students receiving supervisory feedback attributed more positive intentions to

supervisors who had given affirming feedback than did students who received critical feedback (Kacmar, Wayne, & Wright, 1996). Negative memories from childhood about feedback experiences have also been associated with negative self-evaluation when receiving corrective feedback (Stroud, Olguin, & Marley, 2016), suggesting complex emotional responses may be at play, and that self-esteem may be at risk for supervisees. Perhaps unsurprisingly, some feedback recipients have been observed to react with anger and defensiveness (Bukard, Knox, Clarke, Phelps, & Inman, 2014).

Workplace managers, educators, and supervisors appear to be aware that critical feedback can be painful, as evidenced by difficulty providing such feedback, even when it is necessary. In a laboratory setting, subjects assigned to the role of supervisor changed their appraisal of supervisees when they learned that the feedback needed to be delivered in person; the valence of the feedback became more positive, especially if the supervisor attributed poor performance to the subordinate's ability instead of to their effort (Ilgen & Knowlton, 1980). Individuals giving feedback may change or withhold information due to worry about hurting the recipients' feelings (Hoffman, Hill, Holmes, & Freitas, 2005), or inciting a negative response (Ladany & Melincoff, 1999). The discomfort with delivering critical feedback is sometimes countered with tips for carefully maneuvering through the recipients' perceived defenses (Letting, 1992), but research has suggested that the focus on "proper" timing, specificity, and frequency of feedback may not be based on reliable constructs (Price et al., 2010; Larson et al., 1986).

If students in counselor training programs are reacting emotionally to feedback, potentially directing attention away from learning and toward the self, and instructors and supervisors are having difficulty delivering feedback, there is theoretically a cyclical interaction occurring that is not conducive to learning. As such, a focus on proper feedback delivery may be

insufficient. Individual differences are emerging as an important theme in understanding feedback receptivity. The research on feedback orientation offers a perspective about this dynamic, as it relates to the feedback recipient.

### **Feedback Orientation**

Feedback orientation was defined by London and Smither (2002) as “an individual's overall receptivity to feedback, including comfort with feedback, tendency to seek feedback and process it mindfully, and the likelihood of acting on the feedback to guide behavior change and performance improvement” (p. 81). This concept was further operationalized and tested by Linderbaum and Levy (2010), who developed the Feedback Orientation Scale (FOS).

The FOS measures *utility*, defined as the individual's tendency to believe that feedback is useful for goal achievement; *accountability*, which pertains to the individual's tendency to feel obligated to use feedback when it is offered (internal pressure to make use of feedback); *social awareness*, which refers to the individual's tendency to use feedback to moderate the views of others (external pressure to make use of feedback); and *feedback self-efficacy*, which relates to the individual's perceived ability to interpret and respond to feedback (Linderbaum & Levy, 2010). The authors concluded that

Someone who has a strong feedback orientation is likely to generally value feedback, be more attuned to feedback in his or her environment, and be more apt to act on the feedback he or she receives. On the flipside, an individual who has a weak feedback orientation will generally be more resistant to feedback, will tend to ignore feedback in his or her environment, and is less likely to respond to feedback that is received. (Linderbaum & Levy, 2010, p. 1375)

Feedback orientation is considered to be a relatively stable trait, although Linderbaum and Levy (2010) believed, based upon their work, that an individual's orientation is subject to some change and influence. The authors stated that environment might interact with feedback orientation.

The FOS was used in a study of 225 supervisor-subordinate dyads (nurses in Saudi Arabia) to investigate the connect between feedback orientation and performance. This study supported the speculation that feedback environment influences feedback orientation: Satisfaction with feedback positively mediated the relationship between utility, accountability, self-efficacy, and social awareness and the variable of performance (Rasheed et al., 2015). These results suggested that delivering satisfying feedback might increase the chances that the recipient will take and use the information (Rasheed et al., 2015), but also raise interesting questions about whether or not improving feedback orientation first might improve satisfaction with, and use of, feedback.

In the corporate environment, individuals who value feedback have been observed to seek it more frequently and to monitor the environment for feedback cues (Ashford, 1986). Workers who value feedback may also develop better relationships with their supervisors or coaches (Gregory & Levy, 2012). Self-confidence has been observed to play a role in this dynamic as well. Individuals with high self-efficacy have been observed to be less receptive to critical feedback. Such individuals may become frustrated because they perceive their efforts as sufficient and rather than accept that they may be under-performing, high-confidence people may instead doubt the accuracy of the feedback (Nease, Mudgett, & Quiñones, 1999). Conversely, individuals low in self-confidence may avoid performance feedback in order to defend against ego damage. Low-confidence employees might value information about *what* to do, but avoid



information about *how well* they are doing it (Ashford, 1986). The culture and norms of an organization may influence feedback-seeking behavior within the corporate environment as well, particularly as customs relate to advancement and potentially being perceived by colleagues as incompetent or weak (Ashford & Tsui, 1991).

The individual differences represented by feedback orientation suggest that although the supervisor and the quality of a supervisor's feedback may be important, the recipient has significant responsibility in the interaction. Feedback is a mutual process and the recipient's mindset matters (Linderbaum & Levy, 2010). It can be assumed that feedback orientation will present within counseling classrooms and supervisory relationships. In the next sections, these areas will be examined.

### **Feedback in Classroom Education**

Teachers serve as instructors, mentors, and role models within the classroom setting. In counselor education, teachers are also gatekeepers, tasked with the ethical mandate to protect the profession from students who may be unfit to work with clients. Counselor educators are tasked with providing regular feedback to students about their work and professional development, in order to help students achieve competency and to ethically enter the profession (American Counseling Association, 2014). Feedback is critical to the learning process (Al-Hattami, 2019; Finn & Metcalfe, 2010) and has become a focal point in educational research.

In a study of both university students ( $n = 200$ ) and staff ( $n = 323$ ), participants identified four main purposes of educational feedback: justifying grades, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of work, allowing for improvement, and affective purposes such as support and encouragement (Dawson et al., 2019). The feedback process in higher education has, at times, resulted in students placing a high value upon performance goals (i.e. grades) instead of learning

goals. Students focused on achieving high marks, regardless of personal growth, may use feedback primarily as a means of getting a better grade on the next assignment (Yorke, 2003). Research has suggested that students are more likely to utilize surface-level feedback in their writing (e.g. comments about punctuation and grammar) than meaning-level feedback (e.g. comments about content and argument flow) (Dressler, Chu, Crossman, & Hillman, 2019) suggesting a possible preference for quick fixes.

Students and teachers may differ in their opinions about what makes for quality feedback. Students report wanting detailed feedback that can be used to improve performance; clear, focused, and precise feedback; supportive, positive, and encouraging comments; and individualized feedback (Dawson et al., 2019). Students often perceive feedback as a short-term intervention for the purposes of justifying grades or improving the next assignment for the individual teacher providing the feedback (Price et al., 2010). Teachers are more likely to focus on pedagogical design elements such as timing feedback so that it occurs before the next assignment is due (Dawson et al., 2019), and to view feedback as serving the long-term development of the student (Price et al., 2010).

Students are often dissatisfied with feedback, especially written feedback (Nicol, 2010; Price et al., 2010; Steen-Utheim & Hopfenbeck, 2019). Common complaints include that the written feedback was difficult to understand (Nicol, 2010; Steen-Utheim & Hopfenbeck, 2019), too vague, or too negative in tone (Price et al., 2010). Students are also frequently untrained about the ways in which to use written feedback appropriately, and may not know what to do with the comments professors have provided (Burke, 2009). Oral feedback may be preferable to both students and teachers, and may help to create or preserve a positive relationship (Nicol,

2010; Price et al., 2010; Steen-Utheim & Hopfenbeck, 2019). These findings suggest that quality feedback is a relational, and not a transactional, process.

Students and teachers also appear to differ in the degree to which they believe students have a responsibility within the feedback process. Although many educators also overlook the role of students in accepting feedback, even fewer students report thinking about themselves as being accountable for making the feedback process effective (Dawson et al., 2019). Teachers often provide formative feedback, intended to influence future work, but students may skip over it, looking only at the final grade (Yorke, 2003). Feedback, no matter the quality, is not useful unless meaning is made by the recipient and action is taken (Esterhazy & Damşa, 2017; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Price et al., 2010; Yorke, 2003).

Students benefit if they can take responsibility for using feedback and putting it into service for their own learning goals (Yorke, 2003). In a study of 31 undergraduate psychology students, Winstone and colleagues (2017) attempted to identify the barriers to students seeking and using feedback. Some barriers related to the quality of feedback, including students being unable to decode the information provided, but other barriers emerged from the data in the form of lack of student willingness to ask for or use feedback. Multiple students reported that they chose not to look at assignment rubrics or ask for a meeting with their instructor, despite stated beliefs that their instructor would be willing to provide more feedback in person (Winstone, Nash, Rowntree, & Parker, 2017). The authors concluded that “It is clear that some degree of responsibility-taking on students’ part would in most cases be beneficial, or even fundamental, to removing these barriers” (p. 2038).

Individual differences in the mindsets of students might influence the degree to which they seek or use feedback. Students with a fixed mindset, who tend toward absolutist beliefs

about knowledge and expectations of right and wrong answers, tend to want feedback in which a person in a position of authority provides the one, correct piece of data (O'Donovan, 2017).

Students with a fixed mindset frequently focus on getting good grades; prefer top-down learning, wanting only expert instruction and rejecting peer feedback; want to be told exactly what to do in order to earn a good grade or know the right answer; and like to be rewarded for good performance and be viewed positively by their instructor. Students who tend toward a growth mindset (i.e. hold beliefs that knowledge can be contested, that information is constructed and contextual, and that tolerating complexity and ambiguity is part of the learning process), are likely to want a different type of feedback experience. Such students tend to prefer discussion about their work instead of just a written grade, value receiving multiple perspectives and feedback sources, and are more open to varying feedback delivery styles (O'Donovan, 2017).

Although individuals with a growth mindset appear to be more open to receiving feedback, this does not equate to *seeking* critical feedback. An individual with a growth mindset may be more likely to listen to and utilize critical feedback, but no more likely than an individual with a fixed mindset to ask for critical feedback (Cutumisu, 2019). This suggests that an important component of feedback orientation, feedback seeking (London & Smither, 2002), is difficult for individuals of both mindsets. Additionally, the growth mindset may be rare. In a study of undergraduate business students (n = 200), only 12.5% were coded as independent, contextual learners (O'Donovan, 2017).

The FIT model has been used to study student responses to feedback and furthers the discussion of student mindset. Using the Instructional Feedback Orientation Scale (IFOS), King (2015) examined the effects of meta-task processes on student learning. The degree to which students dwelled on a low grade, their own hurt feelings, and negative feedback about a

completed task (i.e. the degree to which they engaged in meta-task processes) predicted lower performance on a second attempt at the task. The author also observed that negative feedback is more likely than positive feedback to result in a student engaging in meta-task processes. This effect may be due to the psychological need to attribute negative feedback to either oneself or an outside cause, which requires more attention and cognitive energy (King, 2015). This also supports the conclusion by Geddes and Linnehan (1996) that critical feedback is a more complex cognitive construct than is positive feedback.

Whether negative feedback is attributed to one's own poor performance or to the characteristics of the feedback-giver may be influenced by the sensitivity of the feedback recipient. Using the Sensitivity to Feedback Scale, Smith and King (2004) examined the difference between high intensity (direct and blunt), low intensity (tactful and polite), and no feedback conditions for individuals with high and low feedback sensitivity. The results of this study suggested that individual differences in feedback sensitivity are pertinent to the variables of feedback delivery and feedback receptivity. The authors stated that although students low in sensitivity might benefit from high intensity feedback, students high in feedback sensitivity likely need low intensity feedback in order to learn. Smith and King (2004) concluded that

[I]t would appear that individuals with a high sensitivity to feedback most readily adapt their behavior when the feedback is of a lower intensity. Presumably, highly negative feedback causes the feedback sensitive learner to make negative attributions, to focus on meta-task issues, such as seeing the feedback as punishment, and to fail to modify behavior (p. 213).

Critical feedback can also affect the ways in which students view their professors and the student-teacher relationship. In a study of undergraduate psychology students ( $n = 198$ ),

participants were found to be more sensitive to perceived messages of failure than messages of success: 97% of students who received negative feedback believed that the teacher thought that they had failed, but only 78% of students who received positive feedback believed that the teacher thought they had succeeded. Critical feedback resulted in both negative self-evaluations (beliefs about being viewed as having put in low effort, being of low ability, or failing at an easy task) and negative evaluations of the teacher (beliefs that the teacher was not accurate in their assessment or did not understand the difficulty of the work) (Coleman, Jussim, & Abraham, 1987). This study suggests that critical feedback is a more powerful communication than affirming feedback and that students' emotions about these exchanges might affect relationships within the classroom setting.

### **Feedback in the Supervisory Relationship**

Like counselor educators, clinical supervisors are gatekeepers to the counseling profession (American Counseling Association, 2014). At the level of clinical training, the feedback being provided likely pertains directly to client experiences, including safety. The topic of feedback within the counselor supervisory relationship, however, has not historically received much attention (Borders, 2005).

Counselor supervisors are not always comfortable delivering critical feedback (Motley, Reese, & Campos, 2014). New supervisors in particular often worry that their critical feedback will sound too harsh, that power dynamics will be difficult to navigate, and that as novice supervisors, they will be unable to deliver critical feedback in ways which facilitates trainee growth and development (Rapisarda, Desmond, & Nelson, 2011). Novice supervisors might also experience the evaluative role as conflictual with a supportive, nonjudgmental counselor identity

(Bernard & Goodyear, 2014). Despite this discomfort, feedback and evaluation are critical functions in supervision (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014).

Research has suggested that feedback is perceived as easier to provide if the topic is a clinical issue like counseling skills or client welfare, and more difficult to provide if it pertains to the supervisory relationship or the trainee's professional behavior (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014; Hoffman et al., 2005). Counselor supervisors have also reported that feedback is easier to give when the trainee is receptive and open, and difficult when the trainee is defensive (Borders et al., 2017; Hoffman et al., 2005). These studies support the conceptualization that feedback is a relational and mutually created process, in which both parties contribute to the efficacy of the exchange. The potentially conflicting roles of providing critical feedback and maintaining a strong supervisory relationship with the trainee represents a dialectic for counselor supervisors (Veilleux, Sandeen, & Levensky, 2014).

Supervisors owe their trainees both formative evaluation, which focuses on skill acquisition, and summative evaluation, which focuses on the degree to which the supervisee is meeting the expectations of the field (American Counseling Association, 2014; Bernard & Goodyear, 2014). Supervisor feedback also comes in the forms of suggestions (feedback which is optional) and instructions (feedback which is required to be used). Instructions are mandates, such as in cases of client safety. Disturbingly, trainees are more likely to resist instructions, especially if the trainee disagrees or does not understand what is being assigned (Proctor & Inskipp, 1998, as cited by Bernard & Goodyear, 2014).

Supervisee resistance can take many forms, including resisting influence, withholding information, power-struggling, arriving late or canceling supervision, failing to follow through on tasks, and not complying with mutually agreed upon plans for client work (Bernard &

Goodyear, 2014). Supervisees can signal resistance by engaging in defensive conduct or by appearing fragile, such as by acting easily offended or hurt, appearing overly embarrassed, or conveying a stress response (Hoffman et al., 2005).

Supervisors sometimes respond to trainee resistance by failing to provide necessary feedback. In a survey of 90 counselor supervisors, 98% of respondents confirmed at least one incidence of withholding information from a trainee in supervision. The most common types of nondisclosures, endorsed by more than 50% of participants, pertained to negative responses to a trainee's counseling or professional behavior, personal reactions toward the supervisee, and negative reactions to the trainee's performance in supervision. Additionally, 64% of supervisors endorsed at least one experience of withholding feedback due to fear of a negative reaction from the trainee (Ladany & Melincoff, 1999). By withholding feedback to avoid hurt feelings, however, supervisors may be damaging the supervisory relationship in other ways. In a study of cross-cultural supervision, 25 counseling students reported on their positive and negative supervision experiences. The complaint that a supervisor "did not give adequate feedback, guidance, or supervision" was noted by 48% of respondents as a critique of their supervisors (Wong, Wong, & Ishiyama, 2013, p. 73).

Research suggests that counseling trainees may be sensitive to the valence of supervisor feedback. Explaining their model of developmental supervision, Rønnestad and Skovholt (2003) offered the perspective that students in the practicum or internship stage of training, the "advanced student phase," may "feel pressure to do things more perfectly than ever before" (p. 14) and may feel particularly vulnerable to critique from senior counselors. Of the advanced student phase, the authors also stated



At this phase, experiences in supervision have particular significance. Non-confirming supervision experiences are powerful, possibly even more powerful than for the beginning student. More is at stake, as the student is further along in training and is supposed to master professional tasks at a higher level (p. 15).

The anxiety about mastering counseling skills and appearing competent in the eyes of a supervisor may be important variables in task performance. The anxiety level of trainee counselors has been shown to negatively correlate with self-efficacy. Additionally, critical feedback has also been shown to decrease self-efficacy and increase student anxiety (Daniels & Larson, 2001). Trainees have reported the desire for supervisors to provide comfort and to normalize experiences like nervousness and making mistakes (Trepal et al., 2010).

Research confirms that trainees' emotions play an important role in the feedback experience during clinical supervision. In a qualitative study of practicum students, Alexander and Hulse-Killacky (2005) identified that the childhood experiences of trainees influenced their perceptions of supervision feedback. Most study participants identified that critical feedback reminded them of negative experiences with caregivers, activated feelings of insecurity related to family of origin experiences, and reminded them of feelings of personal inadequacy. In many cases, study participants reacted to critical feedback by taking it personally and rejecting the feedback or supervisor (Alexander & Hulse-Killacky, 2005). Results of this study suggest that meta-task processes were often activated during supervision:

All ten participants remembered instances of feeling belittled, embarrassed, disrespected, stupid, ugly, unimportant, unloved, or cheated. Many of these feelings were also experienced while receiving corrective feedback in group supervision. All participants believed that their self-esteem, beliefs about their competence, and their willingness to

take risks were influenced by the way they were corrected as children and greatly influenced their perceptions of corrective feedback in group supervision. (Alexander & Hulse-Killacky, 2006, p. 33)

Emotional experiences related to childhood are beyond the control of a supervisor, once again suggesting that the recipient of feedback must bear some responsibility for feedback interactions. The strength of the supervisor-trainee relationship is also supported by the research literature as an important variable. The emotional bond that a trainee feels with their supervisor has been observed to correlate positively with satisfaction with the supervisory relationship overall and the perception of the supervisor specifically (Ladany, Ellis, & Friedlander, 1999). Students often have strong feelings, both positive and negative, toward instructors, supervisors, and other professional counselors (Rønnestad & Skovholt, 2003) and supervisors are often encouraged to attend to this dynamic by providing affirmation:

The dependency and vulnerability of students make them particularly appreciative of the support and encouragement of more advanced members of the profession. Direct or subtle criticism, actual or perceived, can have detrimental effects on student morale. The vulnerability of students can parallel that of some clients who are particularly sensitive to how they perceive their therapists. (Rønnestad & Skovholt, 2003, p. 12)

The emphasis within the research literature upon soothing trainee anxiety seems to suggest that feedback receptivity would be improved by building a positive relationship. However, students may not always engage forthrightly with a supervisor or clearly state their needs (Trepal et al., 2010), may engage in behaviors which are relationship-damaging, such as anger and sarcasm, and may resist relationship repairs which are offered by their supervisors (Burkard et al., 2014). Supervisors have even been criticized for offering “too many

compliments,” a behavior which was classified by supervisees as a negative supervision experience (Wong et al., 2013). It appears, therefore, that although the supervisor-trainee relationship is important, the trainee’s ability to make use of feedback even within a poor relationship would benefit the trainee’s learning and ability to transition into the role of professional counselor.

### **Theoretical/Conceptual Framework: Radically Open Dialectical Behavior Therapy**

Radically Open Dialectical Behavior Therapy (RO DBT) is a biopsychosocial theory of human development and emotional coping. RO DBT has emerged from the research literature pertaining to social evolution, neurobiology, biological temperament, and emotional control. RO DBT provides a unique opportunity to explore the topic of feedback because it is both a theory of human development and a treatment modality, with practical tools for changing behavior (Lynch, 2018). This conceptual framework will be utilized in chapter four for the purposes of interpreting research results.

### **Emotional Control, Neurobiology, and Biotemperament**

Emotion is a nebulous concept, even within the field of mental health. A singular definition with confined parameters has not been agreed upon, though the fields of counseling, psychology, and neuropsychology all agree that emotion matters (Tamir, 2011). Emotions appear to provide human beings with data about ourselves, the world around us, and the meaning of events. Emotions also provide motivation, organizing our behaviors and compelling us to act or react to stimuli in a particular manner (Linehan, 1993; Mennin & Fresco, 2009). Emotions occur synchronously with physiological responses and neuroendocrine changes that seem to compel goal-directed behavior (Gross & Thompson, 2007). Many therapy treatments are about teaching clients to regulate emotions and to prioritize cognitive processes and rational decision-

making above emotion states. By providing both information and impetus for action, however, it can be said that although individuals can regulate their emotions, they are also regulated *by* their emotions (Mennin & Fresco, 2009).

The literature on the subjects of emotional regulation and control is heavily influenced by research of physiology (Fuentes-Claramonte et al., 2016; Gross, 1998), evolution (Lynch, Robins, Morse, & Krause, 2001; Porges, 2015; Porges & Furman, 2011), and biotemperament (Muhtadie, Koslov, Akinola, & Mendes, 2015; Thompson, 2011; Schwartz, Wright, Shin, Kagan, & Rauch, 2003). Together, the literature suggests a neurobiological explanation of emotions, which has been explained by some theorists within the context of human social evolution (Bowlby, 1988; Porges, 2015).

Proponents of the neurobiological explanation of emotions have argued that emotions became important for humans because a solitary person would have been unable to survive in primitive eras and the ability to live within a tribe was essential to avoid predation and starvation. This social survival strategy made cooperation and inclusion crucial (Lynch, 2018a; Muhtadie et al., 2015). It is believed that emotions developed to facilitate rapid communication between group members and to allow individuals to respond appropriately to the tribal milieu (Muhtadie et al., 2015).

In order to thrive within a tribe, humans are born with an innate ability for bonding with other people, beginning with their caregivers. Infants engage in attachment behaviors, such as clinging and crying, to keep their caregivers close, adjusting behaviors to match the environment and the responses of caregiving adults. In this manner, infants begin learning about emotions as soon as they enter the world. To get needs met, when infants experience nervous system dysregulation, they express distress and are then assisted by their caregivers to soothe (Bowlby,

1988; Porges, 2015). Within this relationship and attachment process, the templates for emotional regulation, bonding, and connection are formed (Bowlby, 1988; Karen, 1994).

The nervous system has been of great interest to researchers attempting to explain the evolution and function of emotions. It has been proposed that in order to engage in the relationships that humans need to survive, the functions of the nervous system and the mechanisms for social signaling became intertwined. As humans evolved, a myelinated pathway of nerves developed between the heart and the muscles of the head, face, and neck. Using this shared pathway, the brainstem can control heart rate and facial responses simultaneously. These same nerves connect to the middle ear bone and the laryngeal and pharyngeal muscles, related to listening to and adjusting vocal tones. Porges, founder of polyvagal theory, called this network of nerves the Social Engagement System (Porges & Furman, 2011). Porges has proposed that there is bidirectional communication between emotions and the Social Engagement System; when an individual feels an emotion, the face and voice will change, and when facial expressions and vocal tones are adjusted, emotions will be felt (Porges, 2015).

The physiological connection between emotions and social cues is important for human relationships. Humans signal safety and danger to other members of the tribe with facial expressions, vocal tones, and gestures. These signals are processed within the cortex, which can communicate with the amygdala without conscious awareness. Porges termed this unconscious process *neuroception* (Porges, 2015). Using neuroception, tribe members can communicate threats before words can be formed. Neuroception is also used to determine one's level of social safety, or inclusion, within the group. To avoid abandonment by the tribe, human beings are sensitive to social signals and signs that others may be feeling negative emotions which could result in conflict and social rejection (Karen, 1994; Porges & Furman, 2011).

According to the neurobiological conceptualization of emotion, human beings use our evolutionary gifts of attachment, neuroception, and the Social Engagement System to avoid being rejected by the tribe—if feeling scared, our faces can signal for help without conscious effort; if feeling sad, we can signal for comfort; if feeling happy, we can signal for connection. Humans, however, need another important ability to stay within the tribe, which is the ability to *inhibit* or *control* one's emotions and behaviors. Bowlby (1988) stated that inhibition of attachment behaviors may be necessary to avoid rejection by a caregiver, potentially resulting in an individual who maintains proximity to others by suppressing the expression of needs. Suppressing needs or inhibiting behaviors also allows for the type of social cooperation necessary for critical tribal functions like hunting, sharing food, and resolving disputes. An individual who cannot resist urges to hoard resources, express anger with physical aggression, or engage in other anti-social acts may be rejected from the group (Lynch, 2018a).

Suppressing emotions, as well as the behaviors associated with them, can be either adaptive or maladaptive (Jeffries, McLeish, Kraemer, Avallone, & Fleming, 2016). In the adaptive form, discussed above, emotional suppression helps the individual remain within the safety of the tribe by preventing relationship-damaging behavior. In the maladaptive form, emotional suppression can become harmful to social bonds and individual health (Lynch et al., 2001). To further explore this concept, it is important to distinguish emotional *regulation* from emotional *control*. Emotional regulation pertains to the ability to attend to one's own emotional experiences and adjust the intensity of the emotion and its expression to adapt to the situation; regulation can mean creating, increasing, decreasing, or sustaining intensity. Control, however, is about restraint (Cole, Michel, & Teti, 1994). Control is not about calibrating one's emotions for maximum benefit, but about inhibiting emotions. Control is often a habitual response,

shaped by early relationship templates, experiences, and societal rewards and consequences (Cole et al., 1994; Lynch et al., 2001).

Control is one strategy an individual might use to moderate emotions, but it is not the only way to decrease negative affect. Gross and Thompson (2007) proposed the extended process model of emotion regulation strategies, outlining five common methods for changing or reducing unpleasant emotions: situation selection, situation modification, attentional deployment, cognitive change, and response modulation. Situational selection occurs when an individual chooses an environment based on expected emotional outcomes, such as when a person avoids places likely to invoke fear or anxiety. Utilizing situation modification, an individual changes the physical environment to modulate emotions, such as by inviting a support person along. Attentional deployment occurs when a person focuses on something pleasant or distracts from unpleasant stimuli. Attentional deployment may be invisible to others if the person is redirecting their thinking without other visual cues. Cognitive change is a meaning-making or attribution process, such as when a person offers themselves positive affirmation or reframes their experience (e.g. reinterpreting increased heartrate as excitement instead of fear). Response modulation is the intentional altering or suppression of the expression of an emotion, self-soothing, or using medications or other substances to physiologically re-regulate after emotional disruption has occurred (Gross & Thompson, 2007).

Control becomes a maladaptive strategy for survival within the tribe when it blocks social connection, impedes healthy coping, or becomes rigid and situationally inflexible. Such inflexible control has been termed *overcontrol* (OC) (Lynch, 2018a). An OC individual might be unwilling or unable to experience an emotion even in situations in which there are serious ramifications for engaging in suppression (Lynch et al., 2001). Research has suggested that the

consequences for OC can in fact be significant. The strategy of suppressing and avoiding emotions has been positively correlated with diagnoses of depression and anxiety (Cole et al., 1994; Tortella-Felie, Balle, & Sesé, 2010), as well as social isolation (Lynch et al., 2001; Porges & Furman, 2011).

OC is associated with low distress tolerance (Jeffries et al., 2016) and is believed to be a strategy for coping (Lynch, 2018a). Research, however, has identified that suppression is likely an ineffective mechanism for managing distress. In an experiment conducted with 60 patients with diagnosed mood disorders, individuals were instructed to watch a film clip intended to invoke emotion and to either experience or suppress their emotional responses. Physiological measures of heartrate, breathing, and skin conductance levels were taken, and subjects were surveyed about their emotional reactions. Study participants in the group coached to suppress their emotions were found to recover from negative affect more slowly than those who were coached to allow themselves to experience their emotions. Additionally, the participants in the suppression group were unable to decrease subjective experiences of distress despite being told to focus on reducing the intensity of their internal experiences (Campbell-Sills, Barlow, Brown, & Hoffman, 2006).

In a similar study conducted by Gross (1998), 120 undergraduate students watched a film clip intended to incite disgust. One group was coached to think about the film in a way intended to change emotional valence (reappraisal), a second group was coached to suppress the external expression of their reactions, and a third group acted as a control. All groups were observed regarding behavior, measured for physiological responses, and surveyed about subjective experiences. Both the reappraisal and suppressor groups showed less visible emotion than the control group, but only the reappraisal group reported less emotional distress than the control



group participants. The suppressor group experienced as much distress as if they had not been coached and were observed to have higher measures of sympathetic nervous system activation than either the reappraisal or control groups. Suppression was not effective for decreasing distress, and the effort of hiding emotions might have increased nervous system activation (Gross, 1998).

Lynch and colleagues (2001) have suggested that the inefficiency of suppression as a strategy may itself contribute to or sustain symptoms of depression and anxiety. Their study of both clinical and non-clinical samples demonstrated that emotional inhibition was more common for individuals who consider themselves more emotionally intense than their peers. Because control can be socially valued, the inability to use this strategy effectively to suppress the expression of emotions may result in shame. The team explained “Our results suggest that hopelessness may more often result from failed attempts to control emotion than from intense negative emotion itself” (Lynch et al., 2001, p. 532). This study also suggested that a cycle of maladaptive behavior may be created because emotional suppression might provide temporary relief but ultimately increase negative arousal (as suggested by Gross, 1998), thereby intensifying baseline nervous system activation. The suppression strategy intensifies further because “running from aversive emotions may reinforce notions that emotions are truly scary and reduce feelings of mastery and self-efficacy” (Lynch et al., 2001, p. 533). Denial, avoidance, and suppression might also prevent a situation from being resolved, resulting in long-term distress as the problem resurfaces again and again (Nolen-Hoeksema, Wisco, & Lyumbomirsky, 2008).

The ineffective nature of suppression for managing distress could result in significant consequences regarding social relationships. Returning to the literature about neuroception and

social signaling, the research suggests that social isolation is a serious risk for OC individuals. In a state of sympathetic nervous system activation, a person is more likely to misinterpret the behavior of others, reading social signals through a mental filter of alarm (Porges, 2015). Human beings must feel safe at a neurological level in order to engage in prosocial and cooperative behavior. In a state of nervous system alarm, a person is likely to become less sensitive to social engagement signals from others, becomes less sensitive to the sounds of human voices, and may be physiologically depending upon the fight/flight/freeze subsystems of the nervous system. These survival responses then can motivate behaviors which are not conducive to bonding (Porges, 2004). Exacerbating this problem is the fact that “social separation and isolation from humans, regardless of age, leads to profound disruption in the ability to regulate physiological state and compromises both physical and mental health” (Porges & Furman, 2011, p. 108). If a person is suppressing emotion while attempting to regulate the distress of isolation, and stays in a state of distress, the individual may be unable to use neuroception to recognize and accept the positive emotions of others. In other words, a person might be able to break free from this cycle *if* they are able to make social connections and accept the safety signals of other people (Porges, 2015), but this would require a willingness or ability to regulate, which is something an OC individual may not be able to do. Further, the very act of emotional suppression may be alarming to others. Human beings tend to interpret neutral faces as potential threats, and are less likely to respond with overtly pro-social signals (Lynch, 2018a). In this cycle, an OC individual might isolate because they are dysregulated and then become isolated because they attempted to use emotional control to stop the distress.

OC as a coping strategy can become habitual if it serves an adaptive function at some point in time (likely early childhood) and is not adequately supplemented or replaced

(Thompson, 2011). Coping strategies are socially reinforced and partially established by cultural norms regarding acceptable behavior (Gross & Thompson, 2007), which means that once behaviors like emotional suppression are adopted, this behavior may be rewarded and validated by attachment figures or other influential persons in the individual's life to the degree that other coping mechanisms are not sought (Lynch, 2018a).

In addition to the mechanisms of social learning, research also suggests that biotemperamental predisposition may be an important variable in the formation and maintenance of OC coping. Biotemperament is believed to shape personality and behavior, including motivations and interests, by means of neurological structures, including the limbic system, which moderates responses such as fear (Derryberry & Rothbart, 1997). Temperament has also been identified as an important factor in the development of emotion, including both adaptive and pathological presentations (Southam-Gerow & Kendall, 2002).

An inhibited style of temperament, discernable beginning in infancy, has been documented in the research literature. Inhibited temperament is characterized by increased fear reactions (as measured by heart rate, cortisol production, and amygdala activation), in response to novel stimuli (Fox, Henderson, Marshall, Nichols, & Ghera, 2005). The inhibited biotemperament has been associated with negative emotionality (Derryberry & Rothbart, 1997) and increased risk for the development of social anxiety later in life (White, McDermott, Degnan, Henderson, & Fox, 2011). Some individuals with the inhibited temperament will go on to adopt OC coping strategies such as experiential avoidance (Degnan et al, 2014; Lynch, 2018a).

Research suggests that some temperamental features might continue to influence adult physiology and behavior. In a study involving shy and avoidant individuals who were classified

as inhibited at age two, in adulthood, these individuals demonstrated increased amygdala response in reaction to novelty and new people, as compared to a sample of non-inhibited adults (Schwartz et al, 2003). In another study of adult participants, Muhtadie et al. (2015) examined the relationship between autonomic nervous system responses and sensitivity to social cues and found individual differences in response intensity to social stimuli which could be measured in physiological changes. The researchers believed that their study “identified a reliable trait-like physiological marker that predicts social sensitivity in a context-dependent fashion” (p. 118). Reward sensitivity has also been measured physiologically, with differences noted in functional magnetic resonance imaging results between inhibited individuals (low in reward-sensitivity) and disinhibited individuals (high in reward-sensitivity) (Fuentes-Claramonte et al., 2016). Collectively, these findings suggest that at least some individuals born with an inhibited temperament will continue to experience the biological effects into adulthood.

Research, however, has demonstrated that the inhibited temperament will not always result in an OC individual, and that temperamental features such as negative affectivity and adverse responses to novelty can be changed (Degnan & Fox, 2007; White et al., 2011). Although some children with an inhibited temperament display ongoing signs of fear and reticence in social situations, others appear to adopt coping mechanisms to manage fear other than suppression and social withdrawal, such as attentional shifting (Degnan et al., 2014). This finding makes sense within the theories of attachment and social evolution. Infant temperament and parenting behavior form a bidirectional cycle of influence, with the infant’s temperament modifying parental responses and parenting behaviors shaping the infant’s behavior (Wittig & Rodriguez, 2019). As such, the expression of an infant’s biologically predisposed temperament is subject to influence and will likely be shaped by ongoing interactions with others. Social

learning theory would also support the idea that positive peer interactions might reward coping strategies other than suppression and avoidance. In this manner, temperament might be influential, but not necessarily mean destiny.

In summation, the research on emotional control, neurobiology, and biotemperament suggests that normal human adaptations can result in a strategy of emotional suppression for the purposes of group survival and distress regulation. Further, the research indicates that this coping strategy, developed and maintained by a combination of biology and social learning, could be problematic for an individual if the method becomes rigid and represents the only means of managing difficult emotions. Themes of under-controlled and overcontrolled types have been found in cross-cultural samples in numerous studies using the NEO-Five Factor Inventory (Bohane, Maguire, & Richardson, 2017), which seems to substantiate the theory that this phenomenon may be partially biological (attachment- and temperament-related), and not strictly a culturally constructed state.

### **Radically Open Dialectical Behavior Therapy**

RO DBT provides a model which integrates the research about emotional control, neurology, biotemperament, and feedback. RO DBT is a theory of human development and counseling that has been developed to understand and treat the distress of OC. Goals of RO DBT include improving social signaling, learning adaptive self-soothing strategies, and engaging in meaningful relationships (Lynch, 2018a).

**OC personality.** RO DBT utilizes a biopsychosocial explanation of human nature. Biologically predetermined temperament is assumed to interact with social learning and behavioral shaping. Personality is understood as both a physiological response to stimuli and as social behavior in response to the needs and actions of others.

The RO DBT theory of personality is a dimensional model, concerned with the intensity with which certain traits present (Borges & Naugle, 2017). Specifically, this model focuses on the degree to which the individual regulates emotion. RO DBT practitioners postulate that emotional regulation exists on a continuum and that individuals tend toward a disposition of either under-regulating emotion or overregulating emotion. A “middle ground” of flexible, situation-dependent control can be learned throughout the lifespan, but a temperamental predisposition toward either an overcontrolled or under-controlled temperament is believed to exist (Lynch, 2018a).

RO DBT is primarily concerned with individuals who tend toward the disposition of overcontrol (OC). Four components of this temperament are considered salient: negative affectivity (threat sensitivity), positive affectivity (reward sensitivity), effortful control (self-control capacity), and the inclination toward detail-focused processing of stimuli. Individuals who are biologically vulnerable to OC tend to be high in threat sensitivity, low in reward sensitivity, high in self-control, and high in detail-focused processing (Lynch, 2018c). This temperament can be observed in young children by four to five years of age, evidenced in behaviors such as play, comfort-seeking efforts, and self-regulation strategies (T. Lynch, personal communication, September 24, 2018).

The OC temperament is likely to be socially rewarded: behaviors such as prioritizing the needs of others, working on long-term goals instead of focusing on short-term gratification, avoiding conflict, and carefully planning things out in order to avoid failure or ambiguity are socially desirable in many cultures. Children who act in this manner are likely to be praised or encouraged, resulting in a learned style of social conduct that is bolstered by the OC biological predisposition (Lynch, 2018a). Even in cases in which an individual is not praised for pro-social

behavior, the OC temperament can still be reinforced via frequent corrective feedback from others, potentially suggesting the need to be “perfect” at all times. An OC child, with abilities such as impulse control and a high capacity for detail focus, would be adept at teaching themselves to regulate their behavior even further, so as to comply with the corrective feedback (T. Lynch, personal communication, September 25, 2018).

The cyclical nature of OC—biology contributing to a certain pattern of behavior, which is socially rewarded, which then encourages further expression of the temperament—can, in some cases, result in rigid adherence to this style of interaction. OC behaviors can become an effective manner of coping with stress, uncertainty, and the emotions of others, negating other coping skills. For some, this personality style will develop into maladaptive OC, which is no longer supporting the needs of the individual (Lynch, 2018a).

Maladaptive OC is characterized by four primary features: low receptivity and openness, low flexible control, inhibited emotional expression, and low social connectedness and intimacy (Lynch, 2018a). Individuals with maladaptive OC tend to be avoidant of uncertainty, closed off to new experiences, and resistant to feedback which challenges their existing perceptions. These individuals also tend to demand high levels of structure and order, engage in rigid adherence to rules and self-imposed standards, and display perfectionistic tendencies. Social inhibition can present as contextually inappropriate neutrality or disingenuous expressions of happiness or appeasement. Internally, OC individuals often feel disconnected from others, resentful that their efforts to please go unappreciated, or unaware of their own emotions and needs. By engaging in rehearsed or disingenuous interactions, or providing incongruent and inappropriate social cues, people with OC tend toward isolation, loneliness, and reduced empathy (Dimaggio et al., 2018; Lynch, 2018a).

**Coping.** The OC personality can also be thought of as a style of coping with distress (T. Lynch, personal communication, September 24, 2018). OC individuals tend to dislike attention from others, experience fear in response to uncertainty, and are hypersensitive to signs of possible social rejection. Unfortunately, maladaptive social behavior may be a response to the difficulty of living with some of the biological elements of the OC temperament, such as high threat sensitivity. OC traits such as suppressing emotion and avoiding vulnerability, planning and rehearsing events, and attempting to control situations and reduce ambiguity serve the individual's needs for stress mitigation (T. Lynch, personal communication, September 24, 2018). OC individuals learn to re-regulate their highly-tuned nervous systems with emotional suppression behaviors, which then becomes their primary style of coping (Lynch, 2018a).

The OC style of coping is difficult to unlearn. OC traits are likely to be rewarded throughout the lifespan because such behavior contributes to lawfulness, goal achievement, and financial stability. The suffering of OC individuals is also likely to go unnoticed as OC people tend to draw as little attention to themselves as possible and do not share their true emotions. OC individuals often suffer silently, living on the fringes of social groups and telling themselves that there is no point in trying to do anything differently; they neither reach toward others nor attract the sort of concern that would inspire people to reach toward them (Lynch, 2018a). Opportunities to learn new behaviors are thus limited and practicing new social signaling is unlikely without assistance (Hempel, Rushbrook, O'Mahen, & Lynch, 2018).

**Subtypes and feedback.** The OC temperament is expressed in two behavioral subtypes: the overly agreeable type and the overly disagreeable type. An overly agreeable OC individual is likely to present in public with friendly, compliant behavior, often accompanied by frequent smiling and a happy demeanor, which may be incongruent with the context. An overly



disagreeable OC individual is likely to present with neutral affect, characterized by a flat facial expression and minimal verbalizations or attempts to engage with others (Hempel et al., 2018; Lynch, 2018a). Both types of individuals are attempting to suppress genuine displays of emotion and are likely using these behaviors to manage anxiety during interactions with others (Lynch, 2018a). The subtypes represent public behaviors, and both are subject to private displays of emotion, which could be quite dramatic. These unplanned outbursts are called *emotional leakage*, and on the rare occasions that they are witnessed by outsiders (e.g. a teacher or supervisor), OC individuals are sometimes mischaracterized as under-controlled (Hempel et al., 2018).

OC individuals tend to react negatively to disconfirming feedback, or information that challenges existing beliefs. OC individuals are likely to react to disconfirming feedback with anxious arousal and attempts to block the information, rejecting the feedback almost immediately (Lynch, 2018a; Lynch, Hempel, & Dunkley, 2015). Two mindsets are common in response to disconfirming feedback: *fixed mind* (characterized by the belief that change is unnecessary because the individual already has all of the information needed) and *fatalistic mind* (characterized by the belief that change is unnecessary because change is impossible or there is no correct answer available) (Lynch, 2018b). Both mindsets serve to block out unwanted feedback by dismissing any possible benefits of the new information.

Both subtypes of OC represent deficits in social signaling, although the ways in which individuals of each subtype might signal feedback rejection could vary (Lynch, 2018a). When working with OC students, it would be important for educators and supervisors to watch and listen carefully for signs of fixed or fatalistic mind; smiling politely and nodding along could be a signal that an overly agreeable OC student is actually rejecting feedback. Overly agreeable OC

individuals are also prone to a feedback rejection strategy termed the *don't-hurt-me* response. The don't-hurt-me behaviors serve to communicate that the individual is too fragile or upset to receive feedback, signaling that the provider of feedback is causing harm and behaving inappropriately. A don't-hurt-me response might look like the student lowering their eyes, covering their face, or sinking into their chair in a defeated posture (Lynch, 2018a). Some counselor supervisors have indicated that they felt reluctant to give feedback to trainees who appeared too delicate (Burkard, Knox, Clarke, Phelps, & Inman, et al., 2014), suggesting that don't-hurt-me behaviors might in fact be effective at blocking feedback within counselor training programs.

Overly disagreeable OC individuals are often more inclined toward a defensive strategy termed the *pushback* response. A pushback may consist of either verbal or nonverbal behavior which communicates a subtle or veiled threat or demand, meant to signal to the person providing feedback that there will be unpleasant consequences for their actions. Pushback behaviors might look like glaring; flat or nonresponsive facial expressions, which likely cause a sense of discomfort for the other person; smirking or scoffing; or argumentative statements, which may be concealed with a “joking” or half-hearted delivery, meant to provide plausible deniability in the event that the behavior is called out (Lynch, 2018a). Defensive, shut down, and aggressive responses have been observed in trainee counselors (Borders et al., 2017; Burkard et al., 2014), suggesting that OC pushback behaviors might be occurring within counselor training programs as well.

**Strategies for overcoming maladaptive coping.** All of the information discussed to this point would be of little value if there was nothing to be done to address problems of feedback receptivity and OC. As a treatment modality, however, RO DBT offers strategies for increasing

openness and cognitive flexibility, and improving receptivity to feedback. OC individuals are taught, in individual therapy and/or an RO DBT skills class, techniques such as mindfulness, nervous system calming, self-enquiry, and adaptive social signaling (Lynch, 2018b). RO DBT has been found to be an effective strategy for reducing maladaptive coping behaviors and increasing adaptive coping strategies, within clinical settings (Hempel, Booth et al., 2018; Keogh, Booth, Baird, Gibson, & Davenport, 2016).

If OC coping is interfering in openness to feedback, RO DBT can provide alternative behaviors. These skills can be taught quickly, in a group setting, and are available in a pre-made curriculum, all of which could make RO DBT a good fit for academic settings. The curriculum and worksheets are available in the skills training manual for RO DBT (Lynch, 2018b), which is divided into simple modules.

### **Implications**

The literature discussed above has explored the OC coping strategy and the connections to feedback receptivity. The present research is concerned with a particular context in which individuals with the OC coping style may present, which is the counselor training environment. Inevitably, some counseling students will tend toward an OC style, and the associated behaviors will interact with the training program. Within this environment, the OC strategies of coping will be challenged with new relationships (peers, teachers, supervisors, and clients), novel stimuli and information, and performance feedback. As OC counseling students maneuver the training environment, their reactions to feedback will be important for their learning.

Reports on student remediation have identified that many counseling students struggle to receive supervision adequately and that failure to accept and utilize feedback is a common reason for students to be terminated from training programs (Li, Lampe, Trusty, & Lim, 2009). In a

survey of 607 counseling faculty, internship coordinators, and other supervisors of master's level counseling students, receptivity to feedback was listed as the number one most common student behavior requiring corrective action (Henderson & Dufrene, 2013). Although surely many of the students requiring remediation plans are not OC, it is telling that in the Henderson and Dufrene (2013) study, of the 35 problematic behaviors identified, two of the top five are common problems for OC individuals: feedback receptivity and openness to self-examination (Lynch, 2018a).

The research about biotemperament and social evolution suggests that OC students may be stuck in a cycle of maladaptive coping, and may lack the skillset to behave in other ways. OC students may be at a disadvantage in the training environment, and their coping style may be causing problems that are not adequately understood. The combination of biotemperament, social reinforcement, and lack of alternative coping strategies may be more complex than is readily addressed by most remediation programs. If the presence of the OC temperament were to be known to a student and the student's teacher or supervisor, cycles of ineffective social signaling, maladaptive anxiety management, and poor communication could be attended to. Teachers and supervisors could use knowledge of the OC temperament to increase empathy and understanding for the student, while utilizing principles such as neuroception and pro-social signaling to build relationship. The research suggests that from a position of positive relationship, the feedback process would be improved. Students could also use knowledge of the OC temperament to address tendencies towards blocking out feedback and avoiding closeness in relationships.

Researchers have recommended that students be instructed about (Alexander & Hulse-Killacky, 2005) or oriented to the process of receiving feedback (Hulse & Robert, 2014). A

model was even tested for teaching the skills of giving and receiving feedback, as well as helping students to explore their personal beliefs about feedback. Swank and McCarthy (2013; 2015) piloted a workshop for counseling students, in which first-year master's students participated in role plays, discussions, and writing exercises. Students who participated in the workshop appeared to increase in self-efficacy related to giving and receiving feedback, and some experienced changes in their beliefs about feedback. Notably, however, it was observed that long-standing beliefs, especially those rooted in childhood experiences, were resistant to change (Swank & McCarthy, 2015). The workshop also included activities such as an ice-breaker involving sitting back-to-back with a stranger and attempting an activity together, as well as giving feedback to other students right away (Swank & McCarthy, 2013). Even though attempts were made to build rapport and create a sense of safety (Swank & McCarthy, 2013), these activities might be too threatening to an OC student, who is unlikely to feel comfortable engaging in social activities right away or hearing feedback about personal performance from strangers, in front of others. An OC-specific training could target the core deficits of OC coping, including the behaviors which specifically block feedback.

Receiving critical feedback can be difficult for anyone because it can be a threat to the ego (Trees et al., 2009). Hearing feedback can be even more challenging for OC individuals, who are already more threat-sensitive than others (Lynch, 2018a). In the setting of higher learning, it is crucial that students be able to not only hear feedback, but to be open enough to the new information that they are able to process it and make meaning of that which they are learning (Esterhazy & Damşa, 2017). Students must have the ability to act upon feedback and apply it to new learning opportunities (Price et al., 2010). It is likely that due to their inhibited temperaments and difficulty being open to new information (Lynch, 2018a), OC individuals have

impaired feedback orientation. If so, students who are OC may need specific coaching in order to increase their receptivity to feedback (London & Smither, 2002), and therefore be successful in counselor training programs. If OC is a factor in feedback receptivity within counselor preparation programs, it is presently unknown; the effects are unexamined and interventions are not being made available.

### **Summary**

The feedback literature suggests that critical feedback is a complex mental construct (Geddes & Linnehan, 1996) and that receiving critical feedback may direct the recipient's attention away from task performance and toward emotional reactions (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996). The research about feedback orientation indicates that personal differences related to receptivity and openness influence the feedback experience and that the recipient has an important role in the feedback process (Linderbaum & Levy, 2010; London & Smither, 2002). The emotional elements of feedback and the responsibility of the recipient also emerged as themes within the research pertaining to classroom and supervisory settings. In both environments, students have been observed to struggle with receiving critical feedback (Hoffman et al., 2005; O'Donovan, 2017) and in both settings, the mindset of the feedback recipient has been observed to influence feedback interpretation (Alexander & Hulse-Killacky, 2005; Winstone et al., 2017).

In this chapter, RO DBT was proposed as a possible framework for understanding feedback orientation, particularly as it pertains to the trait of OC, which is associated with feedback-rejecting behavior (Lynch, 2018a). If OC is a contributing factor in the phenomenon of counseling students having difficulty accepting feedback, the research literature is lacking in data. The present study seeks to extend the literature of counselor education and supervision by

examining a possible correlation between measures of OC and feedback receptivity in counselor training programs.

## **CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHOD**

### **Design**

This research was conducted with a quantitative design, with several open-ended questions added for the purposes of providing explanatory data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Several measurement instruments were included and additional demographic information was collected. Participants answered questions about the degree to which they identify with characteristics of OC, their experiences with feedback in the classroom setting, and their experiences with clinical supervision, if applicable. Respondents who have not participated in any clinical supervision were asked to skip the supervision measure.

Quantitative data was used to explore possible correlations between OC and openness to feedback from instructors, as well as correlations between OC and attitudes towards supervisory feedback and evaluation. Qualitative data was used to explore themes related to the experience of receiving and processing feedback.

### **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

- RQ1: What is the relationship between counseling student emotional control and accepting feedback within the classroom setting?
- RQ2: What is the relationship between counseling student emotional control and accepting feedback within the supervisory relationship?
- H<sub>0</sub>1: There is no relationship between the degree of emotional control present for the student and the student's openness or receptivity to feedback in the classroom.
- H<sub>1</sub>: Students who rate higher on scales of emotional overcontrol will express less interest in teacher feedback and more negativity toward receiving feedback from teachers.



- H<sub>02</sub>: There is no relationship between the degree of emotional control present for the student and the student's openness or receptivity to supervisor feedback.
- H<sub>2</sub>: Students who rate higher on scales of emotional overcontrol will express more negative emotions toward supervisory feedback and less satisfaction with the supervisory relationship.

### **Institutional Review Board and Ethical Assurances**

This study involved human subjects, and therefore was presented to and approved by the Antioch University Seattle Institutional Review Board. A waiver and acknowledgement was included at the beginning of the survey, indicating possible risks and benefits, reminding participants that they could stop the survey at any time, and providing contact information. The waiver statement appears with the survey in Appendix A. The potential risks of this research were expected to be no more than minimal. Participants filled out surveys, which could have caused minor emotional distress.

Measurement instruments were used with permission. The first author of each instrument was contacted via e-mail and provided with a brief explanation of the purpose of the study. Permission to use the instruments without compensation was granted by each author.

Data was stored on digital spreadsheets on the investigator's private computer. The data was password protected and reviewed only by the investigator and one committee member. E-mail addresses for the incentive drawing were stored on a separate spreadsheet, not connected to other survey answers, and were used only for selecting gift card winners. Five gift card winners, selected via random number generator, were contacted at the end of the study and provided with \$25 e-gift cards to Amazon.

## **Participants and Recruitment**

Participants for this study were students enrolled at the master's level in counselor training programs. Individuals at all stages of the degree process were accepted, due to the importance of feedback for all students. Participation was limited to master's level students because they are unlikely to have participated in training to become counselor supervisors, whereas doctoral-level students might have such training. Supervisor training could have potentially biased the results because the participant might have responded from the perspective of the supervisor and not strictly as the student/supervisee. Additionally, the target audience for the research results are counselor educators and supervisors, who are likely to need data relevant to their master's level trainees.

Participants were recruited via e-mail listservs (CESNET [for counselor educators and supervisors], COUNSGRADS [for counseling graduate students], and RO-DBT-listserv [for RO DBT practitioners and trainers]), a posted flyer at the American Counseling Association conference, and outreach to individual counseling department program chairs and coordinators. The program leadership of individual universities were identified by using a directory of counseling programs; only those whose e-mail addresses were readily available on the associated university's website were contacted. Faculty were asked to send the survey to master's students. In total, 114 schools were contacted. Survey participation was incentivized with the chance to win one of five \$25 gift cards.

## **Survey**

There were five formal instruments included in the survey tool: three measures related to overcontrol, one measure pertaining to feedback within the classroom setting, and one measure related to satisfaction with the supervisory relationship. All other questions were generated by

the investigator. The survey took an average of 17 minutes to complete, according to data collected by SurveyMonkey.

### **Measures of Overcontrol**

Several instruments are used by Radically Open Ltd, the institute associated with RO DBT, to research and measure OC, including the Personal Need for Structure and the Acceptance and Action Questionnaire-II (Lynch, 2018a). An additional instrument, the OC Trait Rating Scale was provided to the investigator by one of its developers (R. Hemple) for the purpose of this inquiry. This instrument is currently unpublished.

Several other scales were reviewed and rejected for use in this project. For example, the Corrective Feedback Instrument-Revised (Hulse-Killacky, Orr & Paradis, 2006), was considered but not used because the instrument focuses on feedback within group settings and contains numerous questions about giving feedback, which was not the focus on this study. The Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (Gross & John, 2003), which evaluates the emotional regulation strategies of reappraisal and repression, was determined to be measuring a similar but different construct. The wording of this measure might have been confusing and the output data would not have added any information not already provided by the OC Trait Rating Scale.

**Personal Need for Structure.** The Personal Need for Structure (PNS) was developed by Thompson, Naccarato, and Parker (1992), and was re-validated and modified by Neuberg and Newsom (1993). Neuberg and Newsom adapted the 12-item instrument to an 11-item instrument, utilizing a six-item Likert scale with answers ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” A higher score indicates a higher need for structure. The PNS evaluates two factors: the desire for structure in everyday life, and the response to lack of structure. An individual who desires structure, per this model, prefers to impose structure upon situations in

order to reduce ambiguity, generally prefers orderliness, dislikes unpredictability, may rely more heavily upon stereotypes, and prefers certainty and decisiveness (Thompson, Naccarato, Moskowitz & Parker, 2001). Sample items include:

- I enjoy having a clear and structured mode of life.
- I don't like situations that are uncertain.
- I find that a consistent routine enables me to enjoy my life more.

In a study of six groups of undergraduate students, totaling over 2,900 participants, the internal reliability of the PNS and the two factors were found to be adequate (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .77$ ), as was the test-retest reliability ( $r = .79$ ). The concept of desire for simple structure, and the ability of the PNS to operationalize this concept, was evaluated by comparing the PNS to a number of other instruments, including the Big Five Inventory of the Omni Personality Survey (John, Donahue, & Kentle, 1991), the Social Anxiety subscale of the Self-Consciousness Scale (Taylor, 1953), and the Routinization Scale (Reich & Zautra, 1991). Neuberg and Newsom (1993) identified that the PNS had "reasonably good" convergent and discriminant validity and a unique ability to measure the desire for simple structure.

The PNS is applicable to the present study because individuals with a higher desire for simple structure were identified as more likely to apply existing beliefs or social constructs to new and ambiguous situations (Neuberg & Newsom, 1993), which suggests that these individuals did not readily take in new feedback or adapt flexibly to new situations. Data from the validation studies also suggested that the desire for simple structure is a relatively stable trait. The authors stated that individuals who score highly on the PNS are likely to use confirmatory hypothesis-testing strategies which help them resist change (Neuberg & Newsom, 1993).

The 11-item PNS validated by Neuberg and Newsom was used in the survey. In the present sample, the internal reliability was .825.

**Acceptance and Action Questionnaire-II.** The Acceptance and Action Questionnaire-II (AAQ-II) (Bond, Hayes, Baer, Carpenter, Guenole, Orcutt, Waltz, & Zettle, 2011) is a seven-item scale measuring the single factor of psychological inflexibility. The AAQ-II uses a seven-point Likert scale with answers ranging from “never true” to “always true.” A higher score indicates a higher degree of psychological inflexibility. Sample items include:

- I’m afraid of my feelings.
- It seems like most people are handling their lives better than I am.
- Worries get in the way of my success.

The AAQ-II was validated with several samples (undergraduate students, substance misuse patients in a hospital setting, and employees of a bank), with sample sizes ranging from 290 to 583 participants (Bond et al., 2011). Convergent and discriminate validity was evaluated with the use of numerous psychometric tests, including the Beck Depression Inventory-II (Beck, Steer, & Brown, 1996), the Beck Anxiety Inventory (Beck & Steer, 1990), the Global Severity Index of the Symptom Checklist-90-Revised (DeRogatis, 1992), and the White Bear Suppression Inventory (Wegner & Zanakos, 1994). The internal reliability of the seven items in the AAQ-II ranged from .78 to .87 and two 12-month test-retest studies demonstrated reliability measures of .79 and .81 (Bond et al., 2011).

The AAQ-II was initially developed within the framework of acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT), though has been used in research pertaining to dialectical behavior therapy and cognitive behavior therapy, as well as work with chronic pain patients.

Psychological inflexibility in the context of ACT pertains to an individual’s difficulty with

making non-defensive contact with the present moment and acting based upon values instead of emotional reactivity. A psychologically inflexible individual will allow their emotions and existing cognitive structures to dominate the decision-making process (Bond et al., 2011). The AAQ-II is a helpful instrument for the present inquiry because such behavior would be expected from an individual who was not accepting feedback. The AAQ-II has also been shown to have predictive validity for outcomes such as job satisfaction, future absenteeism, and future job performance ( $r = .42$ ) (Hayes, Luoma, Bond, Masuda, & Lillis, 2006, as cited in Bond et al., 2011).

The full AAQ-II was used in the survey. In the present study, internal reliability was .886.

**OC Trait Rating Scale.** The OC Trait Rating Scale (OC-TRS) (Seretis, Hemple, & Lynch, 2015) is a 24-item tool, using a six-point Likert scale response ranging from “disagree completely” to “completely agree.” The OC-TRS was designed to measure eight domains of the OC trait: low openness to experience, low affiliation needs, negative emotionality, low positive emotionality, emotion expression inhibition, high moral certitude, compulsive striving, and high detail-focused processing. A higher score indicates a higher degree of alignment with the OC trait. Example items from this scale include:

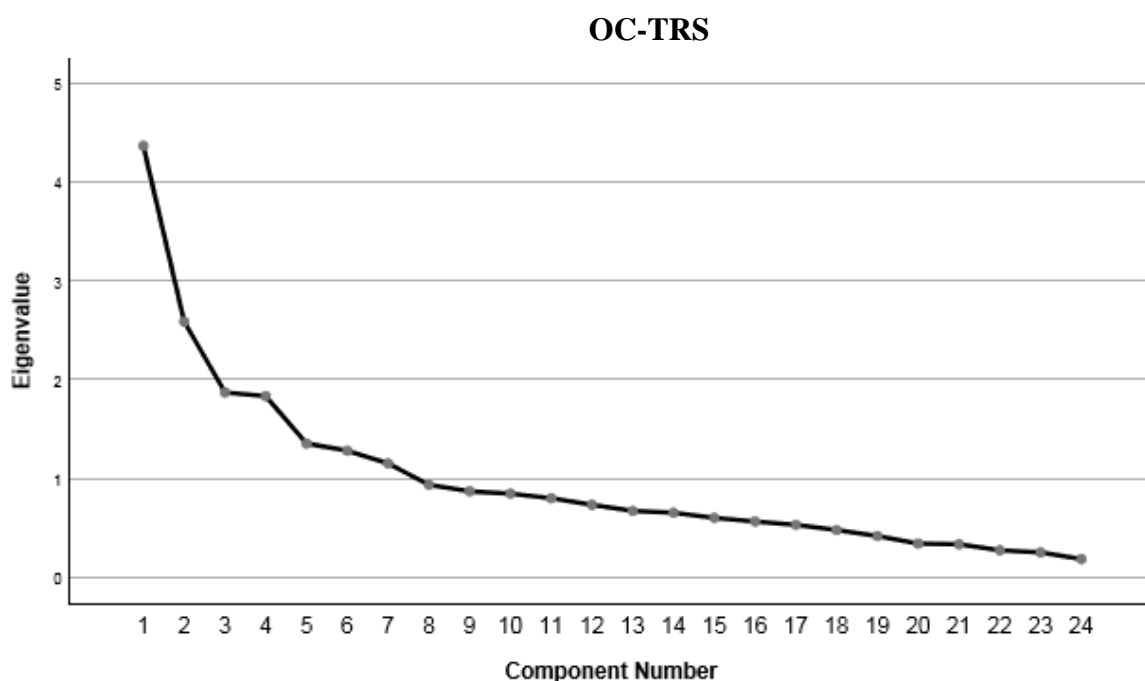
- On the surface I appear calm, but inwardly I am often fearful or irritable.
- When challenged by someone I tend to immediately deny, dismiss, or dispute the feedback.
- Having to be around others for long periods of time is exhausting.

The OC-TRS is still being researched by its creators. Researcher Roelie Hemple was, however, able to provide some preliminary research data about the reliability of this instrument.

In a sample of 253 university students, the OC-TRS had an internal reliability rating of .85 using Cronbach's alpha (personal communication, September 4, 2018).

In the present sample, Cronbach's alpha was .752, indicating an acceptable internal reliability. Due to the limited information available about this measurement tool, factor analysis of the OC-TRS was also conducted with the present research data. Factor analysis did not confirm the eight-domain model. Eigenvalues were greater than 1.0 for seven factors, as shown in Figure 1. Additionally, cross loading is evident among items, as shown in Table 1. As this study was not intended to further develop the OC-TRS, no attempt was made to label the seven components.

**Figure 1.** *OC-TRS Scree Plot*



**Table 1.** *Rotated Component Matrix of the OC-TRS*

	Component						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Having to be around others for long periods of time is exhausting.	0.738						
Very few people really know the real me.	0.731						
I often mask or hide my inner feelings from others.	0.717						
I often feel detached from others.	0.616						
If I'm invited to a party I usually attend out of obligation, not because I expect it to be fun.	0.608						
I feel content with my life.		0.745					
I find something positive or amusing in almost every situation.		0.74					
I always make time for enjoyment and fun.	0.303	0.704					
Most of the time life seems easy.		0.55					-0.363
Most things in life don't work out.		0.518					
I am sometimes so open to new ideas that people have described me as naïve or gullible.			-0.712				
Very few people know that I can have an explosive temper.	0.322		0.551				
My dream life involves having a new experience every day.		0.351	-0.513				
On the surface, I appear calm, but inwardly I am often fearful or irritable.	0.395	0.385	0.512				
I often notice errors that other people miss.				0.711			
I often feel compelled to correct mistakes made by others.			0.345	0.609			
I dislike details.				0.602			
I am proud of my ability to tolerate pain or distress order to achieve a goal.		-0.301		0.463		0.313	



**Table 1.** (continued)

My mind often goes black when I have to speak about my feelings.	0.327			-0.436	0.338		0.301
There is always a right and a wrong way to do things.					0.859		
In life, there is a set of rules and principles that one should always adhere to.					0.786		
When challenged by someone I tend to immediately deny, dismiss, or dispute the feedback.						0.845	
My anxiety often interferes with my ability to hear what another person is saying.			0.351			0.581	
Most people may not know that I will do almost anything to get ahead.							0.864

*Note.* Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. Rotation converged in 10 iterations.

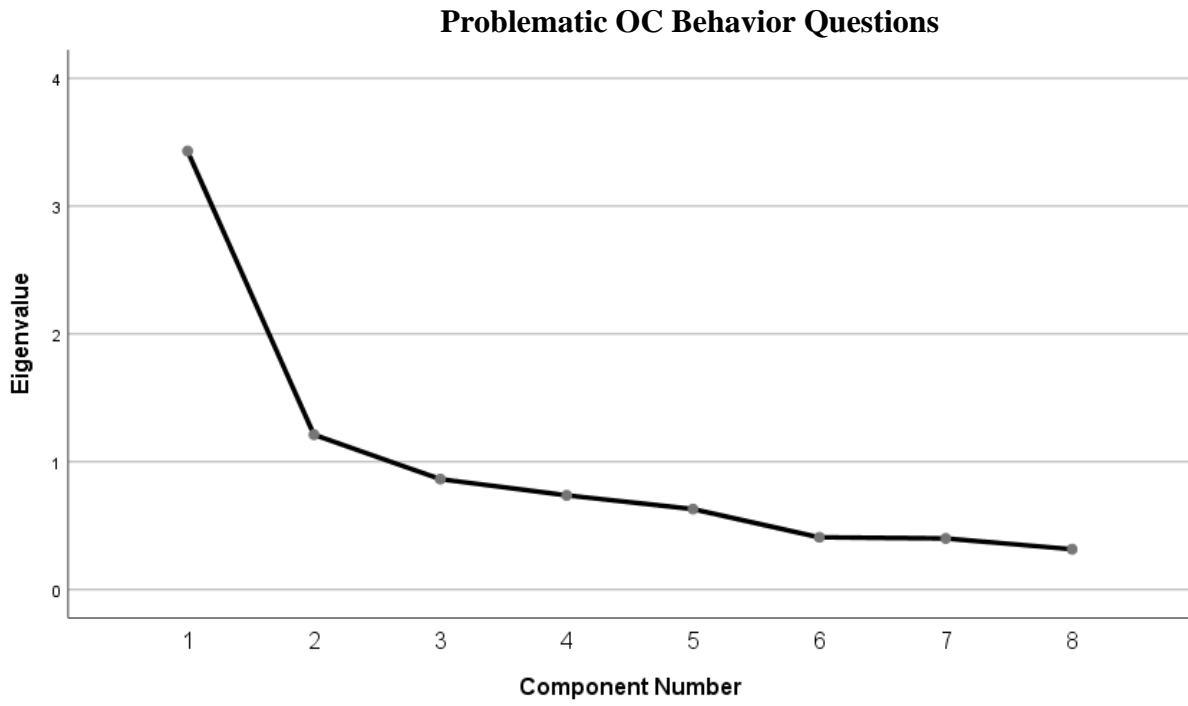
**Problematic OC behavior questions.** In addition to the above instruments, participants were asked to address items specific to typical maladaptive OC behaviors which are likely to occur in response to feedback. Behavior was conceptualized to include thinking. Eight quantitative, Likert-scale items were developed by the investigator, based on the OC literature, and adjusted with the assistance of an RO DBT content expert, Dr. Nicole Little. Answers ranged from “never true” to “always true.” The items about maladaptive OC behavior were:

- When I get feedback about my work, I can move on quickly because I have already worked out the problem, know the answer, or have done the necessary self-reflection about the issue being discussed. (*Intended to evaluate for fixed mind*).
- When I get corrective feedback, I feel hopeless about ever being able to do it right. (*Intended to evaluate for fatalistic mind*).

- I get frustrated with feedback because it seems that my supervisor or teacher just doesn't understand that I *can't* do what it is that they want. (*Intended to evaluate for fixed mind*).
- When I get feedback about my work, it feels like the evaluator is commenting about who I am as a person. (*Intended to evaluate for fixed mind*).
- When I get negative feedback, I think that I visibly look ashamed or shut down. (*Intended to evaluate for don't-hurt-me behavior*).
- I can get other people to back off or leave me alone with just my facial expression. (*Intended to evaluate for pushback behavior*).
- People need to give me their feedback gently, or else I will be too sad or upset to take it in. (*Intended to evaluate for don't-hurt-me behavior*).
- I have to correct others because they give me feedback without understanding me first. (*Intended to evaluate for pushback behavior*).

Internal reliability within the present sample was acceptable (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .707$ ). Factor analysis supported a two-factor model, as shown in Figure 2. The rotated component matrix (Table 2) suggests that the questions did not, as intended, fully evaluate for the factors of fixed mind, fatalistic mind, don't-hurt-me behavior, and pushback behavior. However, the analysis does suggest that internalized states (mindsets) and externalized behaviors did cluster together. The one item that loaded almost equally on the two factors ("I have to correct others because they give me feedback without understanding me first") may have done so because it suggests both a mindset (perceiving oneself as misunderstood) and a behavior (correcting others).

**Figure 2.** *Problematic OC Behavior Scree Plot*



**Table 2.** *Rotated Component Matrix of the Problematic OC Behavior Questions*

	Component	
	1	2
When I get feedback about my work, I can move on quickly because I have already worked out the problem, know the answer, or have done the necessary self-reflection about the issue being discussed.	.766	
When I get corrective feedback, I feel hopeless about ever being able to do it right.	.749	
I get frustrated with feedback because it seems that my supervisor or teacher just doesn't understand that I can't do what it is that they want.	<b>.768</b>	.308
When I get feedback, it feels like the evaluator is commenting about who I am as a person.	-.606	
When I get negative feedback, I think that I visibly look ashamed or shut down.		.781
I can get other people to back off or leave me alone with just my facial expression.		.716
People need to give me their feedback gently, or else I will be too sad or upset to take it in.	.346	<b>.691</b>
I have to correct others because they give me feedback without understanding me first.	.540	.556

*Note.* Factor loadings > .3 difference are in boldface, indicating a significantly stronger loading to that component. Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

### Measures of Feedback Orientation and Satisfaction

There were two instruments to explore feedback orientation and satisfaction with relationships in which respondents receive training feedback. One measure assessed the classroom setting and the other measure assessed clinical supervision. Only individuals who had experienced clinical supervision in practicum or internship were asked to complete the supervisory measure.

**Instructional Feedback Orientation Scale.** The Instructional Feedback Orientation Scale (IFOS) (King, Schrod, & Weisel, 2009) is a 27-item instrument measuring four factors related to accepting and processing feedback within the classroom setting: feedback utility (the

perception that feedback is useful and valuable for improving academic performance), feedback sensitivity (the degree to which the student feels threatened or intimidated by corrective feedback), feedback confidentiality (concerns related to receiving feedback publicly or privately), and feedback retention (the degree to which the feedback was remembered or retained for future use). Participants respond to each item using a five-point Likert scale with answers ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” Sample items include:

- I will usually reflect on a teacher’s feedback.
- Corrective feedback hurts my feelings.
- I typically do not make note of the teacher’s corrective comments.

For the purposes of designing this instrument, feedback was defined as actions taken by an external agent to provide information about task performance. Specifically, feedback was considered an action intended to bring attention to the discrepancy between performance and performance standards. The researchers hoped to develop an instrument which could, in part, provide details about a student’s personal feedback orientation style, allowing for instructors to tailor their feedback to the student’s needs (King et al., 2009).

Two studies were conducted during the development and validation of the IFOS, utilizing sample sizes of 212 and 245 undergraduate students, respectively. Internal reliability tests of the four factors resulted in Cronbach’s alpha measures of .69 for retention, .74 for confidentiality, .86 for sensitivity, and .88 for utility (King et al., 2009). Construct validity was measured with a number of instruments, including the Communication Competency Assessment Instrument (Rubin, 1982), the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (Pintrich & DeGroot, 1990), the Information Reception Apprehension Test (Wheless, Eddleman-Spears, Magness, & Preiss,

1997), and Andersen's affect scale (1979). Analysis supported the four-factor model, modest concurrent validity, and sufficient discriminant validity (King et al., 2009).

All four subscales were included in the survey. In the present sample, internal reliability (Cronbach's alpha) for the subscales were as follows: .676 for retention, .821 for confidentiality, .873 for sensitivity, and .718 for utility. Given that the sub-scales represent different constructs and do not describe one unified paradigm, no overall measure of internal reliability was taken.

**Evaluation Process within Supervision Inventory.** The Evaluation Process within Supervision Inventory (EPSI) (Lehrman-Waterman & Ladany, 2001) is a 21-item inventory which measures two factors related to evaluation within counselor supervision: goal setting (13 items) and feedback (eight items). The EPSI was designed to assess the effectiveness of supervision. After examining the literature, the authors identified that goal setting and feedback (both formative and summative) are consistently associated with quality supervision and supervisee satisfaction. Participants respond using a seven-point Likert scale, with answers ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Sample items include:

- My supervisor and I created objectives which were measurable.
- The appraisal I received from my supervisor seemed impartial.
- My supervisor balanced his or her feedback between positive and negative statements.

The EPSI was validated with a study consisting of 247 counselor trainees. Internal reliability of the two sub-scales varied; Cronbach's alpha measured .89 for the goal-setting factor, and .69 for the feedback factor. The lower reliability of the feedback scale was hypothesized to occur in part because the feedback items measure related but distinct concepts, such as the supervisor's openness to feedback about their own work and the supervisee receiving a formal summative evaluation at the end of the semester (Lehrman-Waterman & Ladany, 2001).

Construct validity was assessed using the Working Alliance Inventory (Bahrck, 1990), the Self-Efficacy Inventory (Friedlander & Snyder, 1983), and the Supervisee Satisfaction Questionnaire (Ladany et al.,1999). The two sub-scales of the EPSI correlated positively with working alliance and satisfaction with supervision (Lehrman-Waterman & Ladany, 2001).

All items of the EPSI were included in the survey. Internal reliability for the entire instrument in the present sample was .897. The subscales scored .873 for goal setting, and .765 for feedback.

### **Additional Questions**

Three open-ended items were included, to evaluate feedback orientation generally. The qualitative items were included for the purposes of providing explanatory data and to supplement the quantitative data. These qualitative items were created by the investigator, based on the feedback literature:

- Please describe an experience which you would describe as a positive experience with receiving feedback.
- Please describe an experience which you would describe as a negative experience with receiving feedback.
- If you could give your supervisors or teachers one piece of advice about how to give appropriate feedback, what would that be?

Lastly, demographic information was collected. Demographic information included age, gender, race or ethnicity, the number of months of school the student had completed, and whether or not the student is attending a CACREP accredited program. The complete survey appears in Appendix A.

### Operational Definitions of Variables

Most of the quantitative variables in this study are derived from the measurement instruments above. The variable of potentially maladaptive OC was operationalized based upon the research literature.

- **Need for structure:** The desire for structure in everyday life, including preferences for orderliness, certainty, and decisiveness, and dislike for ambiguity and unpredictability. Need for structure is measured by the Personal Need for Structure scale. Need for structure is an ordinal variable, in which a higher score indicates a higher need for structure. The possible range of scores is 12-72 (Thompson et al., 2001).
- **Psychological inflexibility:** A state of rigidity, in which an individual responds to internal reactions or adheres to rigid rules instead of maintaining contact with the present moment and choosing to act according to values and goals. Psychological inflexibility is measured by the Acceptance and Action Questionnaire-II. Psychological inflexibility is an ordinal variable, in which a higher score indicates a higher degree of psychological inflexibility. The possible range of scores is 7-49 (Bond et al., 2011).
- **OC-trait:** A disposition characterized by low receptivity and openness to novelty or feedback, low tolerance for ambiguity and a high need for structure, pervasive inhibition of emotional expression, and low social connectedness (Lynch, 2018a). This variable is measured by the OC Trait Rating Scale. OC-trait is an ordinal variable, in which a higher score indicates a closer association with the OC style. The possible range of scores is 24-144 (Seretis et al., 2015).
- **Problematic OC behavior:** The degree to which an individual might engage in overcontrolled coping in response to disconfirming feedback. Problematic OC behavior



is an ordinal variable, measured by the problematic OC behavior questions. A higher score indicates a stronger tendency to engage in OC coping behaviors in response to unwanted feedback. The possible range of scores is 8-56.

- **Potentially maladaptive OC:** The presence of both OC-trait and problematic OC behaviors, in which the participant scored in the top 75<sup>th</sup> percentile on both measures. Potentially maladaptive OC is a nominal variable, identifying that the individual endorses both the OC personality style and problematic behaviors, suggesting that OC may manifest in ways which prevent the student from effectively receiving feedback. The degree to which OC may be actually inhibiting success in the academic setting is unknown without more data, and therefore the variable is labeled *potentially* maladaptive. This variable was used to better understand qualitative data.
- **Feedback utility:** The perception that instructor feedback is useful and valuable for improving performance in the academic setting. Feedback utility is an ordinal variable measured by the corresponding subscale of the IFOS. A higher score indicates a stronger belief that feedback is useful. The possible range of scores is 10-50 (King et al., 2009).
- **Feedback sensitivity:** The degree to which a student feels threatened or intimidated by corrective feedback from instructors. Feedback sensitivity is an ordinal variable measured by the corresponding subscale of the IFOS. A higher score indicates a stronger belief that corrective feedback is embarrassing. The possible range of scores is 9-45 (King et al., 2009).
- **Feedback confidentiality:** The preference for instructor feedback to be given privately. Feedback confidentiality is an ordinal variable measured by the corresponding subscale

of the IFOS. A higher score indicates a stronger belief that feedback is appropriate if it is given in private. The possible range of scores is 5-25 (King et al., 2009).

- **Feedback retention:** The degree to which instructor feedback is remembered or retained for future use in academic work. Feedback retention is an ordinal variable measured by the corresponding subscale of the IFOS. A higher score indicates worse retention of instructor feedback<sup>1</sup>. The possible range of scores is 3-15 (King et al., 2009).
- **Satisfaction with supervision efficacy:** The degree to which a supervisee believes that their supervisor is providing effective and appropriate evaluation. Satisfaction with supervision efficacy is an ordinal variable measured by both subscales of the EPSI. A higher score suggests a stronger working alliance and indicates higher satisfaction with the supervisor's ability to structure goal-setting and provide appropriate feedback within the supervisory relationship. The possible range of scores is 21-147 (Lehrman-Waterman & Ladany, 2001).
- **Satisfaction with supervision feedback:** The degree to which a supervisee believes that their supervisor is providing effective and appropriate feedback. Satisfaction with supervisor feedback is an ordinal variable measured by the feedback subscale of the EPSI. A higher score suggests a stronger working alliance and indicates higher satisfaction with the manner in which the supervisor gives and receives feedback.

Although this variable is part of the satisfaction with supervision efficacy item, it is a different level of detail and represents a construct which has more specific meaning to the

---

<sup>1</sup> Other studies using the IFOS may use reverse coding for this subscale, in which a higher score would indicate better retention of feedback. The developers of the IFOS intended for reverse coding of these items but did not mark these items for reverse coding in their article. As such, these items were coded as presented. Because the subscale is used as an independent variable, with no need for the score to contribute to a larger construct, the coding was not changed.

research questions. The possible range of scores is 8-56 (Lehrman-Waterman & Ladany, 2001).

### **Quantitative Analysis**

Before data was analyzed, blank surveys (ended immediately after agreeing to participate) were deleted, reducing the number of respondents from 169 to 143. Another 10 responses were deleted because the participants stopped filling out the survey before completing enough of the instruments to allow for correlational analysis, leaving a total of 133 usable surveys.

### **Scoring of Instruments**

Each measurement instrument was scored as an entire scale, by subscales, or both, according to the variable definitions above. There were a small number of missing values within the instrument data. Five participants left one missing value each in the OC-TRS, six participants left one missing value each in the IFOS, two participants left one missing value each in the PNS, two participants left one missing value each in the EPSI, and one participant left a missing value in the problematic OC behavior questions. The total amount of missing data was below 5%, allowing for values imputation. Several missing values imputation models were considered. Replacing missing data with the series mean was rejected because this method would not preserve the relationship between variables. The mean and median of nearby points were also rejected because column values would not necessarily represent the likely scores of the individual and row values provided enough data about each individual to compare respondents to themselves instead of participants nearby within the data set.

The OC-TRS scoring guidelines state that missing data should be replaced by averaging the scores of the most closely related items, as defined by the domains (Seretis et al., 2015).

Despite a factor analysis suggesting that the domains may not align as clearly as the authors intended, this practice was followed to replace the five missing values within the OC-TRS, to comply with the scoring guidelines. Missing data for the PNS, IFOS, EPSI, and problematic OC behavior questions was also replaced with this method, utilizing the subscales of each measure as a basis for mean scores. The small amount of missing data allowed for this practice. Using each participants' own data to create a mean score for the missing values helped preserve the ability to compare the variables of instrument scores.

### **Statistics**

Quantitative analysis was performed in SPSS Statistics version 25. Tests of normality identified that much of the data was non-normally distributed. Shapiro-Wilk tests identified  $p$  values as follows: .474 for the PNS, .010 for the AAQ-II, .527 for the OC-TRS, .000 for the problematic OC behavior questions, .000 for the retention subscale of the IFOS, .004 for the confidentiality subscale, .051 for the sensitivity subscale, .000 for the utility subscale, .000 for the EPSI, and .000 for the feedback subscale of the EPSI. Instruments with  $p$  values below .05 are those with distributions deviating from the norm.

The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (Pearson's  $r$ ) was used for all comparative analysis. The Pearson coefficient has been demonstrated to be an effective analysis method for non-normal distributions and is most commonly used for correlational analysis (Puth, Neuhäuser, & Ruxton, 2014). Additionally, using the Pearson coefficient with Likert-scale data and non-normal distributions has not been found to reduce the robustness or accuracy of the analysis (Norman, 2010).

To answer RQ1 (What is the relationship between counseling student emotional control and accepting feedback within the classroom setting?) variables associated with overcontrol

(need for structure, psychological inflexibility, OC-trait, and problematic OC behavior) were compared to variables related to instructional feedback (feedback utility, feedback sensitivity, feedback confidentiality, and feedback retention). Each combination of variables was independently examined using Pearson's  $r$ . To answer RQ2 (What is the relationship between counseling student emotional control and accepting feedback within the supervisory relationship?) the variables related to OC were compared to the variables related to the supervisory relationship (satisfaction with supervision efficacy and satisfaction with supervision feedback). Again, each variable combination was independently examined with Pearson's  $r$ . The measurement instruments associated OC were also compared to each other, using Pearson's  $r$ , to explore the degree to which the instruments may have been measuring the same construct.

Additionally, stepwise regression was conducted to assess for the degree to which the individual measures of OC might account for scores on the IFOS (the EPSI was not included because correlations were not significant). Stepwise regression was also used to examine the possible influence of the demographic variables of age and number of months of training completed. In the regression analyses, IFOS subscale scores were used as outcome variables and measures associated with OC, as well as age and time in training, were used as predictor variables.

## **Qualitative Analysis**

### **Description of Method**

Qualitative analysis was conducted using the method of thematic analysis (TA) defined and distinguished by Braun and Clarke (2006). TA is a *method*, or tool of qualitative analysis, as opposed to a *methodology*, such as grounded theory or phenomenological analysis. In such methodologies "theory is inbuilt, and ideal research questions, methods of data collection and

sampling procures are defined or delimited” (Clarke & Braun, 2018, p. 109), whereas the method of TA is flexible and may be informed by any number of theories, including counseling theories (Clarke & Braun, 2018). Researchers using TA apply theory with intention, transparency, and the recognition that theory is not only crucial for analysis, but that the researcher’s subjectivity and decision-making is an asset to the research (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2018). The theoretical flexibility of TA is appropriate to research utilizing the theory of RO DBT because TA is relevant to both essentialist and constructionist research perspectives (Braun & Clarke, 2006), thereby offering a framework appropriate to a biopsychosocial theory which recognizes both biological variables and social constructs.

TA is intended to be used as a fully qualitative approach, separate from the positivist ideology (Clarke & Braun, 2018) which is suggested by quantitative research. The decision to use TA to support a quantitative study is likely not entirely congruent with the intentions of the developers, but the flexibility of the method and the need for a framework which allows for open exploration of the qualitative data still made it the best choice for this study. The qualitative questions of the present inquiry were intended to add richness to the overall picture of feedback in counselor training programs, and not to provide a definitive answer, which allowed for TA to be used alongside a quantitative philosophy, in what Clarke and Braun (2018) have referred to as “small q” TA (as opposed to fully qualitative “big Q” TA). To maintain the philosophical intention of open qualitative inquiry, the qualitative data was analyzed first, without prior review of the quantitative data.

A theme in TA is defined as a pattern of meaning. A theme is more than a collection of data points or a holding container for related quotes; rather, a theme captures the essence or core quality of the research data (Clarke & Braun, 2018). Data is coded and the codes are then

composed into themes utilizing a non-linear process, which allows for movement back and forth between phases. The phases of TA are (1) becoming familiar with the data, conducted by reading and re-reading the data several times, (2) generating initial codes by systematically coding all relevant data points across the data set, (3) collating codes into initial themes, (4) reviewing themes, checking for fit to the coded data extracts and overall data set, (5) defining and naming themes, generating clear descriptions of each element, and (6) producing a final report which uses relevant data extracts to address the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In each stage, researchers make decisions such as whether to explore the general themes of the data or a specific detail, to conduct an inductive or theoretical thematic analysis, to explore semantic or latent themes, and to use an essentialist or constructionist analysis. Each decision is guided by the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

### **Coding of All Data**

In the present study, 107 participants responded to at least one open-ended prompt. The three prompts collectively had 312 data extracts. The data was read in its entirety several times before any coding was conducted (phase one). At this level of analysis, data was grouped by prompt. Important statements were coded using inductive analysis, without any attempt made to match the data to theory or any existing coding structures; the intention was to maintain a data-driven analysis of the material (phase two). Theoretical thematic analysis at phase three identified initial themes which began to group the data by concepts related to RO DBT. The themes were then reviewed and those with the same essential meaning were clustered, while those with unique meanings were distinguished. The final codes were then compared to the entire data set to evaluate for fit with the total picture of the data (phase four). During phase five, naming and defining themes, a constructionist perspective was utilized, in recognition of the

social and relational meaning which is built into feedback. Finally, in phase six, data extracts were identified which vividly illustrated each theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

### **Coding of Potentially Maladaptive OC Data**

The open-ended prompts in this study were intended to provide explanatory data about feedback and OC. Therefore, once thematic analysis was completed for the entire data set, the data was sorted to identify participants which most likely meet criteria for maladaptive OC. The OC TRS and questions pertaining to problematic OC behaviors were used, to select those participants who both endorsed OC-trait and a history of behaviors associated with maladaptive OC coping. To truly identify maladaptive OC according to standard protocols, however, each individual would need to be evaluated in person and with more data (Lynch, 2018a). These participants were therefore categorized as exhibiting *potentially maladaptive OC*.

Neither the OC-TRS or the measure of problematic OC behavior have identified cut-off scores. Using z-scores is a common approach to psychometrics which do not have defined cut-off scores (Riva, Teruzzi, & Anolli, 2003). Using quartile ranges is another method of identifying participants who differ meaningfully from their peers. The median score for the OC-TRS was 76 ( $M = 77.29$ ,  $SD = 11.445$ ) and the median of the problematic OC behavior questions was 22 ( $M = 22.61$ ,  $SD = 6.237$ ). In this data set, the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile scores were very similar to one standard deviation above the mean (a score of 85 for the OC-TRS, and 26 for the problematic OC behavior questions). Given the non-normal distribution of the OC-TRS scores and the similarity in selecting 75<sup>th</sup> percentile versus SD plus one, the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile was used as a cut-off for both the OC-TRS and the problematic OC behavior questions. Participants needed to score in the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile for both measures to be counted as exhibiting potentially maladaptive OC.



Individuals scoring within this range on both measures totaled 18. Of these participants, 12 provided qualitative data.

At this level of analysis, qualitative data was grouped by respondent instead of prompt, so that the answers to all three questions could be viewed together. This was done so that the thematic coding conducted during the analysis of all data could be checked against the experiences of the individual. This second check of accuracy was completed to help ensure that themes associated with students rating highly on OC scales were well-understood in context, to the degree possible. The themes of students rating highly on measures of OC were then compared to the entire qualitative data set, to look for areas of convergence and divergence.

### **Trustworthiness**

To improve the trustworthiness of the qualitative data, the investigator maintained several documents in addition to the final report. Similar to the reflexive journal commonly used in qualitative research, including TA, to document and explore personal values, biases, and insights (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017), but more congruent with RO DBT, a self-enquiry journal was kept during the analysis process. Additionally, copies of notes, initial codes, and decisions were maintained, which can be reviewed as a timeline of research choices, or potentially used as a research audit, in accordance with standards (Nowell et al., 2017).

### **Assumptions**

This research was conducted with several underlying assumptions in place. The assumption was made that feedback is an important element of the learning process. This belief is supported by research literature and counselor education practices (Al-Hattami, 2019; Finn & Metcalfe, 2010; McAuliffe & Eriksen, 2011). It was also assumed that because students and teachers may have differing understandings of the purposes of feedback (Dawson et al., 2019),

that conflicts could be arising when students receive feedback and are tasked with interpreting and applying the information.

A fundamental assumption underlying the present research is that feedback is a mutual process, in which both the sender and the receiver of the feedback play a role (Linderbaum & Levy, 2010). The recipient's personality, coping style, and behaviors are therefore believed to be important variables in the efficacy of the feedback process. The present research treats feedback recipients as equal partners in the work of integrating feedback for greater student learning.

This research would not be relevant unless problematic feedback behaviors and attitudes can be changed. Research suggests that various coping styles can be used to process the emotions associated with disconfirming feedback (Gross & Thompson, 2007), and that openness to new information can be learned (Lynch, 2018a). The assumption is made that maladaptive coping can be identified and change, for the benefit of counseling students.

### **Study Limitations**

This study was limited by several factors. Firstly, the OC-TRS has, to the best of the investigator's knowledge, never been used in a study of this nature. The instrument is still being validated and normed by its creators and results associated with the measure need to be interpreted with caution. The problematic OC behavior measure was also developed for this study and was not normed and validated ahead of its usage within the survey.

Biases within the sample also limit the generalizability of results. The response rate was low, potentially due in part to limited distribution by department chairs and leadership who opted not to participate. The sample contains an overrepresentation of women and white/Caucasian students. The nature of the study may also have inadvertently screened out a higher rate of under-controlled participants. OC people may be more likely to finish an online survey, even if

they find the work tedious, because OC individuals tend to have a higher degree of persistence and a stronger sense of obligation to others (Lynch, 2018a). It is unknown if the percentages of OC and under-controlled participants would have been different if the study had consisted of in-person interviews or a shorter survey. The design of the study also inherently excluded students whose behavior may have become so disruptive as to result in a suspension or expulsion from school.

Several survey construction problems also limit the research. There was a typo in the OC-TRS: The item reading “My mind often goes blank when I have to speak about my feelings” appeared in the survey as “My mind often goes black when I have to speak about my feelings.” The difference between “blank” and “black” may be of low significance in the interpretation of this statement, but any effect is unknown. Additionally, the open-ended prompts appeared immediately following the EPSI, and the wording of the prompts paired with this ordering of items may have primed participants to believe that they should answer the open-ended prompts in relation to the supervisor they considered for the EPSI, as opposed to more generally, which was the intention.

### **Study Delimitations**

This study was conducted to explore the possible relationship between OC and counseling students having difficulty accepting feedback. The purpose of this exploration was to generate data which could help to improve the efficacy of the feedback process and therefore improve student learning. Despite the limitations of the OC-TRS, it is a tool created by the developer of RO DBT and his colleagues, who are well familiar with the model. As such, this measurement is the most likely instrument available to capture the OC disposition and facilitate

the present inquiry. A content expert from the RO DBT organization was also consulted in regards to survey construction and the problematic OC behavior questions specifically.

The sample in this study was drawn from a population of master's level counseling students in the United States. The data in this study is most applicable to U.S.-based training programs and students who have matured professionally and personally beyond the level of undergraduate college work. Counseling students were targeted specifically because the nature of counselor training is distinctive: Emotional maturity, self-awareness, and interpersonal skills are professional competencies. Counseling students therefore have a specific relationship with the process of accepting and using feedback which may be different from students of other disciplines. The research literature suggests that despite the importance of feedback within counselor education, feedback is not always well received by students and may not be properly utilized. By investigating a possible factor related to the difficulties experienced by students, teachers, and clinical supervisors during the feedback process, this study adds to the knowledge available to counselor educators who wish to address feedback within training programs.

### **Summary**

This study was conducted with survey data, utilizing a quantitative design and several open-ended prompts for the purpose of explanatory data. The five formal measurement instruments all met satisfactory levels of internal reliability, as did the investigator-developed items measuring problematic OC behavior. Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS and the tools of the Pearson product-moment correlation and stepwise regression. Variables related to OC were compared to variables related to satisfaction with teacher and supervisor feedback. Qualitative data was examined using thematic analysis. Participants rating highly on OC-trait

and the measure of problematic OC behaviors were examined in comparison to the sample as a whole.

## CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

This chapter includes results of the quantitative data analysis pertaining to the research questions and the qualitative, explanatory data from the open-ended prompts. The chapter begins with a description of the sample and concludes with an evaluation of the results.

### Descriptive Statistics

The total number of usable surveys was 133. Participants ranged in age from 21 to 62-years-old, with a mean age of 32.33 years ( $SD = 10.14$ ). Regarding race or ethnicity, the sample was composed of 101 white students, 11 black or African American students, six students of mixed racial identity, five Asian or Asian American students, three Hispanic or Latinx students, one student who marked “other,” and six individuals who left the answer blank or marked “prefer not to answer.” The sample was predominantly female, with 114 students selecting this gender identity; 13 students identified as male, two as non-binary, and four individuals left this answer blank or marked “prefer not to answer.”

Participants were asked to identify the approximate number of months that they have been a student in their counselor training program. The minimum number of months was one and the maximum was 96, with a mean of 18.11 months ( $SD = 14.28$ ). Asked about accreditation status, 117 participants stated that their program is CACREP accredited, five reported that their program is not CACREP accredited, eight marked unsure, and three participants left the answer blank. Finally, participants were asked if as a counseling student, they have ever participated in a formal remediation plan due to concerns about their academic progress or other issues. Most participants ( $n = 125$ ) marked no, two selected unsure, three left the answer blank, and three marked yes. Of the three participants who indicated that they have

had remediation plans, one opted to not disclose the reason, one reported “medical leave,” and one stated that the concern being addressed by the remediation was “APA writing guidelines.”

Scores for measures associated with OC are listed in Table 3. This data is included to describe the sample and also to allow for comparison in any future research.

**Table 3.** *Scores on Measures of Overcontrol*

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
PNS	26	64	43.06	8.343
AAQ-II	7	40	20.04	7.457
OC-TRS	49	111	77.29	11.684
Problematic OC Behavior	10	42	22.56	6.189

*Note:* N = 133.

### **Relationships Between Measures of Overcontrol**

Correlational analysis was conducted to examine the degree to which the instruments associated with OC were likely to be measuring the same construct. Results indicated that the instruments were measuring related, though distinct, concepts. The PNS in particular appears distinct with correlation values below .30. No instruments correlated above .85, which could have indicated that the same concept was being measured (Clark & Watson, 1995). All data was analyzed with this consideration. Results of this analysis appear in Table 4.

**Table 4.** *Pearson Correlational Analysis of Measures of Overcontrol*

	PNS	AAQ-II	OC-TRS	Problematic OC Behavior
Correlation Coefficients (sig)				
PNS	1			
AAQ-II	.216* (.012)	1		
OC-TRS	.296** (.001)	.638** (.000)	1	
Problematic OC Behavior	.261** (.002)	.498** (.000)	.485** (.000)	1

*Note:* \* =  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$  (2-tailed).

## Results

### **Question One: What is the relationship between counseling student emotional control and accepting feedback within the classroom setting?**

Correlational analyses of variables related to OC and variables related to feedback from instructors generated the data in Table 5. Significant but weak correlations existed between the need for structure and the variables of feedback confidentiality and feedback retention. Results indicated that a higher need for structure correlated with better feedback retention and a higher desire for privacy. There was a significant, modest correlation between need for structure and feedback sensitivity, indicating that more need for structure correlated with a higher sense of threat and embarrassment when receiving corrective feedback.

Psychological inflexibility also correlated significantly, but weakly, with feedback retention and feedback confidentiality. Results of the analysis indicated that higher scores on the measure of psychological inflexibility correlated with an increased desire for privacy while



receiving feedback and a decrease in feedback retention. A modest, significant correlation also existed between psychological inflexibility and feedback sensitivity, indicating that individuals who endorsed more rigidity and adherence to personal rules were also more likely to report embarrassment with feedback.

The OC-trait variable had significant correlations with each of the variables pertaining to instructor feedback, all in the weak to modest range. These results indicated that higher scores on the OC-TRS correlated with lower feedback retention, higher desires for confidentiality, higher sensitivity to embarrassment, and a lower belief that feedback is useful.

The problematic OC behavior questions correlated significantly, though weakly, with the variables of feedback retention and feedback confidentiality, indicating that the presence of more feedback-blocking behavior correlated with decreased feedback retention and an increased desire for privacy in the feedback process. Problematic OC behaviors also correlated modestly with feedback sensitivity, indicating that individuals engaging in more feedback-blocking behavior were more likely to endorse feeling threatened by and embarrassed about corrective feedback.

**Table 5.** Pearson Correlational Analysis of OC Variables and Instructor Feedback Variables

OC Variables	Feedback Variables			
	Feedback Retention	Feedback Confidentiality	Feedback Sensitivity	Feedback Utility
	Correlation Coefficients (sig)			
Need for Structure	-.173* (.046)	.260** (.003)	.322** (.000)	.140 (.108)
Psychological Inflexibility	.162 (.062)	.219* (.011)	.430** (.000)	-.037 (.673)
OC-Trait	.239** (.006)	.352** (.000)	.351** (.000)	-.176* (.043)
Problematic OC Behavior	.251** (.004)	.228** (.008)	.549** (.000)	-.059 (.449)

Note: \* =  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$  (2-tailed).

Regression analysis results appear in Table 6 (coefficients) and Table 7 (model). Results indicated low to moderate Beta values when psychological inflexibility, OC-trait, need for structure, and problematic OC behavior were used as predictors of feedback sensitivity, utility, retention, and confidentiality. Problematic OC behavior, however, did result in a Beta score of .417 ( $p < .01$ ) when related to feedback sensitivity, suggesting that behavioral indicators such as correcting the feedback-giver or shutting down moderately predict the degree to which the feedback recipient feels threatened or embarrassed by feedback. Overall model fit indicated that the predictor variables are a moderate fit for the variable of feedback sensitivity (*Adjusted R*<sup>2</sup> = .343,  $F(4,128) = 18.26$ ,  $p < .01$ ), but a poor fit for feedback utility (*Adjusted R*<sup>2</sup> = .052,  $F(4,128) = 2.79$ ,  $p < .05$ ), retention (*Adjusted R*<sup>2</sup> = .134,  $F(4,128) = 6.11$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and confidentiality (*Adjusted R*<sup>2</sup> = .127,  $F(4,128) = 5.79$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

**Table 6.** *Coefficients Table: Measures of OC and Instructor Feedback Variables*

	Constant	Psychological Inflexibility	OC-Trait	Need for Structure	Problematic OC Behavior
Sensitivity					
Beta		.208*	-.037	.179*	.417**
Sig.	.729	.031	.700	.018	.000
Utility					
Beta		.127	-.305**	.211*	-.029
Sig.	.000	.271	.009	.020	.777
Retention					
Beta		-.044	.242*	-.296**	.233*
Sig.	.007	.688	.030	.001	.018
Confidentiality					
Beta		-.035	.298**	.164	.058
Sig.	.054	.749	.008	.058	.552

Note: \* =  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ .

**Table 7:** *Model Table: Measures of OC and Instructor Feedback Variables*

	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error of the Estimate	Sig.
Sensitivity	.603	.363	.343**	5.98	.000
Utility	.283	.080	.052*	2.676	.029
Retention	.400	.160	.134**	1.875	.000
Confidentiality	.392	.153	.127**	3.097	.000

Note: Predictor variables: Psychological Inflexibility, OC-Trait, Need for Structure, Problematic OC Behavior. \* =  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ . Degrees of freedom = 128.

The data analysis for question one fails to confirm the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ : There is no relationship between the degree of emotional control present for the student and the student's openness or receptivity to feedback in the classroom). There are statistically significant correlations between measures of emotional control and measures related to students' openness to and use of feedback, and therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. The alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ : Students who rate higher on scales of emotional overcontrol will express less interest in teacher feedback and more negativity toward receiving feedback from teachers) is supported,

with the stipulation that practical significance is affected by the low effect sizes. The variable most closely associated with use of feedback (utility) correlated significantly only with the OC-trait variable, indicating an association between OC, as measured by the OC-TRS, and a lower belief in the value of feedback. The variables most specific to OC theory itself, as defined by RO-DBT, OC-trait and problematic OC behavior, correlated with decreased feedback retention, which suggests less interest in, and later less access to, teacher feedback. All variables associated with emotional control correlated positively with feedback sensitivity, suggesting increased negative feeling toward disconfirming instructor feedback. Regression analysis suggested that other, unknown, variables may better explain variance in scores, though characteristics associated with OC do present significantly within the data.

**Potential confounding variables.** Regression analysis was conducted to explore the possible confounding variables of participant age and the number of months of counselor training participants had completed at the time of the survey. Older students and those who have had time to acclimate to the training environment could be assumed to experience positive effects of maturation, thereby potentially presenting as more open to feedback.

Results indicated that age was not significantly related to feedback retention or feedback utility. Age had a statistically significant small effect, accounting for approximately 4.5% of variance, for the variable of confidentiality ( $Adjusted R^2 = .045, \beta = -.230, p < .05$ ), suggesting that older participants might be less concerned about privacy in the feedback process. Age also had a small effect, accounting for approximately 5% of variance, for the variable of feedback sensitivity ( $Adjusted R^2 = .048, \beta = -.235, p < .05$ ), indicating that older participants might be less likely to feel threatened by feedback.

Months of completed training did not relate significantly to feedback confidentiality, feedback retention, or feedback sensitivity. Approximately 3.5% of the variance associated with utility was accounted for by months of training ( $Adjusted R^2 = .035, \beta = -.207, p < .05$ ), indicating that students who have been in training longer may believe that feedback is less useful than students newer to training.

Stepwise regression was used to examine the model fit of the control variables. Controlling for age and months of completed training together (step 1) indicated that the predictor variables related to OC (step 2) better explained the variance in scores on measures related to feedback. The results of this analysis appear in Table 8.

**Table 8:** *Stepwise Regression Model for Control Variables*

<b>Step 1</b>					
	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change
Sensitivity	.227	.051	.035	7.162	.051*
Utility	.229	.052	.036	2.513	.052*
Retention	.139	.019	.002	1.995	.019
Confidentiality	.229	.052	.036	3.230	.052*
<b>Step 2</b>					
	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change
Sensitivity	.581	.338	.303	6.090	.286**
Utility	.363	.132	.086	2.448	.079*
Retention	.390	.152	.107	1.887	.133*
Confidentiality	.432	.187	.144	3.044	.135*

*Note:* Step 1 predictors are age and months of completed training;  $df = 117, 2$ . Step 2 predictors are need for structure, psychological inflexibility, OC-trait, and problematic OC behaviors;  $df = 113, 4$ . Sig. = \*  $< .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ .

**Question Two: What is the relationship between counseling student emotional control and accepting feedback within the supervisory relationship?**

Correlational analyses of variables related to overcontrol and the variables of satisfaction with supervision efficacy and satisfaction with supervisory feedback yielded no statistically significant correlations. The results failed to reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ : There is no relationship between the degree of emotional control present for the student and the student's openness or receptivity to supervisor feedback).

**Qualitative Findings**

Participants of the survey were asked to provide responses to three open-ended prompts: (1) Please describe an experience which you would describe as a positive experience with receiving feedback; (2) Please described an experience which you would describe as a negative experience with receiving feedback; and (3) If you could give your supervisors or teachers one piece of advice about how to give appropriate feedback, what would that be? A total of 107 participants responded to at least one open-ended prompt, providing a total of 312 qualitative data extracts. Many data extracts contained multiple themes. Extracts are presented exactly as they were typed into the survey by the participants. Age and gender, when available, are included with each quote. Themes include the sense of one's status within the group (tribal security or tribal insecurity), one's status with instructors or supervisors (acceptance or rejection), and the degree to which students feel invited to the learning environment or profession (invitation or barrier to join). A full list of theme definitions appears in Appendix B.

**Total Dataset: Prompt 1**

A total of 103 participants responded to prompt one. Two participants indicated that they had no particular example because they believe that all feedback is positive feedback (example:

“I feel any feedback is helpful to make sure I keep going with what i am doing or change to improve my work and critical thinking skills” [34F]) and one participant indicated that they have not had a positive experience with receiving feedback.

**Tribal security.** Participants discussed positive experiences with feedback which enhanced or preserved their status or security within the group; this theme was termed *tribal security*. Tribal security experiences included being validated or recognized by teachers, supervisors, or peers in front of others or avoiding embarrassment in front of peers. Subthemes included being publicly recognized for accomplishments, strengths, or abilities (termed *empowerment*); the experience of mutuality and respect within their peer group, especially as it pertains to norms about the feedback giving process (termed *shared expectations*); and the experience of receiving feedback in private, which allowed individuals to save face within the group (termed *privacy*).

As an example of the empowerment theme, one participant, 24F, stated “After leading a group counseling session, I received positive feedback from the class TA and my classmates. It was wonderful to hear what I was doing well. It helped to boost my confidence for future experiences.” Being recognized publicly for otherwise private accomplishments was also described as a positive experience of feedback by a 29F participant: “My internship professor, based on positive feedback from my internship site supervisor, was shared in class as praise on my hard work.” Notably, empowerment did not necessarily consist of only positive comments. Another participant characterized receiving some corrective feedback as positive, suggesting that hearing about ways to better use one’s abilities was also empowering:

An assignment for my internship was to record a session with a client. The session was viewed by my cohort and faculty supervisor. After everyone viewed, I received feedback

with things I did well and strategies for improvement from both peers and supervisor [45F].

An example of shared expectations was “My Practices course involves feedback on practice session videos from my peers and the instructor. It’s been a very positive experience because the instructor was very explicit about how to give feedback” (47F). This participant seemed to be communicating some appreciation for the entire class having agreement about the feedback process, creating a sense of security within the group.

Privacy about feedback, whether validating or corrective, was described as a positive element of the feedback process. One participant (54F), illustrating the privacy subtheme, stated that a positive experience consisted of “Private feedback from student adviser with detailed information on performance improvement.” Another participant suggested that they appreciated a professor waiting until after class to provide feedback in writing:

In my techniques class, I was videoed going over the limits of confidentiality with a pseudo client. I received an email with feedback from my professor and it really helped. Nothing is ever perfect, so knowing what I can do to improve is always helpful (22F).

**Acceptance and validation.** Participants also discussed the importance of private relationships with instructors or supervisors. The perception that one’s relationship with the tribal leader has been validated or improved, as when the leader demonstrates acceptance of the individual as a valuable member of the tribe, was termed *acceptance and validation*. Subthemes included interpersonal elements such as the perception that the instructor or supervisor cares for the student as a person (termed *kindness*) and the experience of openness within the relationship, mutual sharing, feeling heard by the leader, or experiencing the leader as a real person with whom to have a relationship (termed *genuineness and mutuality*). Other subthemes pertained



more directly to the students' work, as opposed to personhood. These subthemes included having one's work praised or one's self-doubts comforted (termed *praise and encouragement*); the experience of feeling seen, heard, and valued as a member of the group, even in the absence of overt expressions of caring (termed *respect and individual focus*); perceptions that the instructor or supervisor had put time or effort into the student and their work (termed *effort*); and the experience of receiving corrective feedback only when accompanied by affirming feedback (termed *blending positive and negative*).

Kindness was reflected in statements about personal caring. A 29F shared "I like when I professor was understanding after going through a life crisis." Kindness was also identified even when corrective feedback was being given; another participant stated: "I met with my advisor after my counseling skills course to receive feedback on my overall growth and improvement. The feedback was encouraging and my advisor was gentle and kind when relaying it to me" (24F). Kindness was also reflected in a participant's experience with performance anxiety:

When I first started counseling skills my supervising faculty said that I looked anxious. I was given the advice to relax and not worry about mistakes. I was told that the faculty expects less than perfect counseling in the first class. This helped me to ease up on my self-criticism about performance in class and learn from observation of other students and faculty instruction (27F).

Genuineness and mutuality was discussed by students who appeared to appreciate a sense of comradery with their instructors and supervisors. Two examples of this theme are:

At one point during the semester, both my supervisor and I were feeling stressed and overwhelmed. We played with play-dough during our supervision and talked about

situations in therapy which leave us feeling vulnerable as therapists. It was a formative conversation in our relationship (23F).

My advisor is the professor with whom I have taken the most classes, and I often stop by his office to talk with him about anything and everything. I feel able to share my concerns with him, and greatly value his feedback due to the relationship that we have established. When he delivered my Student Progress Assessment, I was really able to take in his feedback for me because I knew he had my best interest in mind and really wanted me to be able to grow (22F).

Praise and encouragement appeared frequently in the data. Participants shared ideas such as that they appreciated being encouraged to keep moving forward (“When she says Im on the right track, and I just need to keep developing confidence in my counseling style” [25F]) and that it felt encouraging to have their self-doubts challenged (“I was uncertain about the appropriate use of advanced empathy and felt incompetent. After reviewing video/audio, my supervisor pointed out the sincerity and appropriateness of my interventions” [51M]). Praise and encouragement also sometimes included the element of being unexpected:

When taping a session and thinking I did poorly, my professor told me that I had one of my best sessions. It helped me to realize that even though it didn't feel like I was doing a great job, my skills were improving without me even noticing (29M).

Statements related to respect and individual focus often pertained to the sense that the instructor or supervisor had tailored learning activities to the individual student or recognized the unique needs of the student. Kindness was not a required element, as evidenced by the statement “I'd written a challenging response to a discussion prompt, and the instructor considered my opinion” (32F). In this example, the participant did not state that feeling cared for was an

element, but rather that being heard is what made the interaction positive. Another participant (24F), stated that attention to learning style was a positive experience: “When my supervisor gave me feedback via drawing and talking. He remembered that I learn best visually.” The respect and individual focus subtheme also included statements about corrective feedback, such as in this example: “When feedback shows that the supervisor/instructor knows me and has paid attention to my contributions, I find that to be a positive experience, whether the feedback is negative or positive” (43F).

The subtheme of effort was related to respect and individual focus, but beyond acknowledging the student’s work, effort reflected extra work which was put in by the instructor or supervisor in order to assist the student. A 45F participant responded that a positive feedback experience is determined by “Overall time each prof spent with me, giving me valuable feedback.” Effort was identified as being part of the acceptance and validation theme because it appeared to support relationship, such as in this example: “My supervisor at my Practicum and Internship site meets with me regularly every week to teach me something new, discuss different methods and go over how I am feeling. It has been a great experience” (46F).

Blending positive and negative feedback also appeared to be a relational element for many participants. In a statement coded for both blending positive and negative and respect and individual focus, a participant said

I had a professor give me good positive and constructive feedback that directly relates to the type of work I'm going to do with the degree I'm studying for. I like how that professor tailored the feedback specifically to me and my professional goals. That tells me that the professor is genuinely interested in my success (36, preferred not to provide gender).

Another participant addressed the importance of hearing both validating and corrective feedback by stating

I enjoy when a teacher provides positive affirmations and then suggests ways to do things better. It is easier for me to listen to a teacher, when they show me that I have really put in a good effort or done something right and then give a suggestion for another way or better way to do things (24F).

**Invitation to join.** Participants discussed some experiences which neither specifically improved their tribal security or private relationships with instructors or supervisors, but which did seem to provide opportunities for accessing the counseling profession in the future or for better acclimating to the training environment. The perception that the feedback being given was offered kindly, as an opportunity to improve and better meet expectations, was termed *invitation to join*. Subthemes included receiving correction or assistance with solving a problem from an instructor or supervisor, in order to improve (termed *correction and problem-solving*); the perception that feedback was detailed and specific enough to make the necessary adjustments to meet expectations (termed *clarity and details*); and the experience of receiving feedback about personal strengths, which the student can use to improve performance (termed *strengths-focus*).

Participants reported that corrective feedback was important, even in the absence of any affirmation to balance the critique. As an example of the correction and problem-solving subtheme, one 35F participant stated “I am not the strongest writer and my professor suggested to me that spending more time in the writing center would be invaluable to my improvement. He was right.” Another participant, 27F, included the element of having enough time to adequately address the corrective feedback: “When I got back my assignment with constructive feedback from my instructor. I was given sufficient time and opportunity to work on the mistakes and

improve on the quality of my work.” The invitation to join element of receiving corrective feedback is apparent in the following statement of this participant, who spoke to the ways in which correction can result in better access to the profession in the long-term:

When my supervisor gave me feedback and encouraged me to improve my reflection of feeling skills. It resulted in a lot of self reflection that bought clarity to as to why I was struggling with a basic counseling skill. However, the experience provided tremendous value and led to positive feedback on my ability to self reflect (25F).

Clarity and detail appeared to allow students practical steps for improving performance, thereby gaining access to the profession. A 24F described her positive feedback experience by stating “When given feedback, specific steps were given in order to achieve the end goal. I found that helpful.” Another participant reported that clarity is always important for performance:

The positive experiences I have with receiving feedback all include specific details. I enjoy receiving feedback when the supervisor can connect the feedback to something I did or did not do specifically so I know where I went wrong or where I did good (26F).

Another participant offered an example of needing clarity and detail—in this case related to the supervisor’s intentions and goals—in order to repair a relationship rupture:

A session after I became visibly agitated with my supervisor due to a disagreement/ misunderstanding about a client's issue vs. my willingness to direct a client were to sit in session for videotaping purposes, I brought up how I became agitated. The conversation was similar to working with a therapeutic rupture. I learned why it was important that my supervisor needed me capture the client's body language, but I also learned more about the style of feedback I need from my supervisor. I learned that I like explicit feedback and the intent behind the feedback (24M).

The strengths-focus subtheme was demonstrated by students who reflected that they use the assessment of their strengths to determine the best routes for improvement. An example is the participant who stated

A professor and TA gave verbal feedback on a mock-counseling session that myself and two other students completed. They pointed out progress I had made since previous sessions, strengths that I have as a future counselor and where I could make improvements (25F).

**Technique.** Some participants addressed specific feedback techniques or strategies from which they benefited. Related to the theme of blending and negative, though more directive, one participant answered prompt one with only the statement “compliment sandwiches” (30F). Others discussed preferences for written feedback or related to the timing of feedback. The particular style of instructors and supervisors also fits into the technique theme, as demonstrated by the participant who reported “My supervisor has given great feedback when talking through a case, talking about progress, and interventions” (23F). The specific technique the supervisor may have used is unknown, but personal style appears to be the important variable in this statement.

### **Total Dataset: Prompt 2**

A total of 102 individuals provided a response to prompt two. Fifteen individuals stated that they have not had any experiences of receiving negative feedback, or indicated that they consider all feedback to be positive. Examples of these statements include “I take negative feedback to mean ‘needs improvement/ would benefit from additional training in....’ which I take as positive challenges to building my career” (24F) and “I have not had any negative experiences with receiving feedback because feedback is a learning tool for me” (45F).

**Tribal insecurity.** Participants reported negative experiences of feedback in which the individual's status within the group was compromised by public rejection; this theme was termed *tribal insecurity*. Subthemes included the perception that one was being held to unrealistic expectations (termed *unfair standards*); the perception that the person providing feedback was being punitive, attacking, or disrespectful, or perceiving the feedback as criticism of the individual's personhood, instead of their work (termed *shaming*); and the perception of being silenced or unheard by the person providing feedback (termed *stifling*).

One participant, 54F, addressed the subtheme of unfair standards within tribal insecurity by stating that a negative feedback experience was "Being corrected in a group setting without clear instruction." Another participant, 47F, stated "I felt like my instructor picked on me during class when I was unable to give feedback in a particular format."

Shaming within the group was addressed in detail by a number of participants. One individual shared that it was a negative experience "When a professor took me to the back of the classroom after class, but still in earshot of others, and told me that my homework was immature and that if I was struggling with the program I could leave" (29F). Another, 22F, explained a shaming experience which also included the subtheme of stifling:

During a class while practicing setting goals for ourselves in pairs, my professor stopped by me and my partner. We asked for her help, as I am a person who truly needs to have fewer goals and embrace more flexibility in my life. She then proceeded to harshly lecture me about needing to let go of perfectionism, loosen up, lower my rigid expectations for myself, etc. Her voice got louder and more intense as she went, and although everyone else was working in their own pairs, I was embarrassed that this was done in a classroom with all my peers. She gave no room for me to respond, and called

out my physical shakiness as a response to the feedback she was giving me. I was severely shaken up after this incident of her calling me out so inappropriately, and set up a meeting to talk about it with her. Now I do not trust this professor with anything more than I have to, which is a shame because she could be such a great resource to me otherwise.

The sense of lost relationship in the quote above (“Now I do not trust this professor with anything more than I have to...”) was shared by another student who expressed that feeling shamed resulted in loss of respect: “A graduate professor pulling up a graph of how the class did on a paper, before accusing a bunch of people of cheating, and comparing us to undergraduates. I never respected her as a professor after that” (38F).

Shaming did not necessarily need to include actions taken by the instructor or supervisor. A 23F shared that a peer interaction was responsible for the negative experience: “One of my peers was degrading in the way she gave me feedback after trying something new and vulnerable. She only pointed out negative things and was not empathic in her tone.”

Stifling appeared alongside shaming most of the time, but was coded separately because feeling unheard did not necessarily mean that the participant felt degraded. As one student explained a stifling experience:

There was an individual who was bringing magazines to their job with their address and contact information on them. I informed the person that this was an unsafe thing to do.

They believed that I was threatening them. Instead of hearing me out, my employer told me how I should have went to them first or "closed my trap" and fired me (51M).

Negative experiences with public feedback sometimes appeared within the data as complex in regards to the potential reasons for the adverse reaction from the student. An



example of tribal insecurity in which all three subthemes were represented (unfair standards, shaming, and stifling) was:

In coursework, we have a professor who is not clear in their guidelines for assignments or presentations and will call you out in front of the entire class for not meeting what she wants. In one example, I went first for a presentation for which she had not yet provided guidelines (guidelines came 2 weeks after I presented). I spoke to students who previously took the course, the TA, and even asked the professor for clarification, but she did not get back to me before my presentation was due. After I presented, she asked if I didn't bother to even do research for the project that it was not at all what she wanted. She heavily berated me in front of my classmates and when I tried to explain the leg work I did to get clarification, she shut me down. She made me an example of what not to do for my classmates and I was heavily docked on my grades because of it (24F).

**Rejection/detachment.** Private relationships with instructors and supervisors were also described by participants as a source of negative feedback experiences. The perception that one's relationship with the tribal leader was compromised by private rejection was termed *rejection/detachment*. The subthemes of unfair standards, shaming, and stifling were represented within the private relationship experience as well as the public. Two additional subthemes were added to the rejection/detachment theme: the perception of a lack of overt caring (termed *lack of connection*) and the perception that the instructor or supervisor had only focused on mistakes or problems, with no balance of positive feedback (termed *negativity bias*).

An example of the unfair standards subtheme, within the theme of rejection/detachment is the statement from a 24F "I had a different supervisor ask me multiple direct questions and evaluated my performance based on a misexplained concept. It was incredibly disheartening to

be evaluated on this comment and not my actual work.” Several participants also commented on grades or points, such as the student who stated

In my basic skills counseling class, I received constructive feedback about identifying certain skills within a counseling session transcript. Essentially, my teacher took a significant amount of points away, and although she did provide some feedback to explain why, I did not feel the appropriate amount of points were deducted in relation to what her comments warranted (21F).

One statement, coded unfair standards, included reference to escalating the issue to department leadership, bypassing the apparently compromised relationship with the instructor:

I had a teacher that I had to call the head of the department about because of a grade he gave me. I was in class, but had my video off because I was sick. I told him multiple times but he didn't acknowledge my messages until I contacted the head of the department (26F).

Experiences of private shaming were described by participants who felt personally attacked by a supervisor or teacher. One student shared that a negative experience was “Feedback in the form of criticism rather than pointing out ways I can enhance or strengthen my work” (48F). Another statement reflected the invalidating nature of criticism: “During my undergrad, I had a professor respond to an emotional paper I wrote by saying that it was ‘not even a big deal’ and that I was wrong to be emotional about the death of my mentor” (24F).

Statements reflecting the stifling subtheme addressed topics like misunderstandings and feeling dismissed. One participant, 60F, appeared to capture a moment of disagreement in which the teacher may have been commenting on perceived defensiveness:

I received feedback and tried to point out what I thought I did in response to the feedback and the professor commented that I had to be willing to accept criticism. I left it go because that was not at all what I was responding to but I didn't feel as though he understood my point. I didn't care if he agreed with it or not, I just felt he took my response not in the manner in which it was given.

Also within the stifling subtheme, several participants addressed feeling dismissed when their work was being evaluated or graded. One student shared that a negative feedback experience was “On a paper, my professor marked certain areas with question marks and made assumptions about my thinking process without consulting me for clarity” (29F). Another student generalized that not being heard is always negative: “A negative experience with receiving feedback would be one in which the supervisor does not let me speak and is critical of my work” (28F).

The lack of connection subtheme was coded separately from shaming because these participants appeared to be speaking not to the experience of being criticized, but about a desire for overt expressions of warmth or personal relationship. Statements coded for lack of connection related to students who identified a feedback experience as negative because they appeared to want more individual (perhaps even therapeutic) care. Two examples are:

Once, a supervisor disregarded my questions of whether an interaction in my personal life would fall under the realm of mandated reporting, as their office hours were drawing to a close and asked me to leave without answering my concern. (This interaction was later addressed and resolved) (23F).

During my first semester of working with my supervisor, I was struggling to manage my mental health. When I opened up to her about my experiences of depression, she was

somewhat supportive but did not attend to my disclosure in an empathic way. I felt like my vulnerability was not valued and it deterred me from sharing personal information with her. My supervisor has also moved away from leaving space for me to share about my personal feelings related to therapy and has been pushing me to focus almost exclusively on clients. This has been difficult and seems inadequate at times (23F).

The subtheme of negativity bias relates to unfair standards, but statements coded negativity bias were those which did not directly express that the instructor or supervisor was unfair, only that there was no balance; the feedback may have been correct, but the participant still expressed a desire to have positive traits acknowledged. One participant, 22F, generalized that feedback experiences are negative if “Someone just telling me all the things I am doing wrong.” Another student shared feeling upset by negativity bias:

I have had an experience where the person providing the feedback did not offset any of their corrective/"negative" feedback with validating/"positive" feedback; I only received criticism, which was upsetting because I didn't feel that what I was doing right was acknowledged (25F).

**Barrier to join.** Participants described experiences which did not necessarily appear to compromise relationships or existing status within the tribe, but which did prevent the student from accessing the tribe (either the immediate classroom/peer group, or the broader profession). The instructor or supervisor was almost always blamed. This perception that one’s ability to join with or succeed within the tribe has been compromised by leader behaviors or other circumstances was termed *barrier to join*. The barriers themselves appeared as seven subthemes: believing oneself held to unrealistic expectations (termed *unfair standards*); the perception that only one’s mistakes or problems were being considered, with no balance of positive feedback

(termed *negativity bias*); the perception that the instructor or supervisor did not put in enough time or effort to help the student succeed (termed *insufficient effort*); the belief that the feedback-giving technique or strategy was insufficient (termed *inadequate technique*); the perception that the feedback was too vague to be valuable, contained contradictions, was confusing, or was not helpful because the instructor or professor's intentions were unknown (termed *lack of clarity*); the perception that the feedback did not contain enough constructive criticism (termed *lack of correction*); and the experience of receiving no feedback of any kind (termed *lack of any feedback*).

An example of unfair standards preventing an individual from being able to join is the statement from a 34F participant, "Scheduling people an hour early before the usually start time and be upset when I don't make it on time." Several participants expressed what appear to be anger or resentment about unfair standards. One student appeared to blame the personal limitations of the instructor for the negative experience, stating "When the feedback from supervisor/instructor seems to come from their own insecurities or is not accurate, it is a negative experience" (43F). Another student described a negative feedback experience by sharing "I once had a professor give me some nonsense, boo-hoo feedback. That professor had hurt feelings that I didn't agree on a particular topic. Too bad... get over it. Be a professional" (36, preferred not to identify gender). The implication seems to be that the professor blocked access by being unfair and emotional, impeding student progress by providing "nonsense" feedback. Unlike rejection/detachment unfair standards, these students do not appear to be commenting on feelings of relationship rupture or personal rejection.

Negativity bias as a barrier to join also presented as related to, but distinct from, from the negativity bias present in the relational context. One participant, 23F, shared "No reflection or

comment on something I did well or okay, just focused on improvement which made it unclear to me as to how to proceed or improve.” This statement implies that corrective feedback without validation made it impossible for the student to improve. Though it is unclear why this might be so, the student seems to express that lack of validation was a barrier to full participation.

Participants shared that instructors or supervisors not spending enough time with them or on their work created barriers. A 45F participant, whose statement was coded insufficient effort, shared that a feedback experience was made negative by “Not having enough time to spend together to understand the content of a session thus effecting feedback.” Another student attributed their decision to decrease their effort to an instructor:

The professor took weeks to grade or provide feedback on weekly assignments. Not knowing if I was on track with my assignments, I started to not work as hard. I recall thinking if it is not important enough for timely feedback then I dont need to work as hard (53F).

A third example of the insufficient effort subtheme is the student who described a feedback experience as negative because the instructor provided correction but did not work with the student to make the correction happen: “At a previous college I had a professor tell me that I better use citations or else and they never help me correct it or helped me learn from it. It was very negative and unhelpful” (27F).

Related to insufficient effort was the complaint that instructors and supervisors did not deliver feedback with the correct technique or strategy. One participant, 42F, whose statement was coded inadequate technique, commented on the volume of feedback: “Simply providing too much feedback at once was not beneficial since it was hard to retain.” Another reported not

liking the instructor's timing: "Being stopped during a session to receive feedback, whether it is good or bad" (23F).

The lack of clarity subtheme was reflected by statements related to feedback which made it difficult for participants to meet expectations. A 33F participant shared "My practicum supervisor telling me I shouldn't use techniques taught to me by my professors." The sense of being misled by contradictory information was also reflected by the statement "I got contradictory feedback in 2 different papers - this was frustrating and confusing and led me to just want to 'perform'" (48F). Written feedback on papers was addressed by other students as well, such as in the following two quotes both coded lack of clarity:

I recently wrote a paper for a different class. I agree with my professor that it needed more work, but the feedback I received was so vague and lacking in detail, I couldn't improve anything because I still don't know what was wrong or lacking (22F).

I received a paper with very minimal feedback and was concerned that I was not on the right track. I expressed it to my professor and they directed me to the feedback attached to the paper, it left me confused (35F).

Feedback which was clearly presented, but lacked correction, was also discussed as a negative feedback experience. The lack of correction theme was coded for statements which indicated that not being told how to improve impaired the student's ability to join with the tribe. An example is the student who reported

Negative experiences are when I get general "that was good" remarks. I appreciate more detail to what was good so I can improve it more and I rarely believe everything in a session was so good that no improvements need to be done (26F).

Two participants, both apparently speaking about their employment positions, also related that praise without correction is feedback which is difficult to trust:

A supervisor that I have at my job gives virtually no feedback. I don't know when I need to do something differently so even when I receive positive feedback I don't trust it as much because I have never gotten anything constructive (26F).

I received a stellar review at work with NO thoughts on what to work on which undermined their praise. I didn't trust it. I also received feedback once that did not take into account the personal barriers to my performance. Of course it shouldn't have considered those because it was a work review, but it was a negative experience nonetheless (47F).

Several students shared that negative experiences consisted of receiving no feedback of any kind. Because these feedback experiences were not due to lack of clarity, negativity only, or positivity only, they were coded lack of any feedback. A 39F participants reported “I think a lack of feedback is most discouraging. I like to have an idea of how I am doing, and feedback provides me with that all throughout the quarter.” Another student shared that being denied access to their performance review was a negative experience: “at the end of my quarter evaluations, I knew my supervisor turned my evaluation into my advisor, but I never got to see the feedback on the form” (27F).

### **Total Dataset: Prompt 3**

Unsurprisingly, many of the themes from prompt one, relating to a positive experience with receiving feedback, were also present in the data for prompt three, which asked for suggestions for instructors and supervisors. An important additional theme, acknowledgment of



power and privilege, was added. Additionally, the invitation to provide advice prompted several participants to provide harshly worded correction.

**Tribal security.** Students spoke about the desire to be accepted and validated within the group, which was termed *tribal security*. Subthemes included requests for mutual respect and standards (termed *shared expectations*), public recognition (termed *empowerment and praise*), and to not be publicly addressed, whether with positive or negative feedback (termed *privacy*).

A statement coded empowerment and praise (28F) was “Hearing positive feedback in front of peers is a nice boost to fledgling counselor's sense of efficacy.” The desire for public recognition was countered by another participant (38F) whose statement was coded shared expectations and privacy: “Group feedback that is very negative, name calling, and demeaning language should be obvious no-nos. Ask students if they like group praise- not everyone does. I think it’s embarrassing to be praised in front of others.”

The privacy theme was the most common request related to tribal security. Examples are “Don’t single people out in a group to give corrective feedback, please! Do it privately if you can!” (28F) and “Always give feedback in a private setting not in front of other students” (28F). Another participant included an overt invitation for correction:

I love hearing feedback and receiving help from professors because it makes me a better counselor, and it shows that I can take criticism and learn from it. However, I wish that when I heard criticisms of my performance, it wasn't in a class setting, where every single classmate of mine looks at me and has to listen to the feedback I am receiving. (24F)

**Acceptance/validation.** Participants spoke to the desire to have a positive relationship with instructors and supervisors, and to feel secure in their status with these individuals. This desire for acceptance and validation by the tribe leader was termed *acceptance/validation*.

Subthemes included wanting caring, empathy, or support (termed *kindness*); desiring one's work being praised or one's self-doubts being comforted (termed *praise and encouragement*); desiring openness within the relationship, mutual sharing, feeling heard, or experiencing the instructor or supervisor as a real person with whom to have a relationship (termed *genuineness and mutuality*); wanting to feel seen, heard, and valued as a unique individual within the tribe, even in the absence of over expressions of caring (termed *respect and individual focus*); wanting a devotion of time, energy, or effort from the instructor or supervisor (termed *effort*); the desire for corrective feedback to be accompanied by affirming feedback (termed *blending positive and negative*); and desiring the instructor or supervisor to be aware of the power differential between instructors/supervisors and students, including attending to sociocultural differences and the responsibility of the leader to responsibly use their power to manage the group (termed *acknowledgement of power and privilege*).

A request for kindness was expressed by a 22F who implied that kindness has not always been offered to her: "Be more tactful with how you say feedback." Another student elaborated further:

Be empathetic, patient, and as kind as you can while still challenging me. I like constructive feedback, but keep in mind that there's likely a lot of doubt and impostor syndrome coming in from my own insecurities. If all I get from you is doubt of my capabilities, I might just feel discouraged and not think I can continue learning or improving (30F).

In a statement coded praise and encouragement, a 51F participant appeared to address the desire for validation of her work, though not necessarily with a bid for kindness. She stated

“Give feedback that is constructive in manner that will not break the person's spirit and that will encourage them to work harder.”

The desire for a real relationship, coded genuineness and mutuality, was apparent in statements which addressed the two-way nature of the feedback process. An example of genuineness and mutuality is the advice to “Be personable about it and allow time for us to comment on the feedback. Feedback should always be a learning interaction” (30F). Another participant requested authenticity:

Don't say nice things, just to say nice things. Mean them - your comments always come across more thoughtful when we can tell you mean them. Be authentic, we are watching you like hawks because as high achieving students we care a lot about what you think of us so we will know what sounds genuine and what doesn't (25F).

Respect and individual focus is a related subtheme which addresses the desire for acknowledgment as a valuable person and member of the tribe. Unlike genuineness and mutuality, however, respect and individual focus statements did not specifically request two-way relationship or validation of personhood, instead focusing more on recognition of the students' work. An example is the 43F participant who wrote “Pay attention so that you can give feedback that is accurate.” Another stated “Spend time reading my notes and doing DIRECT observations” (51F). Attending to learning styles is part of this subtheme, as demonstrated by the 24F who stated “I would say that I appreciate them reflecting with/teaching me, visually. It shows they are paying attention and care.” Another student (36, preferred not to identify gender) reflected that without individualized feedback, the exchange may be lacking in meaning:

Tailor the feedback to the person and what they're trying to accomplish. This cookie cutter one size fits all method makes you look like you don't know or don't care. Either way, why would I listen to that kind of feedback?

Several statements related to the respect and individual focus subtheme hinted that perhaps the participants had not always received the degree of individualized feedback that they desired. One student offered the advice of “Be sure to consider the student's entire course of behavior and general attitude before deciding that they need correction” (62F). In a statement coded both respect and individual focus and acknowledgement of power and privilege, a 29F participant stated

Don't make it an all-or-nothing comment, make it something tangible we can work on and see through to the end. If the feedback is "shape up or ship out" then maybe let them show they can improve before you offer to end their career.

Several participants recommended that instructors and supervisors put effort into their feedback interactions. A 25F student responded to the prompt with “Follow through what they said.” In a statement coded for both respect and individual focus and effort, a 24M participant shared

I would like more focus from my supervisor. The structure is such that I come in with a video tape and I ask her to review a certain situation. I like this format, but I would also like to be learning about things related to my goals, namely how to better conceptualize my clients.

The advice to blend positive and negative feedback was frequent. Though related to technique, the specific request for both positive and negative feedback also appears to address the issue of relationship, as evidenced by this statement, coded both kindness and blending

positive and negative: “Always combine corrective feedback with praise or some kind of supportive statement that addresses the thing a person is doing well. Only receiving corrective feedback is embarrassing and can feel like the recipient is being put down” (25F). Another participant, 24F, addressed the matter of receptivity as it relates to blended feedback: “It is really nice to hear positive affirmations on the feedback as well, even if there are some negative feedback, putting things in a positive perspective makes me more receptive.”

The acknowledgement of power and privilege subtheme included advice related to recognizing the importance of culture as well as requests that the instructor or supervisor acknowledge and take responsibility for their power in the relationship. Examples related to culture include “Be mindful of others culture when setting expectioba, and pay attention to words bejng used” (34F) and “Ask if race is an issue because of the power dynamics” (29F). Both of those statements were made by participants who identified as black or African American, and it is notable that race and culture were not specifically addressed by any other participant.

Other students made statements suggesting bids to not be hurt by the power or privilege of the instructor: “Remember the power imbalance between instructors and students. No matter how old we are, we still feel the gulf separating us” (47F), and

I would tell them to never lose sight of where they have their roots. Being in leadership is never easy; However, it is always important to consider the individuals' perspective. Furthermore, one should never say or do to others anything they would not like said or done to them (51M).

When prompted for what advice she would have for instructors and supervisors about giving feedback, a 24F requested that leaders use their power for the benefit of the entire tribe.

She stated about feedback:

Keep giving it. Honestly, we don't know what we're doing yet and we consistently need to be reminded. Also, when there's that person in the room that's consistently defending themselves while you give feedback, PLEASE call them out. We're all annoyed by it but we can't say anything. If you nip this in the bud, maybe they will stop.

Two participants each made statements about power and privilege that insinuated frustration or tension within the student-instructor/supervisor relationship. The statements imply some challenge to the feedback provider:

If you are going to claim that I made a mistake or consistently am making a mistake, and I ask for evidence of it — please have that evidence. Otherwise, you lose credibility as a supervisor and I stop taking your feedback seriously (28F).

Do not insult students in front of others, just because you have power doesn't give you the right to treat them like that. You have no idea what their life is like. Further, we as students are paying for the course, you don't get to act like you're superior to students. You're not (33M).

**Invitation to join.** Participants suggested that instructors and supervisors create access to the profession and inclusion within the tribe by offering feedback which allows students to better meet expectations. These opportunities, presented with kind intentions, were termed *invitation to join*. Within prompt three, the invitation to join theme contained the three subthemes of students desiring correction and collaboration with their instructor or supervisor in order to solve problems (termed *correction and problem-solving*), the desire for specific and

detailed feedback about how to better meet expectations (termed *clarity and details*), and the desire to be told about specific personal strengths and abilities (termed *strengths-focus*).

An example of correction and problem-solving is the 25F participant who asked simply “Please include ways to grow and improve, no one is perfect.” Another student, 24F, added her encouragement that correction need not be demeaning, emphasizing the inviting nature it can have: “Don’t be afraid to provide constructive feedback. You can positively and appropriately point out areas of improvement to benefit students. This does not have to be mean or scolding. There is a balance in between.”

The need for specific feedback was addressed within the clarity and details subtheme. An example is the advice of “It would be nice to have feedback explicitly said instead of indirectly saying what they want” (28F). Another participant asked instructors and supervisors to “Be honest and explain the feedback, don’t just state it and move on. Explain ways someone could improve, based on the corrective feedback you provide.” (28F). A 21F respondent addressed the importance of detailed feedback as a means of ensuring fair access. In a statement coded both clarity and details and acknowledgement of power and privilege she said “Please provide clear expectations from the very beginning. It always feels unjust/alarming to receive constructive feedback about not meeting an expectation that was never established in the first place!”

**Technique.** Lastly, participants made suggestions about feedback techniques and strategies. Several individuals suggested the specific feedback blending strategy of “sandwiching” a negative between two positive comments. Other comments addressed the formatting of feedback (“Provide more feedback in writing” [51M]) or the style and content (“provide feedback in a timely fashion and include feedback on content and formatting” [53F],

“Keep it brief, to the point and if needed give examples” [34F]). One student asked that instructors and supervisors filter their feedback through a methodology commonly attributed to the poet Rumi: “1. is it true? 2. is it necessary? 3. is it kind? (is it gentle? not too harsh?) 4. is it helpful? if it meets those criteria, the feedback would always be appropriate” (39F).

### **Frequencies of Themes**

Frequency counts are generally not included in qualitative analysis and are not part of the thematic analysis process (Braun & Clarke, 2006). However, for the purposes of explanatory data, the frequencies of the qualitative themes are relevant. Frequencies are detailed in Table 9.

In the prompt one data, praise and encouragement within the context of an accepting and validating private relationship with an instructor or supervisor is the most cited theme (n = 33). The next highest ranked subtheme is correction and problem-solving as an invitation to join (n = 22). The third most represented subtheme, and the only other theme with over ten responses, is blending positive and negative feedback, again within the context of an accepting and validating private relationship (n = 11). Collectively, this data suggests that the most important elements for positive feedback interactions relate to the students’ *work*. Students appear to feel the most agreeable when instructors and supervisors validate that their work is of acceptable quality, when student weaknesses are being recognized by their instructors and supervisors alongside strengths and accomplishments, and when instructors and supervisors provide opportunities to fix mistakes. Students appear to value feedback most during interactions in which their status with instructors and supervisors is secured by opportunities to be perceived as competent.

In the prompt two data, the most commonly occurring subtheme is shaming within the context of tribal insecurity (n = 17). This suggests that the most common reason for a student to identify a feedback experience as negative relates to the manner in which the feedback is about



the student's *personhood*. Concerns related to student work and competence are also represented. The next two most cited subthemes related to negative feedback experiences (n = 10 on both) are unfair standards within the context of the private relationship with the instructor or supervisor and lack of clarity creating a barrier to join. Collectively, this data suggests that students are most uncomfortable with feedback when they feel personally attacked, when they believe that their instructor or supervisor does not recognize their competence, and when they feel unable to prove their competence by adjusting their performance to the standards.

Interestingly, the subtheme in prompt two which actually represents the second most common subtheme present is no experience of negative feedback or the belief that anytime feedback is being received, it is a positive experience. A closer look at the data, however, suggested that this may not be an entirely accurate representation of the manner in which these participants accept feedback. One third of these respondents (n = 5) also endorsed problematic OC behaviors above the median score, suggesting that although they state that they want and accept all feedback, they also behave in ways which block feedback.

For prompt three, the invitation for advice-giving, participants echoed much of what they said in prompt one, though only one participant recommended praise and encouragement within the private relationship, suggesting that although this is highly valued from supervisors and instructors, it is not expected. Instead, participants focused on respect and individual focus (n = 22), blending positive and negative feedback (n = 20), and specific feedback techniques (n = 17). Additionally, though only the sixth highest ranked subtheme, it is notable that 13 respondents spoke to the importance of instructors and supervisors acknowledging their power and privilege, while none reported this phenomenon as part of their positive feedback experience, suggesting a needs gap.

**Table 9.** *Frequencies of Themes*

Theme and Subtheme	Prompt 1	Prompt 2	Prompt 3
Total Sample ( <i>Potentially Maladaptive OC</i> )			
Tribal security – empowerment	7(1)		
Tribal security – shared expectations	2		1
Tribal security – privacy	4		12(2)
Acceptance and validation – kindness	4		16(2)
Acceptance and validation – praise and encouragement	33(6)		1
Acceptance and validation – genuineness and mutuality	4		7(1)
Acceptance and validation – respect and individual focus	7		22
Acceptance and validation – effort	5		3
Acceptance and validation – blending positive and negative	11(1)		20(3)
Acceptance and validation – acknowledgement of power and privilege			13(1)
Invitation to join – correction and problem solving	22(3)		11(2)
Invitation to join – clarity and details	9		16
Invitation to join – strengths-focus	2		
Tribal insecurity – unfair standards		4	
Tribal insecurity – shaming		17(1)	
Tribal insecurity – stifling		3	
Tribal insecurity – other		5	
Rejection/detachment – unfair standards		10	
Rejection/detachment – shaming		7(2)	
Rejection/detachment – lack of connection		7(2)	
Rejection/detachment – negativity bias		5(1)	
Rejection/detachment—stifling		2	
Barrier to join – unfair standards		4(1)	
Barrier to join – negativity bias		2(2)	
Barrier to join – insufficient effort		7(2)	
Barrier to join – insufficient strategy or technique		4(2)	
Barrier to join – lack of clarity		10	
Barrier to join – lack of correction		4	
Barrier to join – lack of any feedback		3	
No experience of negative feedback or all feedback is positive	2	15(2)	
No experience of positive feedback	1(1)		
Technique (including recommendations)	7(2)		17(2)

*Note:* Total sample data derived from 312 data extracts; potentially maladaptive OC data derived from 36 extracts. Statements may have been coded with more than one code, resulting in totals different than 312 and 36.

### **Analysis of Potentially Maladaptive OC Dataset**

A total of 18 participants were identified as having potentially maladaptive OC characteristics, as evidenced by being in the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile of both OC-trait and maladaptive OC behavior measures. Of these 18 participants, 12 provided qualitative data, totaling 36 data extracts.

The responses of participants in this group were unremarkable in regards to types of themes present within the data. A crosstabs analysis identified no significant difference in count versus expected count of themes when potentially maladaptive OC statements were compared to statements of the non-potentially maladaptive OC group (total data counts minus potentially maladaptive OC data counts). This suggests that the types of concerns, positive experiences of feedback, and advice were not meaningfully different between the two groups.

A notable meta-theme in the potentially maladaptive OC data was the degree to which most statements were vague or dispassionate. Although several participants did share somewhat detailed answers, most students in the potentially maladaptive OC group used imprecise language and gave short answers, sometimes using tautology to explain what felt positive or negative. Three participants' responses to each prompt are as follows:

[Prompt 1:] There was one time when I wrote a paper and my professor gave me positive feedback on my paper and i received 100%. [Prompt 2:] In general when i am filming a counseling session for class and my teacher provides things I can/should work on, I feel like I will never measure up or be perfect. [Prompt 3:] In general, always give positive feedback along with the negative feedback, do not just focus on the negative (24F).

[Prompt 1:] A teacher sent me feedback on how to improve my writing, I listened and got a higher grade. [Prompt 2:] when I was addressed in a room full of people on a mistake i made. [Prompt 3]: Do it in private (29F).

[Prompt 1:] Receiving positive feedback on papers or during role plays has been the most helpful for me. [Prompt 2:] I have received corrective feedback over a misunderstanding and felt as if my professor was irritated with me. [Prompt 3:] We do not have as much time as they think we do (26M).

The participants in this group did not make any of the statements previously identified as potentially defensive, nor did these participants offer harsh criticisms, make emotional bids for stronger relationships or connection, or describe feedback-rejecting behavior. During the initial data coding, several statements from the total dataset were noted as potential indicators of don't-hurt-me (such as bids for caring or a statement warning that corrective feedback in public will “never be forgotten”) or pushback behavior (such as the statement that a professor gave “nonsense, boo-hoo” feedback). After separating the potentially maladaptive OC participants, it was discovered that none of these statements had been made by students in this group.

## **Evaluation of Results and Findings**

### **Question One**

The measurement instruments associated with the OC temperament and coping style were found to measure related, but distinct concepts. The need for structure in everyday life—including preferences for orderliness, certainty, and decisiveness, and a dislike for ambiguity and unpredictability—was associated with better feedback retention. An individual having the ability to remember feedback for later use might be evidence of the strengths of being a controlled, detail-oriented person. This suggests an adaptive and useful quality of need for structure,

although the data also indicated that need for structure correlated with an increased sense of threat or embarrassment from feedback and an increased desire for privacy. Individuals rating highly on the need for structure might be students who feel some anxiety about feedback, but also listen to and retain the information provided. Students who rated highly on the measure of psychological inflexibility, in contrast, appeared to have the challenges of increased desires for privacy and an increased sense of threat and embarrassment with feedback, without the benefit of improved feedback retention. Distinguishing these two traits is therefore potentially important in the evaluation of feedback receptivity.

The variable of OC-trait itself correlated with decreased feedback retention, an increased desire for confidentiality, an increased sensitivity to feedback, and a decreased belief in the utility of feedback. These results are congruent with RO DBT research which has identified OC people as less open and receptive to information, more cognitively rigid, and more sensitive to perceived social threats (Lynch, 2018a). The results suggest that OC, therefore, may appear in the counselor training environment in response to instructor feedback, potentially creating a barrier to feedback receptivity.

Problematic OC behaviors correlated with decreased feedback retention, increased sensitivity, and increased desires for confidentiality. These results suggest that the presence of feedback-blocking behaviors, including thoughts, could be indicators that feedback is not being accepted, is being experienced by the recipient as threatening, and might not be available for future recall and use. This result is congruent with research which has identified that the distress tolerance strategy of emotional suppression is ineffective (Campbell-Sills et al, 2006; Gross, 1998). Participants who engaged in OC coping while experiencing disconfirming feedback still reported that feedback is embarrassing and threatening, and may have been too emotionally

activated to focus on that which they were hearing, as suggested by the difficulties with feedback retention.

The vague nature of the qualitative statements from the potentially maladaptive OC students is particularly interesting. The language might be indicative of a disinterest in feedback or might relate to the theme of lack of retention. Perhaps individuals high in the trait of OC do not remember their feedback experiences well. It is also possible that some of the data came from individuals who are overly agreeable and perhaps disinclined toward strong language. No definitive conclusions can be made from the information available.

It is notable that throughout the qualitative data extracts for the entire data set, there is a strong meta-theme of external locus of control. Participants consistently identified that what made a feedback experience positive or negative was the behavior of the person providing the feedback. There were some references to self-reflection as a *result* of the feedback interaction (only when describing positive experiences), but only a few data extracts appeared to directly speak to personal control. Responding to the prompt about negative feedback experiences, one participant stated “When sitting and completing an intake for the first time and I took the feedback in a negative way.” Another student, previously quoted, indicated wanting the opportunity to hear critique in part because “it shows that I am able to take criticism and learn from it.” This attitude, however, was rarely expressed.

This other-focused attribution is consistent with research suggesting that students may view the feedback process more as a transaction and less as a tool for personal growth (Price et al., 2010), and a process for which the student themselves has little responsibility (Dawson et al., 2019). The attribution of blame to the other party for negative feedback experiences suggests that resolving a discrepancy between one’s desired view of self and disconfirming feedback by

rejecting the feedback or feedback-giver is a common response in counselor training environments. The presence of external attribution for a negative experience can also be an indicator that meta-task processes have been activated, suggesting that the student may not be focusing on task processes such as changing performance behavior (King, 2015). Meta-task processes might have been a factor for those participants who reported feeling upset or losing respect for an instructor's feedback due to the nature of the feedback exchange.

The qualitative data showed that many students focus on fair standards, and this aligns with previous research which has identified that students frequently want to use feedback to improve the next assignment or explain a grade, as opposed to taking in the feedback as information for long-term growth (Price et al., 2010). The previously quoted student who identified feedback as “unjust/alarming” if it pertained to an “expectation that was never established in the first place” might be speaking to the tendency of students to perceive feedback as strictly transactional and evaluative, and not as another method of teaching new information (Yorke, 2003).

Despite the prevalence of other-focused attributions, the predictor variables of need for structure, psychological inflexibility, OC-trait, and problematic OC behavior did explain about 34% of the variance in feedback sensitivity scores. This suggests that individual traits are meaningful in determining the degree to which a feedback experience results in embarrassment or a threat response. The data supports a view of feedback interactions in which both parties have a responsibility to ensure that the feedback is taken in and utilized. This result is congruent with previous research which concluded that student learning would benefit from students taking responsibility for some portion of the feedback process (Winstone et al., 2017).

## Question Two

Despite some small but significant correlations between measures related to OC and feedback within the classroom setting, nothing significant could be determined about these variables within the context of the supervisory relationship. This result is inconsistent with previous research which was identified that difficulty accepting supervision is a common concern cited by training programs for student remediation (Li et al., 2009). The qualitative data might provide some explanation for these results. The most commonly cited complaint about negative feedback experiences was the element of public shaming. The classroom is a public venue, in which many members of the tribe are present, whereas the supervision relationship is likely much more private, potentially even strictly one-on-one. The supervisory setting, therefore, may not be a place in which public shaming often occurs.

The lack of a crowd may offer other benefits as well. Previous research has reported that individual verbal feedback and personalized interaction may contribute to more positive relationship development (Nicol, 2010; Price et al., 2010; Steen-Utheim & Hopfenbeck, 2019). Without other students needing attention, supervisors may be able to individualize feedback interventions, and cater to the needs, personality style, and coping mechanisms of the student. For example, Smith and King (2004) identified that individuals who are high in sensitivity tend to be better supported by low-intensity feedback; one-on-one, this type of accommodation can be made.

Additionally, the timing of clinical supervision could be affecting results. Though regression analysis demonstrated that students who are further along in training might have a slightly reduced sense of feedback utility, only students who have successfully completed didactic training and coursework are approved for practicum and internship. Therefore, highly



maladaptive students, including any whose OC might have resulted in too much difficulty functioning within the training setting, would likely not be included in the group of students who have supervisors. Getting to the stage of clinical training might in itself be an indicator of some degree of adequate feedback orientation.

### **The Element of Relationship**

The element of relationship is important in the interpretation of results. The qualitative data extracts made clear that relationship-enhancing experiences of feedback were positive, and rejecting, shaming, or dismissing experiences of feedback were negative. Focus in the research literature on feedback-delivery technique (e.g. Borders et al., 2017; Nelson et al., 2008) might be misleading. Qualitative data extracts related to technique contained many contradictions (some students wanted more written feedback while others asked for less, etc.), but the desire for positive relationship, respect, and individual focus was consistent and clear. Even the theme of blending positive and negative feedback was more prevalent as a relational theme than strictly as a recommendation of technique. Discrepancies between the feedback experiences students reported as positive in prompt one and the behaviors which they recommended in prompt three suggested that perhaps students do not always know how to ask for the types of experiences they really want. Technique suggestions (such as offering “compliment sandwiches”), therefore, may present in some research literature as a stand-in for the desire for *relationship*.

### **Summary**

This chapter detailed the results of quantitative and qualitative data analysis. Correlation and regression analysis resulted in the rejection of the null hypothesis for question one and support for the hypothesis that students who rate higher on scales of emotional overcontrol will express less interest in teacher feedback and more negativity toward receiving feedback from

teachers. This finding was, however, tempered with the stipulation that small effect sizes decrease the practical significance. Other, unknown variables might further explain the variance in scores on measures related to feedback receptivity and more fully elucidate that which causes a student to accept or reject instructor feedback. The null hypothesis for question two could not be rejected, and no significant correlations were identified between variables of emotional overcontrol and variables of feedback receptivity.

Results indicated that a moderate amount of variance in scores pertaining to feedback sensitivity could be explained by variables related to emotional overcontrol. This result suggested that the individual traits of students do relate meaningfully to feedback receptivity, indicating that instructors and supervisors alone cannot ensure a positive or effective feedback experience for a counseling student and cannot bear sole responsibility for the feedback process.

Qualitative data suggested that relationship is an important element of effective feedback exchanges. Themes such as privacy, respect, mutuality, and kindness were discussed as they relate to students' positive experiences of feedback as well as advice for their instructors and supervisors. Themes such as public shaming and unfair standards were identified as elements of negative feedback experiences. The qualitative data suggested that students attributed the responsibility to ensure effective feedback exchanges largely to the instructor or supervisor.

## CHAPTER V: SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND OUTCOMES

This research was conducted to address the problem of counseling students struggling to accept and utilize instructor and supervisor feedback, a challenge which has resulted in a significant amount of student remediation and termination from counselor training programs (Henderson & Dufrene, 2013; Li et al, 2009). The purpose was to examine the possible correlation between variables related to inhibited temperament and overcontrolled (OC) coping and difficulty with accepting feedback within counselor training programs. The OC disposition was examined through the conceptual framework of Radically Open Dialectical Behavior Therapy (RO DBT), and measured using the Personal Need for Structure (PNS) (Thompson, Naccarato, & Parker, 1992), the Acceptance and Action Questionnaire-II (AAQ-II) (Bond et al., 2011), and the OC Trait Rating Scale (OC-TRS) (Seretis et al, 2015). Scores from these instruments were compared to subscales of the Instructional Feedback Orientation Scale (IFOS) (King, Schrod, & Weisel, 2009) to evaluate the influence of OC in the classroom setting, and the Evaluation Process within Supervision Inventory (EPSI) (Lehrman-Waterman & Ladany, 2011) for the supervisory setting. Quantitative data analysis consisted of correlation and regression analysis. Qualitative data was also used for the purposes of supplemental explanatory information, and analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Results of this research suggest that the OC disposition influences feedback receptivity in the classroom setting, though no significant correlations existed between measures of OC and measures of satisfaction with feedback in the supervision setting. Effect sizes were small but significant for the effects of OC-related measures on instructor feedback variables. Additionally, approximately 34% of the variance in sensitivity to feedback scores could be explained by the OC-related variables, suggesting that individual differences in student temperament and coping

likely have a meaningful influence on the feedback process in counselor training. The OC-TRS is still under development by its authors, including ongoing validation, and results should be interpreted with this limitation in mind. The implications of these results will be discussed in this chapter, including potential indications for counselor educators and supervisors, and the chapter will conclude with suggestions for future research.

### **Implications**

Results of this study confirmed the presence of individual student differences which correlate with variations on measures of feedback receptivity within the setting of counselor instruction. The OC style of coping and relating to the environment appears to be a relevant variable for considering the degree to which students are open to feedback. As such, instructors and supervisors are unlikely to ensure feedback receptivity only by altering their own behaviors; attending to student OC and inviting collaboration will now be explored as an alternate approach to improving feedback exchanges. This discussion is intended to help address the problem of students struggling to accept feedback by reframing the problem through the lens of RO DBT.

### **Challenges within the Learning Environment**

The ability and willingness to receive and utilize feedback is critical for students in the counselor training environment (Cadieux & Wehrly, 1986; Glenn, Leppma, & Thorne, 2015). Ideally, students will use training feedback not only to improve their work in the short term, but to develop a career-long practice of self-reflection (Rønnestad & Skovholt, 2003). The results of the present study suggest that individuals who rate highly on measures of OC may be at a disadvantage in the training environment with regards to accepting and utilizing feedback and turning feedback into long-term growth.

OC is associated with low distress tolerance (Jeffries et al., 2016), higher threat sensitivity (Lynch, 2018c), and increased risk for negative emotionality and anxiety (Derryberry & Rothbart, 1997; White et al., 2011). Receiving disconfirming feedback can be an emotional event, and OC individuals might be predisposed to increased anxious arousal in response. Results of the present study confirmed that all four variables associated with OC positively correlated with the feeling that feedback is threatening or embarrassing. The variables of psychological inflexibility, OC-trait, and problematic OC behaviors also correlated with decreased feedback retention, suggesting that something about OC could be impairing students' ability to maintain the information offered during feedback interactions; research suggests this could relate to OC threat-sensitivity.

The research on meta-task processes in the learning environment provides a possible explanation for the relationship between OC and lower retention. Given that feedback can change an individual's locus of attention, and threatening feedback can direct the person's focus from the task at hand toward self-assessment or judgment of the feedback source (i.e. meta-task processes) (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996), it makes sense that threat-sensitive OC students could have difficulty focusing on, and therefore remembering, feedback. It is simply harder to learn when meta-task processes are activated (King, 2015). Meta-task processes are more likely to be activated by critical feedback (King, 2015; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996), which is potentially a disadvantage for threat-sensitive OC students who might interpret a greater amount of feedback as critical, and might respond with more emotional intensity to disconfirming feedback.

Participants who rated highly on the measure of OC-trait were also more likely to endorse the attitude that feedback is not useful. Rejecting the usefulness of feedback can be a strategy to mitigate anxiety when the feedback recipient engages in meta-task processes, attributes the

negative experience to a source other than themselves, determines that the feedback-giver is not credible, and resolves the discrepancy between self-image and disconfirming feedback by dismissing the feedback (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996). The OC tendency to dismiss feedback in order to reduce anxiety and maintain an image of competence (Lynch, 2018a) is congruent with the lower scores on the measure of feedback utility. It is important to note that feedback is generally useful only when meaning is made of it (Esterhazy & Damşa, 2017); a lack of retention and reduced sense of utility might suggest that OC students make less meaning of the feedback provided by their instructors and supervisors. It is difficult to image long-term self-reflection and growth divorced from meaning-making.

If meta-task processes are indeed activated for OC students, the cost to the student could be greater than even the value of lost feedback. The need to attribute negative feedback to oneself or to an outside agent requires more cognitive energy than that which is used during a simple expression of positive feedback, likely quickly attributed to one's own good work (King, 2015). Threat-sensitivity, echoed in feedback sensitivity, has the potential to create additional cognitive demand. OC students might be more cognitively taxed during lectures, demonstrations, readings, and other academic activities, creating an additional barrier to learning.

OC also presents relational challenges within the training environment. Moderate correlations existed between measures of the OC-trait and the variables of psychological inflexibility and problematic OC behaviors. This result suggests that students who rate higher on OC-trait may also be less flexible to changing environmental cues, and more likely to engage in behaviors which block feedback and signal indirect demands, threats, or pleas, which are intended to shape the behavior of others. These pushback and don't-hurt-me responses allow for

plausible deniability while evoking a visceral reaction for the individual providing feedback.

The end result can be relational damage in the form of distrust, discomfort, frustration, or other reactions which hinder open communication (Lynch, 2018a; 2018b).

An individual caught up in feedback-blocking behavior may also be less able to receive support from the tribe or leader on a neurological level. The correlation between problematic OC behaviors and sensitivity to feedback suggests that these behaviors may be related to threat response. This is congruent with RO DBT theory and research (Lynch, 2018a) and suggests that students who present pushback and don't-hurt-me behaviors may be less able to interpret signals of cooperation such as kind facial expressions and an encouraging tone of voice from their instructor or supervisor (Porges, 2015). Individuals need to be calm in order to receive these cooperative signals but using a feedback-blocking behavior is unlikely to result in actual calming (Lynch, 2018a). Results of the present study indicate that invitations to join with the tribe and meet the expectations of leaders are important to many students. Without the activation of the Social Engagement System (Porges, 2015), the nervous system process responsible for connection, a student trying to block feedback may be unable to receive invitations to join.

Though these interpretations are tentative, the study data and existing theory support the conclusion that OC students might have disadvantages in the learning environment. Feedback is part of counselor training, cannot always be delivered in the format or style most desirable to the student, will sometimes be public, and needs to be retained for long-term skill acquisition and reflection. Fundamental elements of learning are unavailable if the student feels threatened and unwilling to tolerate uncertainty as new knowledge is developed (O'Donovan, 2017).

### **Opportunities within the Learning Environment**

The OC style of coping and relating also offers strengths within the learning environment. The data indicated that there may be an adaptive quality to OC if the need for structure presents without a high degree of psychological inflexibility. Though psychological inflexibility correlated with decreased feedback retention, need for structure correlated with *increased* retention. This is an important distinction, given that the two traits might appear similar. Distinguishing a dislike for ambiguity and uncertainty from a state of rigidity and adherence to predetermined rules might be an important factor in determining the degree to which a student is willing and able to remember feedback.

It is not surprising to see adaptive, socially desirable abilities correlate with the OC measures; OC coping is, after all, believed to be the best attempt of the individual to be acceptable to the tribe (Lynch, 2018a). Inhibition of emotion, especially when not taken to an extreme, can help an individual to work on long-term goals even in the absence of frequent rewards, cooperate with others and be of service, and tolerate the distress of others (Jeffries et al., 2016; Lynch, 2018a; Lynch et al., 2001). It is easy to imagine how these abilities could serve a counseling student. Other common OC characteristics, such as detail-oriented processing and skill with planning ahead (Lynch, 2018a), also offer resources which could support the learning of a student. The present study did not examine the how OC characteristics might aid student learning, but given the presence of OC within the sample, it is likely some adaptive abilities related to OC exist for this group of students.

### **Feedback as Relational Process**

The qualitative data in this study highlighted the importance of relationship in the feedback process. Positive feedback experiences described the themes of tribal security,



acceptance and validation, and invitation to join. Within these themes, participants expressed that they felt positively about feedback exchanges in which they felt accepted by the group; experienced kindness, respect, acceptance, and effort from the group leader; and in situations in which the instructor or supervisor created an opportunity to join with the academic tribe or counseling profession. Negative experiences were characterized as feedback exchanges in which tribal security was threatened or diminished, such as through public shaming; individual relationship with a leader was harmed by things such as perceived bias or unfairness; or access to the academic tribe or counseling profession was blocked or not actively facilitated by the group leader.

Participants in this study asked to have their strengths and successes validated alongside critical feedback, to be treated with kindness, to receive clear and detailed feedback, and to have critical feedback delivered in private. Other studies have found similar results (e.g. Wong et al., 2013). These relationally based requests are more consistent across the present data and existing research literature than are requests for specific techniques (e.g. written versus verbal feedback, lots of feedback versus limited information, etc.) which tended to vary more widely and sometimes contradict. The relationship itself may be the clarifying feature. For example, past research has found that mixing positive and negative feedback can be perceived as confusing (Geddes & Linnehan, 1996). This is not consistent with results of the present inquiry, in which many students specifically requested that negative and positive feedback be combined. However, both the present study and the Geddes and Linnehan (1996) study identified that unclear messaging and distrust (or in the present inquiry, more specifically, insufficient connection) were considered by students to be negative. Respondents in the present study also indicated that lack of corrective feedback was difficult to trust. A potential implication is that

relational elements such as trust, honesty, and effort are the factors of relevance, and not necessarily the technique of combining different types of feedback content.

The qualitative data in the present study suggested that students may not know how to ask for the kind of relationships they want with their instructors and supervisors. In prompt one, pertaining to past positive feedback experiences, the most common theme expressed was students valuing feedback which praised and encouraged them. In prompt three, when asked to provide advice to instructors and supervisors, nearly none of these participants recommended praise and encouragement; instead, the most common recommendation was showing respect and individualizing teaching and feedback. A possible interpretation is that the respondents in this study did not know how to ask for the experience of feeling cared about and invested in by their instructors and supervisors, but they could imagine tangible behaviors such as using polite words and teaching to students' learning styles. It is possible that the less perceptible elements of relationship being difficult to describe has skewed the research literature about feedback by over-representing students' desires for specific, measurable behaviors.

A focus on relationship instead of strategy makes sense in the field of counselor education and the feedback process specifically. Relationship behaviors can act as meta-communication about the counseling profession by modeling counselor traits such as empathy, compassion, and collaboration (Duffey et al., 2016). A strong sense of emotional bond has also been found to correlate with satisfaction with supervision in counseling, while the more perceptible variable of shared goals did not (Ladany et al., 1999). In the setting of medical school, relationship, including the elements of trust and comfort, was found to be an important variable in the degree to which medical students actively sought feedback from their instructors (Delva et al., 2013).

Relationship could be especially important for working with OC students. Relationship is a protective factor against OC coping strategies like suppression, avoidance, and rejection because supportive relationship activates the Social Engagement System (Porges, 2004). Because these strategies do not work to regulate distress (Campbell-Sills et al., 2006; Gross, 1998), and could impair learning (King, 2015), experiences of social safety could help OC students stay engaged, receptive, and open to valuable experiences such as cooperative signals and invitations to join the tribe. Activation of the Social Engagement System can also help the feedback recipient to feel less threatened and therefore help them stay out of meta-task processes, making it easier to learn new skills and information (King, 2015; Smith & King, 2004; Kluger & DiNisi, 1996).

All students, and perhaps especially threat-sensitive OC students, could be assumed to benefit from the face-saving element which exists within a positive relationship. The most commonly cited theme describing a negative feedback experience in this study was public shaming, or losing face in front of the tribe. Teachers helping students to preserve their self-image (and by extension, their status within the tribe), has been associated in prior research with an increased belief that the feedback provided was useful, as well as a decrease in defensiveness (Trees et al., 2009).

OC students likely feel the need to save face not only in instances in which their work is being critiqued, but during moments of emotional “leakage,” or instances in which the OC coping strategy of suppression fails and emotion erupts to the surface. OC individuals are likely to experience these moments as shameful (Lynch et al., 2001), even if no criticism was being offered and no shaming behavior was intended on the part of the classmate, instructor, or supervisor. A strong relationship with an OC student could help the leader in such a moment to

recognize the student's predicament and offer the student a face-saving option like not being the center of attention. Validation that the student did not lose status within the tribe for showing emotion would also demonstrate to an OC student that their relationships were intact.

Lastly, it is notable that building and prioritizing a strong relationship could help to teach the idea that feedback exchanges include an element of mutuality. The correlational analyses in this study support the notion that instructors and supervisors carry only part of the responsibility for a successful feedback interaction. By embedding instructional feedback in the broader context of a relationship, the inherent shared responsibility might be better understood by both parties.

### **The Radically Open Learning Environment**

Based on the implications above, practical usage of OC concepts in the training setting will now be discussed. This hypothetical integration of radical openness into the counselor training environment is a theoretical exploration, utilizing research literature and the data of the present study, to explore ways in which RO DBT could be implemented throughout a new type of feedback culture.

### **RO DBT and Counselor Training**

Past researchers have recommended orienting students to the process of receiving feedback (e.g. Hulse & Robert, 2014) and teaching students to use feedback (e.g. Swank & McCarthy, 2013; Quinton & Smallbone, 2010). The present study extends this research by adding the information that OC is a component of feedback receptivity in the counselor training environment. This is important, in part, because existing strategies for orienting students to feedback may not sufficiently address OC needs. For example, early childhood experiences have been found to affect adults' experiences of receiving feedback (Alexander & Hulse-Killacky,

2005; Stroud et al., 2016). Utilizing an experimental workshop model, researchers were able to change some student attitudes about feedback, such as self-efficacy for giving feedback, but saw no change to long-standing beliefs rooted in childhood memories (Alexander & Hulse-Killacky, 2005). Difficulty creating second-order change (to beliefs as opposed to only immediate behaviors) makes sense if the biopsychosocial model is applied. Existing research, as discussed in Chapter 2, strongly suggests that the struggles OC students have with feedback retention, sensitivity, utility, and confidentiality are not willful choices, but deeply ingrained patterns of behavior tied to biology and a life of social learning. A workshop which teaches feedback skills may be insufficient to affect change on the biopsychosocial level. In fact, the message that one need only “work harder and do better” in order to be successful can exacerbate OC difficulties by suggesting that more suppression, more “powering through” at all costs, and less mindful engagement with the moment is a pathway to being acceptable to others (Lynch, 2018a).

Teaching RO DBT not as a technique, but as a new perspective on *relationship*—with others, with the self, and with feedback—offers an alternative model for improving feedback receptivity which specifically addresses OC. Interrupting cycles of social isolation, feedback-blocking, and emotional distress for OC people does not mean changing an individual’s fundamental personality structure, nor denying them access to the strengths of their OC disposition. Rather, learning new perspectives and means of interaction, such as those presented in RO DBT, creates the opportunity for flexible control, receptivity to new experiences, and intimacy and connection; a combination of abilities otherwise known as *radical openness* (Lynch, 2018a). Radical openness creates the opportunity to use inhibition by choice and not by rigid habit (Lynch, 2018a; 2018b). Students could potentially keep and utilize the advantages and benefits of their OC temperaments without the painful challenges.

A full review of the RO DBT practices for cultivating radical openness is beyond the scope of this chapter, but several elements are important for the present discussion. Firstly, RO DBT approaches OC in a relational manner. The therapist (or instructor/supervisor, if the model were applied to the academic setting) acts as tribal ambassador whose job it is to communicate that the individual is a valuable and needed member of the tribe, and who is being invited to *stop* working so hard (i.e. inhibiting) and return to the comfort of the tribe. The primary mechanism of healing is to change maladaptive social signaling in order to enhance connection and a feeling of social safety (Lynch, 2018a).

Secondly, RO DBT teaches that individuals see the world not as *it* is, but as *they* are. The willingness to engage in healthy self-doubt and tolerate ambiguity is seen by RO DBT practitioners as a fundamental element of learning and being in relationship. To facilitate the cultivation of this self-reflective stance, RO DBT utilizes mindfulness practices, activities designed to interrupt feedback-blocking behaviors and cultivate personal accountability, and the process of self-enquiry. Self-enquiry is the practice of turning one's attention toward discomfort for the purpose of asking oneself "is there something for me to learn here?" To engage in self-enquiry, the individual avoids urges to automatically re-regulate, justify, defend, distract, blame, or even accept, and seeks instead to respond flexibly to what is needed in the present moment (Lynch, 2018a). Self-enquiry is an acknowledgement of one's own role in the events of the moment.

Individual feedback orientation, or overall receptivity to feedback and willingness to seek and use feedback for performance improvement, is believed to be amenable to influence (Linderbaum & Levy, 2010). Additionally, biotemperament is not destiny; traits such as negative affectivity and inhibition are subject to change through social interaction and learning

(Degnan & Fox, 2007; White et al., 2011). RO DBT, however, is not a strategy for increasing feedback receptivity; it is a therapeutic modality which offers a pathway to second-order change and a new way of interacting with the world. RO DBT has demonstrated efficacy for the treatment of depression (Lynch et al., 2001), eating disorders (Hempel, Booth et al., 2018), and other conditions, but its defining characteristic is not its ability to treat mental health disorders, but rather to challenge overcontrol itself and thereby affect holistic growth and functioning (Vanderbleek & Gilbert, 2018). Offering RO DBT to OC students would be a strategy for improving relational health and overall wellness, with improved feedback receptivity a likely benefit along the way. A radically open academic *culture*, practiced by both students and educators, could offer opportunities for enhanced learning on both sides.

### **Helping Students Identify OC**

Data in this study indicated that OC students have some difficulties with feedback receptivity. Given the challenges, as well as potential strengths, of OC in the classroom, students would benefit from the opportunity to learn about these concepts. Counselor training programs could educate students about the OC trait, the potential challenges of maladaptive OC and the potential adaptive benefits of this disposition.

Differentiating OC from under-control could also be valuable learning for everyone in the training environment. Variations in emotional control appear to affect receptivity and feedback behaviors. For example, lower-intensity feedback will likely be more effective for individuals high in feedback sensitivity (Smith & King, 2004), which is common to OC people. Such information could be a reminder to instructors to use tactful feedback which is direct but not confrontational and for students to accept low-intensity feedback when it is offered. A

distinction made about individual student style is not a technique, but an element of relationship which can guide behavior.

Students who struggle within the training setting are frequently referred by program facilitators to personal counseling, but without knowledge of the OC temperament and its potential role in the problem, there is a risk that the student will learn even more emotional control in counseling, not less. Given the unique qualities of this disposition, students who are struggling with feedback receptivity could also be directed to RO DBT practitioners. Pairing students with the resource most appropriate to their needs would be aided by knowledge of OC.

### **Orienting Students to their Feedback Responsibilities**

Results from the present inquiry indicate clearly that the instructor cannot bear sole responsibility for feedback receptivity. The disposition of the student is a significant variable over which the teacher has no control. Results of the qualitative data analysis also demonstrated a nearly universal attribution of the responsibility for the quality of feedback exchanges to instructors and supervisors. This discrepancy, left unaddressed, could deny students the opportunity to take responsibility for their share of feedback tasks, such as focusing, receiving, making-meaning, and utilizing the feedback in future work. Orienting students to the reality that feedback exchanges require cooperation and mutuality could provide students more access to learning. Once aware of their own responsibilities, students could be oriented to receptivity strategies, such as those available in RO DBT.

### **Building Relationship**

Participants in this study indicated that relationship matters in determining the quality of a feedback exchange. Whether feedback is given in writing or verbally, is formative or summative, or occurs privately or publicly, a positive relationship is likely to support better



feedback receptivity. Often, OC people are not easy to get to know and it may take time to build rapport, learn about them as people, and develop trust (Lynch, 2019a). To have better relationships with OC students, instructors and supervisors can practice the role of tribal ambassador and be patient with the relationship-building process. Counselor educators being knowledgeable about OC and its potential indicators would help them to better identify likely OC students and therefore prepare for OC relational needs.

By building a strong relationship with students, instructors and supervisors could help OC students to remain in the Social Engagement System during feedback interactions. Relationship can communicate to students that just because they did not meet every expectation, they are still considered valuable members of the tribe.

### **Self-Enquiry and Openness for Educators**

Participants in this study indicated that genuineness from instructors and supervisors, and the willingness to listen to students, helped to create positive feedback experiences. Counselor educators could model openness and set community norms by engaging in self-enquiry and cultivating their own sense of healthy self-doubt. This stance could also help instructors and supervisors to not respond to OC behavior reactively and instead remain in an uncomfortable moment long enough to learn from it and respond flexibly with that which is needed in the moment.

### **Avoiding Becoming Shaped by Maladaptive OC Behavior**

It is normal for instructors and supervisors to feel wary about giving critical feedback (Borders et al., 2017; Motley et al., 2014; Rapisarda, Desmond, & Nelson, 2011). Counselor supervisors have reported feeling challenged by both pushback-like behavior, such as defensiveness and arguing, and behaviors resembling don't-hurt-me responses, such as students

acting easily embarrassed, overly stressed, or fragile (Hoffman et al., 2005). Despite the challenges, counselor instructors and supervisors need to intervene in feedback-blocking behavior. If students are engaging in such behaviors, data from this study suggests they may not be retaining the valuable information being communicated. Problematic OC behaviors correlated with decreased feedback retention and feedback sensitivity, suggesting that students engaging in such behavior feel threatened and might not be absorbing the information for later use. Simply repeating the information to the student, however, is unlikely to be effective if the student remains closed.

Problematic behaviors such as pushback and don't-hurt-me responses are intended to shape the behavior of the individual on the receiving end of these displays; namely, to stop that person from continuing to give feedback or make requests (Lynch, 2018a). The data in the present study highlighted the importance of not giving in to these veiled demands. Behaviors such as glaring, looking ashamed, or arguing are potential indicators that learning is impaired. Utilizing knowledge of OC, instructors witnessing these behaviors could infer that meta-task processes are potentially activated and respond to such behaviors by helping students return to a state of social safety. Instructors could, as suggested by the qualitative data, ensure privacy, communicate respect and concern, offer an opportunity for the student to feel heard, and attempt to signal invitations to join. Using neuroception, including intentional body language and voice tone, the goal of such exchanges would be for the instructor to convey a visceral sense of acceptance in the tribe.

Not all OC students will overtly signal that feedback is being blocked. Overly agreeable OC behaviors, such as nodding along and feigning compliance, could also be monitored for within the training environment. Given the indicators in this study that OC can correlate with

decreased feedback retention, a feedback exchange might be best considered an on-going process. Instructors could check in periodically to ensure that follow-through has occurred, as evidenced by application to future work. Adequate communication between instructors and students' advisors would be necessary for tracking that necessary feedback was not discarded. Qualitative assessment of this type represents a change in the way some programs may currently be assessing feedback procedures. Tracking instructor behaviors, such as the quantity and frequency of the feedback they provide, is tempting due to the tangible, measurable nature of these variables; such elements, however, may not capture the true effectiveness of feedback (Price et al., 2010).

### **Giving Feedback while Allowing Students to Save Face**

Providing disconfirming feedback is sometimes so uncomfortable that educators simply withhold it (Ladany & Melincoff, 1999). Previous research (Wong, Wong, & Ishiyama, 2013) and the present study both support the conclusion that students generally dislike learning environments in which they are denied feedback. The qualitative data of this study suggested that disconfirming feedback, delivered kindly and with an invitation to join, is highly valued. Even those students identified as potentially having maladaptive levels of OC and accompanying behavior did not indicate that they dislike or do not want feedback.

Supervisors in past research have expressed discomfort with giving feedback about supervisees' personalities or professional behavior, or feedback which was perceived to be subjective in nature, such as about how therapy "should" be done (Hoffman et al., 2005). Data from the present study suggests that students do want to hear about alternative ways to conduct therapy and suggestions for better meeting expectations. Given that praise was viewed by some students as aversive, the data also suggests that that which is disconfirming may be unique to the

individual. Again, relationship quality and the individual nature of the student may be more relevant than trying to alter content or technique. Instructors who struggle with discomfort at the thought of providing feedback about a student's behavior could begin by evaluating the strengths and resources that exist within the relationship which could be used to convey feedback in an inviting manner. A tribal ambassador's job, after all, is not only to affirm but to help guide, ensure compliance with tribal expectations, and correct tribe members before they commit offenses which damage their status (Lynch, 2018a). If an instructor finds themselves struggling with this role, self-enquiry could be a means of exploring their own worries about this responsibility.

Results of the present study clearly indicate that personal insults, shaming, threats, and dismissive behavior are aversive to students. Importantly, results also indicate that not all students appreciate public recognition or want to be praised. Allowing students to save face, therefore, is not as simple as avoiding harshness. It may be an important component of saving face to allow students to stay out of the spotlight.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

#### **Instruments**

The OC-TRS is still undergoing validation and refinement. In the present inquiry, factor analysis was unable to support the eight-factor model intended by the developers. Additional research is needed to refine this instrument and determine the elements of OC which are measurable by such a self-report instrument. Additionally, correlational analysis suggested that the OC-TRS, PNS, and AAQ-II are likely to be measuring related, but distinct concepts. Results of the present inquiry suggested that the PNS might capture an adaptive quality of OC, as evidenced by the correlation with increased feedback retention. Research comparing these

instruments could improve construct validity for the OC-TRS and further differentiate OC from the need for structure and psychological inflexibility.

The measurement of potentially maladaptive OC behavior was created for the present study. Factor analysis supported a two-factor model, internal reliability was acceptable (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .707$ ), and correlational analysis supported the conclusion that this instrument relates to OC. Further inquiry and validation could be undertaken to develop this instrument. A potential benefit would be the creation of an instrument which directly measures feedback blocking behaviors which could then be known to both students and educators, making the behaviors available for intervention.

### **OC in the Educational Setting**

Although most variables related to OC correlated significantly with variables related to feedback retention, effect sizes were small. Beta values ranged from .179 to .417, and the model fit indicated that the OC variables accounted for as little as 5.2% of the variance in feedback utility, 13.4% of the variance in retention, and 12.7% of variance in confidentiality. The OC-related variables did account for approximately 34.3% of the variance in feedback sensitivity scores, but it is clear that variables other than OC are relevant for understanding differences in feedback receptivity. Variables such as trauma, including early childhood experiences, feelings of shame, and identity factors, for example, are known to affect the ways in which individuals respond to feedback (Cozolino, 2014). Future research could include measures of individual difference such as trauma history to better understand feedback receptivity and feedback orientation.

The effects of time could also be relevant to understanding OC in counselor education. Being in the training environment might increase rigidity for some individuals, due to increased

anxiety and desire to perform (Rønnestad & Skovholt, 2003). Data from the present inquiry identified a very small effect size for time in program on the variable of feedback utility, indicating that students may consider feedback less useful the longer they are in school. A pre-test/posttest design measuring OC before and after counselor training could help to identify whether flexibility and openness is changed by the practices of counselor education. Potential benefits and challenges to the counselor training environment as they relate to flexibility could be identified and addressed.

The degree to which OC affects student learning is also potentially an area of valuable inquiry. Future research could explore the possible relationship between the OC trait and the activation of meta-task processes within the classroom setting, including accompanying nervous system activation and any difficulties with absorbing and retaining information. Such research could help to explain the effects of OC on classroom learning, potentially leading to improved processes for managing OC challenges in the training environment.

### **OC in the Supervisory Relationship**

Correlational analysis revealed no significant results between measures of OC and a measure of supervisory effectiveness, including a subscale related to feedback. This result appears to indicate that OC does not significantly affect the feelings of students about feedback within supervision. It is possible that one-on-one, supervisors are able to mitigate maladaptive effects of OC. Future research could explore the supervisory behaviors and elements of relationship which protect against maladaptive OC and support feedback receptivity.

### **Conclusions**

This quantitative study utilized a survey design to measure variables related to the biopsychosocial trait of emotional overcontrol and variables related to feedback receptivity

within counselor education. This study addressed two research questions: 1) What is the relationship between counseling student emotional control and accepting feedback within the classroom setting? and 2) What is the relationship between counseling student emotional control and accepting feedback within the supervisory relationship? Correlation and regression analysis confirmed Hypothesis 1 (students who rate higher on scales of emotional overcontrol will express less interest in teacher feedback and more negativity toward receiving feedback from teachers) and was unable to reject null Hypothesis 2 (there is no relationship between the degree of emotional control present for the student and the student's openness or receptivity to supervisor feedback).

### **Purpose and Place within the Literature**

This study was intended to address the problem of counseling students struggling to accept and utilize instructor and supervisor feedback by exploring the possible role of OC in feedback receptivity. This study adds to the research literature by confirming that student traits are significant to the outcomes of feedback exchanges, as evidenced by measures of feedback receptivity. The study therefore provides a differing perspective and balance to a body of research literature which has focused on supervisor and instructor behaviors and which has emphasized the responsibility of feedback-givers to make the feedback acceptable to the recipient (e.g. Borders et al., 2017; McAullife, 2011a; Swank & McCarthy, 2015; Trepal, Bailie, Leeth, 2010). This study has provided support for the perspective that individual student characteristics are relevant to the concept of feedback receptivity and could serve as a data point in ongoing research about the feedback process in counselor education.

This study has also furthered the research about emotional overcontrol as understood within the framework of RO DBT. To the best of the investigator's knowledge, this is the first study to examine the influence of OC on feedback receptivity within counselor education.

### **Strengths and Limitations**

Results of this study should be considered within the framework of its strengths and limitations. The design was limited by several factors, including that the OC-TRS is still under development, the problematic OC behavior measure was not validated and normed prior to use, and there is a potential that a disproportionate number of OC people (compared to under-controlled people) completed the entire survey due to its length. Results are also limited by the small response size for the survey, a primarily white and female sample, and small effect sizes within the data.

Despite the limitations, this study included students from around the United States and by gathering data in an online survey, included information from multiple schools and therefore various training environments and feedback cultures. The survey utilized several validated measures as well as an instrument developed by the founder and head researcher of RO DBT. Additionally, an RO DBT content expert helped to develop the survey and craft the questions related to problematic OC behaviors. Measures of internal reliability found each instrument to be adequate within the current sample. Both quantitative and qualitative inquiry was used to generate a fuller explanation of the data, and this research provided rich information about a previously unexplored topic.

### **Key Findings**

Measures of instructional feedback receptivity in the present sample were significantly related to measures related to OC, indicating that this individual difference between students is



an important component of feedback exchanges in counselor education. Instructors and supervisors cannot be solely responsible for whether or not students listen to, make meaning of, and use feedback. Students' distress management and coping strategies, as evidenced by measures of OC, affect the ways in which they respond to feedback. As such, students need to take responsibility for their role in feedback exchanges in order to benefit as much as possible from the learning environment.

This study confirmed that the concept of OC is a relevant lens for examining feedback receptivity. The expression of this trait within counselor education has implications for student learning and relates to concerning challenges, such as decreased feedback retention, increased feelings of threat in response to feedback, and a lower belief that feedback is useful. The presence of OC in the counseling student population and the knowledge that this trait might affect learning can now be used to identify potential solutions.

Finally, the qualitative data clearly illustrated the importance of relationship for the concept of feedback receptivity. Participants indicated that they want supervisors and instructors to act as leaders and mentors who utilize their experience, power and privilege, and wisdom to guide students through the training process. Participants emphasized their needs for connection, support, validation, correction, and the invitation to step into the tribe of professional counselors.

## References

- Alexander, A., & Hulse-Killacky, D. (2005). Childhood memories and receptivity to corrective feedback in group supervision: Implications for group work. *The Journal for Specialists in Group Work, 30*(1), 23-45. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01933920590908642>
- Al-Hattami, A. A. (2019). The perception of students and faculty staff on the role of constructive feedback. *International Journal of Instruction, 12*(1), 885-894. <http://dx.doi.org/10.29333/iji.2019.12157a>
- American Counseling Association (2014). *ACA Code of Ethics*. Alexandria, VA: Author.
- Andersen, J. F. (1979). Teacher immediacy as a predictor of teaching effectiveness. *Annals of the International Communication Association, 3*(1), 543-559. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/23808985.1979.11923782>
- Ashford, S. J. (1986). Feedback-seeking in individual adaptation: A resource perspective. *Academy of Management Journal, 29*(3), 465-487. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5465/256219>
- Ashford, S. J., & Tsui, A. S. (1991). Self-regulation for managerial effectiveness: The role of active feedback seeking. *Academy of Management journal, 34*(2), 251-280. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5465/256442>
- Bahrlick, A. S. (1990). *Role induction for counselor trainees: Effects on the supervisory working alliance*. (Doctoral dissertation, The Ohio State University).
- Bean, R. A., Davis, S. D., & Davey, M. P. (2014). *Clinical supervision activities for increasing competence and self-awareness*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Beck, A. T., Steer, R. A. & Brown, G. (1996). *Beck Depression Inventory II manual*. San Antonio, TX: The Psychological Corporation.
- Beck, A. T., & Steer, R. A. (1990). *Manual for the Beck Depression Inventory*. San Antonio, TX: Psychological Corporation.
- Bennett, N., Harold, D. M., Ashford, S. J. (1990). The effects of tolerance for ambiguity on feedback-seeking behaviour. *Journal of Occupational Psychology, 63*, 343-348. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8325.1990.tb00535.x>
- Bernard, J. M. & Goodyear, R. K. (2014). *Fundamentals of clinical supervision* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York, NY: Pearson.
- Bohane, L., Maguire, N., & Richardson, T. (2017). Resilients, overcontrollers and undercontrollers: A systematic review of the utility of a personality typology method in understanding adult mental health problems. *Clinical Psychology Review, 57*, 75-92. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2017.07.005>

- Bond, F. W., Hayes, S. C., Baer, R. A., Carpenter, K. M., Guenole, N., Orcutt, H. K., Waltz, T., & Zettle, R. D. (2011). Preliminary psychometric properties of the Acceptance and Action Questionnaire–II: A revised measure of psychological inflexibility and experiential avoidance. *Behavior therapy, 42*(4), 676-688.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.beth.2011.03.007>
- Borders, L. D. (2005). Snapshot of clinical supervision in counseling and counselor education: A five-year review. *The Clinical Supervisor, 24*(1-2), 69-113.  
[http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J001v24n01\\_05](http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J001v24n01_05)
- Borders, L. D., Welfare, L. E., Sackett, C. R., & Cashwell, C. (2017). New supervisors' struggles and successes with corrective feedback. *Counselor Education and Supervision, 56*(3), 208-224. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/ceas.12073>
- Borges, L. M., & Naugle, A. E. (2017). The role of emotion regulation in predicting personality dimensions. *Personality and Mental Health, 11*(4), 314-334.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/pmh.1390>
- Bowlby, J. (1988). *A secure base: Parent-child attachment and healthy human development*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77-101. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Brett, J. F., & Atwater, L. E. (2001). 360° feedback: Accuracy, reactions, and perceptions of usefulness. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 86*(5), 930-942.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.86.5.930>
- Burke, D. (2009). Strategies for using feedback students bring to higher education. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 34*(1), 41-50.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02602930801895711>
- Burkard, A. W., Knox, S., Clarke, R. D., Phelps, D. L., & Inman, A. G. (2014). Supervisors' experiences of providing difficult feedback in cross-ethnic/racial supervision. *The Counseling Psychologist, 42*(3), 314-344. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0011000012461157>
- Cadieux, R. A., & Wehrly, B. (1986). Advising and counseling the international student. *New Directions for Student Services, 1986*(36), 51-63.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/ss.37119863607>
- Campbell-Sills, L., Barlow, D. H., Brown, T. A., & Hofmann, S. G. (2006). Effects of suppression and acceptance on emotional responses of individuals with anxiety and mood disorders. *Behaviour Research and Therapy, 44*(9), 1251-1263.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.brat.2005.10.001>

- Clark, L. A., & Watson, D. (1995). Constructing validity: Basic issues in objective scale development. *Psychological Assessment*, 7(3), 309-319.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/1040-3590.7.3.309>
- Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2018). Using thematic analysis in counselling and psychotherapy research: A critical reflection. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*, 18(2), 107-110.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/capr.12165>
- Cole, P. M., Michel, M. K., & Teti, L. O. D. (1994). The development of emotion regulation and dysregulation: A clinical perspective. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development*, 59(2-3), 73-102. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/1166139>
- Coleman, L. M., Jussim, L., & Abraham, J. (1987). Students' reactions to teachers' evaluations: The unique impact of negative feedback. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 17(12), 1051-1070.
- Corey, G., Haynes, R., Moulton, P. & Muratori, M. (2010). *Clinical supervision in the helping professions: A practical guide* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.
- Cozolino, L. (2014). *The neuroscience of human relationships: Attachment and the developing social brain* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2018). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.
- Cutumisu, M. (2019). The association between feedback-seeking and performance is moderated by growth mindset in a digital assessment game. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 93, 267-278. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2018.12.026>
- Daniels, J. A., & Larson, L. M. (2001). The impact of performance feedback on counseling self-efficacy and counselor anxiety. *Counselor Education and Supervision*, 41(2), 120-130.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6978.2001.tb01276.x>
- Dawson, P., Henderson, M., Mahoney, P., Phillips, M., Ryan, T., Boud, D., & Molloy, E. (2019). What makes for effective feedback: Staff and student perspectives. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 44(1), 25-36.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2018.1467877>
- Degnan, K. A., & Fox, N. A. (2007). Behavioral inhibition and anxiety disorders: Multiple levels of a resilience process. *Development and Psychopathology*, 19(3), 729-746.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0954579407000363>
- Degnan, K. A., Almas, A. N., Henderson, H. A., Hane, A. A., Walker, O. L., & Fox, N. A. (2014). Longitudinal trajectories of social reticence with unfamiliar peers across early childhood. *Developmental Psychology*, 50(10), 2311-2323.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0037751>

- Delva, D., Sargeant, J., Miller, S., Holland, J., Alexiadis Brown, P., Leblanc, C., Lightfoot, K., & Mann, K. (2013). Encouraging residents to seek feedback. *Medical Teacher, 35*(12), e1625-e1631. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3109/0142159X.2013.806791>
- Derryberry, D., & Rothbart, M. K. (1997). Reactive and effortful processes in the organization of temperament. *Development and Psychopathology, 9*(4), 633-652. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0954579497001375>
- DeRogatis, L. R. (1992). *The SCL-90-R: Administration scoring and procedure manual II*. Baltimore, MD: Clinical Psychometric Research.
- Dimaggio, G., MacBeth, A., Popolo, R., Salvatore, G., Perrini, F., Raouna, A., Osam, C. S., Buonocore, L., Bandiera, A., & Montano, A. (2018). The problem of overcontrol: Perfectionism, emotional inhibition, and personality disorders. *Comprehensive Psychiatry, 83*, 71-78. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.comppsy.2018.03.005>
- Dressler, R., Chu, M. W., Crossman, K., & Hilman, B. (2019). Quantity and quality of uptake: Examining surface and meaning-level feedback provided by peers and an instructor in a graduate research course. *Assessing Writing, 39*, 14-24. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.asw.2018.11.001>
- Duffey, T., Haberstroh, S., Ciepcielski, E., & Gonzales, C. (2016). Relational-cultural theory and supervision: Evaluating developmental relational counseling. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 94*(4), 405-414. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/jcad.12099>
- Earley, P. C., & Stubblebine, P. (1989). Intercultural assessment of performance feedback. *Group & Organization Studies, 14*(2), 161-181. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/105960118901400206>
- Esterhazy, R., & Dańša, C. (2017). Unpacking the feedback process: An analysis of undergraduate students' interactional meaning-making of feedback comments. *Studies in Higher Education, 44*(2), 260-274. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2017.1359249>
- Finn, B., & Metcalfe, J. (2010). Scaffolding feedback to maximize long-term error correction. *Memory & Cognition, 38*(7), 951-961. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3758/MC.38.7.951>
- Friedlander, M. L., & Snyder, J. (1983). Trainees' expectations for the supervisory process: Testing a developmental model. *Counselor Education and Supervision, 22*(4), 342-348. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6978.1983.tb01771.x>
- Fox, N. A., Henderson, H. A., Marshall, P. J., Nichols, K. E., & Ghera, M. M. (2005). Behavioral inhibition: Linking biology and behavior within a developmental framework. *Annual Review of Psychology, 56*, 235-262. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.55.090902.141532>

- Fuentes-Claramonte, P., Ávila, C., Rodríguez-Pujadas, A., Costumero, V., Ventura-Campos, N., Bustamante, J. C., Rosell-Negre, P. & Barrós-Loscertales, A. (2016). Characterizing individual differences in reward sensitivity from the brain networks involved in response inhibition. *Neuroimage*, 124, 287-299. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.neuroimage.2015.08.067>
- Fulton, C. L. (2016). Mindfulness, self-compassion, and counselor characteristics and session variables. *Journal of Mental Health Counseling*, 38(4), 360-374. <http://dx.doi.org/10.17744/mehc.38.4.06>
- Geddes, D., & Linnehan, F. (1996). Exploring the dimensionality of positive and negative performance feedback. *Communication Quarterly*, 44(3), 326-344. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01463379609370021>
- Glenn, M., Leppma, M., & Thorne, K. (2015). Clinical supervisors' perceptions of counselor characteristics associated with effective and well-balanced practices. *Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counseling*, 46(4), 29-36. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1891/0047-2220.46.4.29>
- Gregory, J. B., & Levy, P. E. (2012). Employee feedback orientation: Implications for effective coaching relationships. *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*, 5(2), 86-99. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17521882.2012.691888>
- Gross, J. J. (1998). Antecedent-and response-focused emotion regulation: Divergent consequences for experience, expression, and physiology. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74(1), 224-237. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.74.1.224>
- Gross, J.J., & John, O.P. (2003). Individual differences in two emotion regulation processes: Implications for affect, relationships, and well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 85, 348-362. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.85.2.348>
- Gross, J. J. & Thompson, R. A. (2007). Emotion regulation: Conceptual foundations. In J. J. Gross (Ed.), *Handbook of emotion regulation*, pp. 3-24. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Grubb, W. N., & Lazerson, M. (2005). The education gospel and the role of vocationalism in American education. *American Journal of Education*, 111(3), 297-319. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1086/429112>
- Hattie, J., & Timperley, H. (2007). The power of feedback. *Review of Educational Research*, 77(1), 81-112. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3102/003465430298487>
- Hayes, S. C., Luoma, J. B., Bond, F. W., Masuda, A., & Lillis, J. (2006). Acceptance and commitment therapy: Model, processes and outcomes. *Behavior Research and Therapy*, 44, 1-25. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.brat.2005.06.006>

- Hempel, R. J., Booth, R., Giblin, A., Hamilton, L., Hoch, A., Portner, J., Rushbrook, S. C., Simic, M., Hunt, K. & Wolf-Arehult, M. (2018). The implementation of RO DBT in clinical practice. *The Behavior Therapist*, 41(3), 161-173.
- Hempel, R. J., Rushbrook, C. S., O'Mahen, H., & Lynch, T. R. (2018). How to differentiate overcontrol from undercontrol: Findings from the RefraMED study and guidelines from clinical practice. *The Behavior Therapist*, 41(3), 132-142.
- Henderson, K. L., & Dufrene, R. L. (2013). Student behaviors and remediation: An empirical study. *Journal of Professional Counseling: Practice, Theory & Research*, 40(2), 2-14. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15566382.2013.12033924>
- Henley, A. J., & DiGennaro Reed, F. D. (2015). Should you order the feedback sandwich? Efficacy of feedback sequence and timing. *Journal of Organizational Behavior Management*, 35(3-4), 321-335. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01608061.2015.1093057>
- Hoffman, M. A., Hill, C. E., Holmes, S. E., & Freitas, G. F. (2005). Supervisor perspective on the process and outcome of giving easy, difficult, or no feedback to supervisees. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 52(1), 3-13. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.52.1.3>
- Honda, K. (2017). *Multirole clinical supervision: Evidence, reflections, and best practices*. Seattle, WA: Psychology in Seattle.
- Hulse, D., & Robert, T. (2014). Preplanning for feedback in clinical supervision: Enhancing readiness for feedback exchange. *The Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision*, 6(2), 4. <http://dx.doi.org/10.7729/62.1091>
- Hulse-Killacky, D., Orr, J. J., & Paradise, L. V. (2006) The Corrective Feedback Instrument-Revised. *The Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, 31(3), 263-281. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01933920600777758>
- Ilggen, D. R., & Knowlton Jr, W. A. (1980). Performance attributional effects on feedback from superiors. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 25(3), 441-456. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0030-5073\(80\)90039-2](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0030-5073(80)90039-2)
- Jeffries, E. R., McLeish, A. C., Kraemer, K. M., Avallone, K. M., & Fleming, J. B. (2016). The role of distress tolerance in the use of specific emotion regulation strategies. *Behavior Modification*, 40(3), 439-451. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0145445515619596>
- John, O. P., Donahue, E., & Kentle, R. J. (1991). *The "Big Five" inventory: Versions 4a and 5a (Tech Rep.)*. Berkley, CA: University of California, Institute of Personality Assessment and Research.
- Kacmar, K. M., Wayne, S. J., & Wright, P. M. (1996). Subordinate reactions to the use of impression management tactics and feedback by the supervisor. *Journal of Managerial Issues*, 8(1), 35-53.

- Karen, R. (1994). *Becoming attached: First relationships and how they shape our capacity to love*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Keogh, K., Booth, R., Baird, K., Gibson, J., & Davenport, J. (2016). The Radical Openness Group: A controlled trial with 3-month follow-up. *Practice Innovations, 1*(2), 129-143. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/pri0000023>
- King, P. E. (2015). When do students benefit from performance feedback? A test of feedback intervention theory in speaking improvement. *Communication Quarterly, 64*(1), 1-15. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01463373.2015.1078827>
- King, P. E., Schrodtt, P., & Weisel, J. J. (2009). The instructional feedback orientation scale: Conceptualizing and validating a new measure for assessing perceptions of instructional feedback. *Communication Education, 58*(2), 235-261. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03634520802515705>
- Kluger, A. N., & DeNisi, A. (1996). The effects of feedback interventions on performance: A historical review, a meta-analysis, and a preliminary feedback intervention theory. *Psychological Bulletin, 119*(2), 254. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.119.2.254>
- Ladany, N., Ellis, M. V., & Friedlander, M. L. (1999). The supervisory working alliance, trainee self-efficacy, and satisfaction. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 77*(4), 447-455. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6676.1999.tb02472.x>
- Ladany, N., & Melincoff, D. S. (1999). The nature of counselor supervisor nondisclosure. *Counselor Education and Supervision, 38*(3), 161-176. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6978.1999.tb00568.x>
- Larson Jr, J. R., Glynn, M. A., Fleenor, C. P., & Scontrino, M. P. (1986). Exploring the dimensionality of managers' performance feedback to subordinates. *Human Relations, 39*(12), 1083-1101. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/001872678603901202>
- Lehrman-Waterman, D., & Ladany, N. (2001). Development and validation of the evaluation process within supervision inventory. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 48*(2), 168-177. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.48.2.168>
- Letting, J. K. (1992). Giving corrective feedback: A decisional analysis. *Social Work, 37*(5), 424-430.
- Levitt, D. H., & Jacques, J. D. (2005). Promoting tolerance for ambiguity in counselor training programs. *Journal of Humanistic Counseling, Education and Development, 44*, 46-54. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/j.2164-490X.2005.tb00055.x>
- Li, C., Lampe, R., Trusty, J. G., & Lin, Y. (2009). Cluster analysis of impaired counseling students: A survey of master's level CACREP-accredited programs. *Journal of Professional Counseling, Practice, Theory, & Research, 37*(1), 38-50. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15566382.2009.12033854>



- Linderbaum, B. A., & Levy, P. E. (2010). The development and validation of the Feedback Orientation Scale (FOS). *Journal of Management*, 36(6), 1372-1405. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0149206310373145>
- Linehan, M. (1993). *Cognitive-behavioral treatment of borderline personality disorder*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- London, M., & Smither, J. W. (2002). Feedback orientation, feedback culture, and the longitudinal performance management process. *Human Resource Management Review*, 12(1), 81-100. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S1053-4822\(01\)00043-2](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S1053-4822(01)00043-2)
- Lynch, T. R. (2018a). *Radically open dialectical behavioral therapy: Theory and practice for treating disorders of overcontrol*. Oakland, CA: Context Press.
- Lynch, T. R. (2018b). *The skills training manual for radically open dialectical behavioral therapy: A clinician's guide for treating disorders of overcontrol*. Oakland, CA: Context Press.
- Lynch, T. R., Robins, C. J., Morse, J. Q., & Krause, E. D. (2001). A mediational model relating affect intensity, emotion inhibition, and psychological distress. *Behavior Therapy*, 32(3), 519-536. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0005-7894\(01\)80034-4](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0005-7894(01)80034-4)
- Lynch, T. R., Hempel, R. J., & Dunkley, C. (2015). Radically open-dialectical behavior therapy for disorders of over-control: Signaling matters. *American Journal of Psychotherapy*, 69(2), 141-162. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1176/appi.psychotherapy.2015.69.2.141>
- Lynch, T. R., Hempel, R. J., Whalley, B., Byford, S., Chamba, R., Clarke, P., Clark, S., Kingdon, D. G., O'Mahen, H., Remington, B., Rushbrook, S. C., Shearer, J., Stanton, M., Swales, M., Watkins, A., & Russell, I. T. (2019). Refractory depression—mechanisms and efficacy of radically open dialectical behaviour therapy (RefraMED): Findings of a randomised trial on benefits and harms. *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, 1-9. doi: 10.1192/bjp.2019.53
- McAuliffe, G. & Eriksen, K. (2011). *Handbook of counselor preparation: Constructivist, developmental, and experiential approaches*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- McAuliffe, G. (2011a). Guidelines for constructivist-developmental counselor education. In McAuliffe, G. & Eriksen, K. (2011). *Handbook of counselor preparation: Constructivist, developmental, and experiential approaches* (31-48). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- McAuliffe, G. (2011b). In McAuliffe, G. & Eriksen, K. (2011). Who are the learners? Phases of counselor development. In *Handbook of counselor preparation: Constructivist, developmental, and experiential approaches* (49-58). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

- Mennin, D. S., & Fresco, D. M. (2009). Emotion regulation as an integrative framework for understanding and treating psychopathology. In A. M. Kring & D. M. Sloan (Eds.), *Emotion regulation and psychopathology: A transdiagnostic approach to etiology and treatment* (pp. 356-379). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Motley, V., Reese, M. K., & Campos, P. (2014). Evaluating corrective feedback self-efficacy changes among counselor educators and site supervisors. *Counselor Education and Supervision, 53*(1), 34-46. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6978.2014.00047.x>
- Muhtadie, L., Koslov, K., Akinola, M., & Mendes, W. B. (2015). Vagal flexibility: A physiological predictor of social sensitivity. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 109*(1), 106-120. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/pspp0000016>
- Nease, A. A., Mudgett, B. O., & Quiñones, M. A. (1999). Relationships among feedback sign, self-efficacy, and acceptance of performance feedback. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 84*(5), 806-814. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.84.5.806>
- Nelson, M. L., Barnes, K. L., Evans, A. L., & Triggiano, P. J. (2008). Working with conflict in clinical supervision: Wise supervisors' perspectives. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 55*(2), 172-184. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.55.2.172>
- Neuberg, S. L., & Newsom, J. T. (1993). Personal need for structure: Individual differences in the desire for simpler structure. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 65*(1), 113-131. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.65.1.113>
- Nicol, D. (2010). From monologue to dialogue: Improving written feedback processes in mass higher education. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 35*(5), 501-517. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02602931003786559>
- Nolen-Hoeksema, S., Wisco, B. E., & Lyubomirsky, S. (2008). Rethinking rumination. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 3*(5), 400-424. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-6924.2008.00088.x>
- Norman, G. (2010). Likert scales, levels of measurement and the “laws” of statistics. *Advances in Health Sciences Education, 15*(5), 625-632. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10459-010-9222-y>
- Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. J. (2017). Thematic analysis: Striving to meet the trustworthiness criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 16*(1), 1-13. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1609406917733847>
- O'Donovan, B. (2017). How student beliefs about knowledge and knowing influence their satisfaction with assessment and feedback. *Higher Education, 74*(4), 617-633. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10734-016-0068-y>

- Pintrich, P. R., & De Groot, E. V. (1990). Motivational and self-regulated learning components of classroom academic performance. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 82(1), 33-40. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.82.1.33>
- Porges, S. W. (2004). Neuroception: A subconscious system for detecting threats and safety. *Zero to Three*, 24(5), 19-24.
- Porges, S. W. (2015). Making the world safe for our children: Down-regulating defence and up-regulating social engagement to 'optimise' the human experience. *Children Australia*, 40(2), 114-123. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/cha.2015.12>
- Porges, S. W., & Furman, S. A. (2011). The early development of the autonomic nervous system provides a neural platform for social behaviour: A polyvagal perspective. *Infant and Child Development*, 20(1), 106-118. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/icd.688>
- Price, M., Handley, K., Millar, J., & O'Donovan, B. (2010). Feedback: all that effort, but what is the effect? *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 35(3), 277-289. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02602930903541007>
- Puth, M. T., Neuhäuser, M., & Ruxton, G. D. (2015). Effective use of Spearman's and Kendall's correlation coefficients for association between two measured traits. *Animal Behaviour*, 102, 77-84. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.anbehav.2015.01.010>
- Quinton, S., & Smallbone, T. (2010). Feeding forward: Using feedback to promote student reflection and learning—A teaching model. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 47(1), 125-135. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14703290903525911>
- Rapisarda, C. A., Desmond, K. J., & Nelson, J. R. (2011). Student reflections on the journey to being a supervisor. *The Clinical Supervisor*, 30(1), 109-123. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07325223.2011.564958>
- Rasheed, A., Khan, S. U. R., Rasheed, M. F., & Munir, Y. (2015). The impact of feedback orientation and the effect of satisfaction with feedback on in-role job performance. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 26(1), 31-51. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/hrdq.21202>
- Reich, J. W., & Zautra, A. J. (1991). Analyzing the trait of routinization in older adults. *The International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, 32(3), 161-180. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2190/4PKR-F87M-UXEQ-R5J2>
- Ridgway, I. R., & Sharpley, C. (1990). Multiple measures for the prediction of counsellor trainee effectiveness. *Canadian Journal of Counselling and Psychotherapy*, 24(3), 165-177.
- Riva, G., Teruzzi, T., & Anolli, L. (2003). The use of the internet in psychological research: Comparison of online and offline questionnaires. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 6(1), 73-80. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1089/109493103321167983>

- Rønnestad, M. H., & Skovholt, T. M. (2003). The journey of the counselor and therapist: Research findings and perspectives on professional development. *Journal of Career Development, 30*(1), 5-44. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/089484530303000102>
- Rubin, R. B. (1982). Assessing speaking and listening competence at the college level: The communication competency assessment instrument. *Communication Education, 31*(1), 19-32. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03634528209384656>
- Schwartz, C. E., Wright, C. I., Shin, L. M., Kagan, J., & Rauch, S. L. (2003). Inhibited and uninhibited infants "grown up": Adult amygdalar response to novelty. *Science, 300*(5627), 1952-1953. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1126/science.1083703>
- Seretis, D., Hempel, R.J. & Lynch, T.R (2015). *The OC Trait Rating Scale*. Unpublished manuscript, Department of Psychology, University of Southampton, Southampton, United Kingdom.
- Smith, C. D., & King, P. E. (2004). Student feedback sensitivity and the efficacy of feedback interventions in public speaking performance improvement. *Communication Education, 53*(3), 203-216. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0363452042000265152>
- Southam-Gerow, M. A., & Kendall, P. C. (2002). Emotion regulation and understanding: Implications for child psychopathology and therapy. *Clinical psychology review, 22*(2), 189-222. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0272-7358\(01\)00087-3](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0272-7358(01)00087-3)
- Steen-Utheim, A., & Hopfenbeck, T. N. (2019). To do or not to do with feedback. A study of undergraduate students' engagement and use of feedback within a portfolio assessment design. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 44*(1), 80-96. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2018.1476669>
- Stroud, D., Olguin, D., & Marley, S. (2016). Relationship between counseling students' childhood memories and current negative self-evaluations when receiving corrective feedback. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling, 38*(3), 237-248. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10447-016-9268-5>
- Swank, J. M., & McCarthy, S. (2013). The counselor feedback training model: A developmental approach to teach feedback skills. *Adultspan Journal, 12*, 100-112.
- Swank, J. M., & McCarthy, S. (2015). Effectiveness of the counselor feedback training model. *The Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision, 7*(1), 4-23. <http://dx.doi.org/10.7729/71.1078>
- Tamir, M. (2011). The maturing field of emotion regulation. *Emotion Review, 3*(1), 3-7. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1754073910388685>
- Taylor, J. A. (1953). A personality scale of manifest anxiety. *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 48*(2), 285-290. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/h0056264>

- Thompson, M. M., Naccarato, M. E., & Parker, K. E. (1992). Measuring cognitive needs: The development and validation of the Personal Need for Structure (PNS) and Personal Fear of Invalidity (PFI) measures. *Manuscript submitted for publication*.
- Thompson, M. M., Naccarato, M. E., Parker, K. C., & Moskowitz, G. B. (2001). The Personal Need for Structure and Personal Fear of Invalidity measures: Historical perspectives, current applications, and future directions. *Cognitive Social Psychology: The Princeton Symposium on the Legacy and Future of Social Cognition*, 19-39.
- Thompson, R. A. (2011). Emotion and emotion regulation: Two sides of the developing coin. *Emotion Review*, 3(1), 53-61. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1754073910380969>
- Tortella-Feliu, M., Balle, M., & Sesé, A. (2010). Relationships between negative affectivity, emotion regulation, anxiety, and depressive symptoms in adolescents as examined through structural equation modeling. *Journal of Anxiety Disorders*, 24(7), 686-693. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.janxdis.2010.04.012>
- Trees, A. R., Kerssen-Griep, J., & Hess, J. A. (2009). Earning influence by communicating respect: Facework's contributions to effective instructional feedback. *Communication Education*, 58(3), 397-416. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03634520802613419>
- Trepal, H. C., Bailie, J., & Leeth, C. (2010). Critical incidents in practicum supervision: Supervisees' perspectives. *Journal of Professional Counseling, Practice, Theory, & Research*, 38(1), 28-38. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15566382.2010.12033864>
- Vanderbleek, E. & Gilbert, K. (2018). Too much versus too little control: The etiology, conceptualization, and treatment implications of overcontrol and undercontrol. *The Behavior Therapist*, 41(3), 125-131.
- Veilleux, J. C., Sandeen, E., & Levensky, E. (2014). Dialectical tensions supervisor attitudes and contextual influences in psychotherapy supervision. *Journal of Contemporary Psychotherapy*, 44(1), 31-41. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10879-013-9245-9>
- Wahesh, E., Kemer, G., Willis, B. T., & Schmidt, C. D. (2017). An analysis of peer feedback exchanged in group supervision. *Counselor Education and Supervision*, 56(4), 274-288. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/ceas.12085>
- Wegner, D. M., & Zanakos, S. (1994). Chronic thought suppression. *Journal of Personality*, 62, 615-640. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6494.1994.tb00311.x>
- Wheless, L. R., Eddleman-Spears, L., Magness, L. D., & Preiss, R. W. (2005). Informational reception apprehension and information from technology aversion: Development and test of a new construct. *Communication Quarterly*, 53(2), 143-158. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01463370500090845>

- West, J. D., Bubenzer, D., Cox, J. A., & McGlothlin, J. M. (Eds.). (2013). *Teaching in counselor education: Engaging students in learning*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Counselor Education and Supervision.
- White, L. K., McDermott, J. M., Degnan, K. A., Henderson, H. A., & Fox, N. A. (2011). Behavioral inhibition and anxiety: The moderating roles of inhibitory control and attention shifting. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, *39*(5), 735-747. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10802-012-9688-6>
- Winstone, N. E., Nash, R. A., Rowntree, J., & Parker, M. (2017). 'It'd be useful, but I wouldn't use it': Barriers to university students' feedback seeking and recipience. *Studies in Higher Education*, *42*(11), 2026-2041. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2015.1130032>
- Wittig, S. M., & Rodriguez, C. M. (2019). Emerging behavior problems: Bidirectional relations between maternal and paternal parenting styles with infant temperament. *Developmental Psychology*, *55*(2). <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/dev0000707>
- Wong, L. C., Wong, P. T., & Ishiyama, F. I. (2013). What helps and what hinders in cross-cultural clinical supervision: A critical incident study. *The Counseling Psychologist*, *41*(1), 66-85. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0011000012442652>
- Yorke, M. (2003). Formative assessment in higher education: Moves towards theory and the enhancement of pedagogic practice. *Higher Education*, *45*(4), 477-501.
- Zheng, X., Diaz, I., Jing, Y., & Chiaburu, D. S. (2015). Positive and negative supervisor developmental feedback and task-performance. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, *36*(2), 212-232. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/LODJ-04-2013-0039>

## Bibliography

- Archer, J. C. (2010). State of the science in health professional education: Effective feedback. *Medical Education*, 44(1), 101-108. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2923.2009.03546.x>
- Astrachan-Fletcher, E., Giblin, A., Simic, M. & Gorder, J. (2018). Radically Open Dialectical Behavior Therapy for anorexia nervosa: Connection, openness, and flexibility at the heart of recovery. *The Behavior Therapist*, 41(3), 149-153.
- Bing-You, R. G., & Trowbridge, R. L. (2009). Why medical educators may be failing at feedback. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 302(12), 1330-1331. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1001/jama.2009.1393>
- Blakely, G. L. (1993). The effects of performance rating discrepancies on supervisors and subordinates. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 54(1), 57-80. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1006/obhd.1993.1003>
- Borges, L. M., & Naugle, A. E. (2017). The role of emotion regulation in predicting personality dimensions. *Personality and Mental Health*, 11(4), 314-334. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/pmh.1390>
- Chen, P. Y., & Popovich, P. M. (2002). *Correlation: Parametric and nonparametric measures*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J. W. & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Cohen-Gilbert, J. E., & Thomas, K. M. (2013). Inhibitory control during emotional distraction across adolescence and early adulthood. *Child Development*, 84(6), 1954-1966. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12085>
- Dahling, J. J., Gabriel, A. S., & MacGowan, R. (2017). Understanding typologies of feedback environment perceptions: A latent profile investigation. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 101, 133-148. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2017.05.007>
- Driscoll, H., Zinkivskay, A., Evans, K., & Campbell, A. (2006). Gender differences in social representations of aggression: The phenomenological experience of differences in inhibitory control. *British Journal of Psychology*, 97(2), 139-153. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1348/000712605X63073>
- Duffey, T., Haberstroh, S., Ciepcielski, E., & Gonzales, C. (2016). Relational-cultural theory and supervision: Evaluating developmental relational counseling. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 94(4), 405-414. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/jcad.12099>

- Frame, M. W., & Stevens-Smith, P. (1995). Out of harm's way: Enhancing monitoring and dismissal processes in counselor education programs. *Counselor Education and Supervision*, 35(2), 118-129. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6978.1995.tb00216.x>
- Gaete, J., & Strong, T. (2017). Facilitating supervisees' developing competence through supervisory conversation. *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*, 30(2), 166-187. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09515070.2016.1167013>
- Gabriel, A. S., Frantz, N. B., Levy, P. E., & Hilliard, A. W. (2014). The supervisor feedback environment is empowering, but not all the time: Feedback orientation as a critical moderator. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 87(3), 487-506. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/joop.12060>
- Gardner, R. M. (2002). Cross cultural perspectives in supervision. *Western Journal of Black Studies*, 26(2), 98-106.
- González, A. (2018). Turning a traditional teaching setting into a feedback-rich environment. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*, 15(1), 32. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-018-0114-1>
- Green, H. J. (2011). Skills training and self-esteem: Educational and clinical perspectives on giving feedback to clinical trainees. *Behaviour Change*, 28(2), 87-96. <https://doi.org/10.1375/bech.28.2.87>
- Harackiewicz, J. M., & Larson, J. R. (1986). Managing motivation: The impact of supervisor feedback on subordinate task interest. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51(3), 547-556. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.51.3.547>
- Hardin, M. G., Mandell, D., Mueller, S. C., Dahl, R. E., Pine, D. S., & Ernst, M. (2009). Inhibitory control in anxious and healthy adolescents is modulated by incentive and incidental affective stimuli. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 50(12), 1550-1558. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-7610.2009.02121.x>
- Hays, M. J., Kornell, N., & Bjork, R. A. (2010). The costs and benefits of providing feedback during learning. *Psychonomic bulletin & review*, 17(6), 797-801. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3758/PBR.17.6.797>
- Henley, A. J., & DiGennaro Reed, F. D. (2015). Should you order the feedback sandwich? Efficacy of feedback sequence and timing. *Journal of Organizational Behavior Management*, 35(3-4), 321-335. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01608061.2015.1093057>



- Izadpanah, S., Schumacher, M., Arens, E. A., Stopsack, M., Ulrich, I., Hansenne, M., Grabe, H. J. & Barnow, S. (2016). Adolescent harm avoidance as a longitudinal predictor of maladaptive cognitive emotion regulation in adulthood: The mediating role of inhibitory control. *Journal of Adolescence*, 52, 49-59.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2016.07.006>
- Juwah, C., Macfarlane-Dick, D., Matthew, B., Nicol, D., Ross, D., & Smith, B. (2004). *Enhancing student learning through effective formative feedback*. Hestlington, York, United Kingdom: The Higher Education Academy. Retrieved from  
[https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/resources/id353\\_senlef\\_guide.pdf](https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/resources/id353_senlef_guide.pdf)
- Kelley, C. M., & McLaughlin, A. C. (2012). Individual differences in the benefits of feedback for learning. *Human Factors*, 54(1), 26-35. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0018720811423919>
- Ladany, N., Lehrman-Waterman, D., Molinaro, M., & Wolgast, B. (1999). Psychotherapy supervisor ethical practices: Adherence to guidelines, the supervisory working alliance, and supervisee satisfaction. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 27(3), 443-475.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0011000099273008>
- Lerche, V., Neubauer, A. B., & Voss, A. (2018). Effects of implicit fear of failure on cognitive processing: A diffusion model analysis. *Motivation and Emotion*, 42(3), 386-402.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11031-018-9691-5>
- Leung, K., Su, S., & Morris, M. W. (2001). When is criticism not constructive? The roles of fairness perceptions and dispositional attributions in employee acceptance of critical supervisory feedback. *Human Relations*, 54(9), 1155-1187.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0018726701549002>
- Lynch, T. R. (2018c). Tribe matters: An introduction to Radically Open Dialectical Behavior Therapy. *The Behavior Therapist*, 41(3) 116-125.
- Mainhard, T., Van Der Rijst, R., Van Tartwijk, J., & Wubbels, T. (2009). A model for the supervisor–doctoral student relationship. *Higher Education*, 58(3), 359-373.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10734-009-9199-8>
- Mather, M., Clewett, D., Sakaki, M., & Harley, C. W. (2016). Norepinephrine ignites local hotspots of neuronal excitation: How arousal amplifies selectivity in perception and memory. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 39, 1-19.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0140525X15000667>
- Mathiak, K. A., Koush, Y., Dyck, M., Gaber, T. J., Alawi, E., Zepf, F. D., Zvyagintse, M. & Mathiak, K. (2010). Social reinforcement can regulate localized brain activity. *European Archives of Psychiatry and Clinical Neuroscience*, 260(2), 132-136.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s00406-010-0135-9>

- McAdams, C. R., III, & Foster, V. A. (2007). A guide to just and fair remediation of counseling students with professional performance deficiencies. *Counselor Education and Supervision*, 47(1), 2-13. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6978.2007.tb00034.x>
- McCormick, E. M., & Telzer, E. H. (2017). Failure to retreat: Blunted sensitivity to negative feedback supports risky behavior in adolescents. *NeuroImage*, 147, 381-389. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.neuroimage.2016.12.041>
- Maguire, M., & Delahunt, B. (2017). Doing a thematic analysis: A practical, step-by-step guide for learning and teaching scholars. *All Ireland Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 9(3). Retrieved from <http://ojs.aishe.org/aishe/index.php/aishe-j/article/viewFile/335/553>
- Mennin, D. S., Heimberg, R. G., Turk, C. L., & Fresco, D. M. (2002). Applying an emotion regulation framework to integrative approaches to generalized anxiety disorder. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 9(1), 85-90. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/clipsy.9.1.85>
- Mennin, D. S., Holaway, R. M., Fresco, D. M., Moore, M. T., & Heimberg, R. G. (2007). Delineating components of emotion and its dysregulation in anxiety and mood psychopathology. *Behavior Therapy*, 38(3), 284-302. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.beth.2006.09.001>
- Muijs, D. (2011). *Doing quantitative research in education with SPSS* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Nagori, R., & Cooper, M. (2014). Key principles of peer assessments: A feedback strategy to engage the postgraduate international learner. *IAFOR Journal of Education*, 2(2), 211-237. <http://dx.doi.org/10.22492/ije.2.2.07>
- Nelson, M. L., Barnes, K. L., Evans, A. L., & Triggiano, P. J. (2008). Working with conflict in clinical supervision: Wise supervisors' perspectives. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 55(2), 172-184. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.55.2.172>
- Rich, P. R., Van Loon, M. H., Dunlosky, J., & Zaragoza, M. S. (2017). Belief in corrective feedback for common misconceptions: Implications for knowledge revision. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition*, 43(3), 492-501. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/xlm0000322>
- Russell, C. S., & Peterson, C. M. (2003). Student impairment and remediation in accredited marriage and family therapy programs. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 29(3), 329-337. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1752-0606.2003.tb01210.x>
- Unger, K., Kray, J., & Mecklinger, A. (2012). Worse than feared? Failure induction modulates the electrophysiological signature of error monitoring during subsequent learning. *Cognitive, Affective, & Behavioral Neuroscience*, 12(1), 34-51. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3758/s13415-011-0061-y>

- Versta Research, Inc. (2011, December). How to estimate the length of a survey. Retrieved from <https://verstaresearch.com/newsletters/how-to-estimate-the-length-of-a-survey/#main-article>
- Yang, Q., Notebaert, W., & Pourtois, G. (2018). Reappraising cognitive control: Normal reactive adjustments following conflict processing are abolished by proactive emotion regulation. *Psychological Research*, 83(1), 1-12. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s00426-018-1099-z>
- Webb, T.L., Totterdell, P. and Ibar, D.N.H. (2015) Foundations and extensions for the extended model: More on implicit and explicit forms of emotion regulation. *Psychological Inquiry*, 26 (1), 123-129. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1047840X.2015.960040>

**APPENDIX A**

Survey

## Consent

Dear Student,

Thank you for taking the time to review this consent form and participate in this research project. Your time is valuable and sincerely appreciated. Below, you will find important information about your rights as a research participant.

### **Participants:**

This survey is intended for master's level counseling students. Any student enrolled in a master's-level graduate program for mental health counseling, counseling psychology, or a related clinical degree program is invited to participate.

### **Investigator and Contacts:**

This research is the work of Erin Berzins, a doctoral candidate at Antioch University Seattle. She can be reached at [eberzins@antioch.edu](mailto:eberzins@antioch.edu). The faculty advisor for this project is Dr. Ned Farley. This research was approved by the Antioch University Seattle Institutional Review Board. For any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact Mark Russell at [mrussell@antioch.edu](mailto:mrussell@antioch.edu).

### **Purpose:**

You are invited to participate in a study about feedback within counselor training. The purpose of this study is to explore students' experiences of feedback received from teachers and clinical supervisors.

### **Procedures:**

This survey consists of several measurement instruments, as well as a few open-ended prompts and some demographic data. The survey consists of some data about you, and also your assessment of your teachers and supervisors. You will be asked to select answers which most align with your personal experiences, beliefs, opinions, and style. There are no right or wrong answers. In total, this survey is expected to take approximately 20-25 minutes to complete.

### **Risk of Participation:**

The risk of participation in this research is believed to be minimal. You will be asked about your personal experiences, which may cause some emotional discomfort. You might also experience minor frustration or boredom.

### **Benefits of Participation:**

There is no direct benefit guaranteed to you as a participant. A possible benefit for all

counseling students or the field as a whole is that this research could provide useful information for developing better practices in counselor education and supervision.

**Compensation:**

There is no direct compensation, but participants will have the option of entering a drawing for one of five \$25 gift cards, redeemable on Amazon.

**Confidentiality:**

Your survey will be stored initially with SurveyMonkey.com, protected by a password known only to the researcher. Data will be downloaded onto a personal computer and IP addresses will be immediately deleted from the downloaded file. E-mail addresses for the gift card drawing will be collected in a separate database, never connected to other survey data. Once winners have collected their prizes, all e-mail addresses will be deleted. All information will be kept private and password protected. Anonymous survey information will only be visible to the researcher and the dissertation committee. Data from this survey will be aggregated and presented in the results section of a dissertation which will be available for public viewing. Any results published in the final dissertation product will not include information which identifies you.

**Participation Rights:**

Participation in this survey is voluntary. Your school or other institution is not requiring that you participate and there is no penalty for non-participation. You have the right to quit the survey at any time.

**Agreement:**

By selecting “proceed” and completing the survey, you are agreeing to participate in this research, as described by the consent document above.

**Page 1**

I would like to start by getting to know a little bit about you and your style. Please read each of the following statements and decide how much you agree with each according to your attitudes, beliefs, and experiences. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers.

**Please respond according to your life in general, not strictly your role as a student.**

*[Note: the items below will appeared with a 6-point Likert scale grid, with answers: strongly disagree, moderately disagree, slightly disagree, slightly agree, moderately agree, strongly agree].*

1. It upsets me to go into a situation without knowing what I can expect from it.
2. I’m not bothered by things that interrupt my daily routine.
3. I enjoy having a clear and structured mode of life.
4. I like to have a place for everything and everything in its place.
5. I find that a well-ordered life with regular hours makes my life tedious.
6. I don’t like situations that are uncertain.
7. I hate to change my plans at the last minute.
8. I hate to be with people who are unpredictable
9. I find that a consistent routine enables me to enjoy life more.
10. I enjoy the exhilaration of being in unpredictable situations.
11. I become uncomfortable when the rules in a situation are not clear.

Below you will find a list of statements. Please rate how true each statement is for you by using the scale below to fill in your choice.

*[Note: the items below appeared with a 7-point Likert scale grid, with answers: never true, very seldom true, seldom true, sometimes true, frequently true, almost always true, always true].*

12. My painful experiences and memories make it difficult for me to live a life that I would value.
13. I’m afraid of my feelings.
14. I worry about not being able to control my worries and feelings.
15. My painful memories prevent me from having a fulfilling life.
16. Emotions cause problems in my life.
17. It seems like most people are handling their lives better than I am.
18. Worries get in the way of my success.

**Page 2**

On this page, you are being asked about your thoughts, feelings, and behavior across different settings or circumstances. Listed below are a number of statements. Please read them carefully and decide how much each statement applies to you according to your present and past experiences. In completing this questionnaire, it is important to understand that there are no "right" or "wrong" answers.

**Please respond according to your life in general, not strictly your role as a student.**

*[Note: the items below appeared with a 6-point Likert scale grid, with answers: disagree completely, disagree strongly, disagree somewhat, agree somewhat, agree strongly, agree completely].*

19. When challenged by someone I tend to immediately deny, dismiss, or dispute the feedback.
20. There is always a right and a wrong way to do things.
21. My mind often goes black when I have to speak about my feelings.
22. Very few people really know the real me.
23. I always make time for enjoyment and fun.
24. On the surface, I appear calm, but inwardly I am often fearful or irritable.
25. My dream life involves having a new experience every day.
26. Most of the time life seems easy.
27. I often feel detached from others.
28. If I'm invited to a party I usually attend out of obligation, not because I expect it to be fun.
29. Most people may not know that I will do almost anything to get ahead.
30. I often feel compelled to correct mistakes made by others.
31. I am sometimes so open to new ideas that people have described as naïve or gullible.
32. Having to be around others for long periods of time is exhausting.
33. In life, there is a set of rules and principles that one should always adhere to.
34. I am proud of my ability to tolerate pain or distress order to achieve a goal.
35. Most things in life don't work out.
36. I often notice errors that other people miss.
37. Very few people know that I can have an explosive temper.
38. My anxiety often interferes with my ability to hear what another person is saying.
39. I dislike details.
40. I find something positive or amusing in almost every situation.
41. I often mask or hide my inner feelings from others.
42. I feel content with my life.

Please read the statements below and determine how often these things are true for you.

*[Note: the items below appeared with a 7-point Likert scale grid, with answers: never true, very seldom true, seldom true, sometimes true, frequently true, almost always true, always true].*



43. When I get feedback about my work, I can move on quickly because I have already worked out the problem, know the answer, or have done the necessary self-reflection about the issue being discussed.
44. When I get feedback correcting my work, I feel hopeless about ever being able to do it right.
45. I get frustrated with feedback because it seems that my supervisor or teacher just doesn't understand that I *can't* do what it is that they want.
46. When I get feedback about my work, it feels like the evaluator is commenting about who I am as a person.
47. When I get negative feedback, others might see me look away, appear hurt, or appear shut down
48. I can get other people to back off or leave me alone with just my facial expression.
49. People need to give me their feedback gently, or else I will be too sad or upset to take it in.
50. I have to correct others because they give me feedback without understanding me first.

**Page 3**

I would now like to ask you some questions about your teachers and the feedback they give you. Please read each prompt carefully and decide how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

*[Note: the items below appeared with a 5-point Likert scale grid, with answers: strongly disagree, disagree somewhat, neither agree or disagree, agree somewhat, strongly agree. Items 51-77 were also randomized in the final survey].*

51. I think feedback from teachers is vitally important in improving my performance.
52. I will usually reflect on a teacher's feedback.
53. I listen carefully when a teacher provides feedback.
54. I am extremely encouraged by positive feedback from teachers.
55. I think that feedback provides clear direction on how to improve my performance.
56. Feedback from my teachers can be a valuable form of praise.
57. I pay careful attention to instructional feedback
58. Feedback from my teachers motivates me to improve my performance.
59. Feedback from teachers is a waste of time.
60. I feel relieved when I receive positive feedback.
61. My feelings can be easily hurt by corrective feedback from a teacher.
62. I feel threatened by corrective feedback.
63. Corrective feedback hurts my feelings.
64. Corrective feedback is intimidating.
65. My feelings are not easily hurt by corrective feedback from a teacher.
66. It is difficult to "get over" corrective feedback.
67. Corrective feedback is embarrassing.
68. I tend to dwell on the negative feelings that result from corrective feedback.
69. Corrective feedback from a teacher increases the stress I feel about future performance.
70. I do not like to receive corrective feedback in front of other people.
71. I do not like for others to hear what feedback I am receiving.
72. I don't mind being singled out by feedback from a teacher.
73. I prefer to receive feedback from a teacher in private.
74. I like others to hear the feedback I am receiving from my teacher.
75. I can't remember what teachers want me to do when they provide feedback.
76. I tend to miss out on the details of what instructors want when they provide me with feedback.
77. I typically do not make note of the teacher's corrective comments.

**Page 4**

This page pertains exclusively to students who have completed at least one term (quarter or semester) of practicum or internship. These questions are about your practicum or internship supervisor. If you have more than one supervisor, please answer by thinking about whomever you consider to be the supervisor *most responsible* for evaluating you (i.e. the person most likely to determine the outcome of your practicum or internship experience and your ability to progress in your degree program).

**If you have not completed any practicum or internship, or are in your first term, please skip to the next page.**

*[Note: the items below appeared with a 5-point Likert scale grid, with answers: strongly disagree, disagree somewhat, neither agree or disagree, agree somewhat, strongly agree].*

78. The goals my supervisor and I generated for my training seem important.
79. My supervisor and I created goals which were easy for me to understand.
80. The objectives my supervisor and I created were specific.
81. My supervisor and I created goals that were realistic.
82. I think my supervisor would have been against my reshaping/changing my learning objectives over the course of our work together.
83. My supervisor and I created goals which seemed too easy for me.
84. My supervisor and I created objectives which were measurable.
85. I felt uncertain as to what my most important goals were for this training experience.
86. My training objectives were established early in our relationship.
87. My supervisor and I never had a discussion about my objectives for my training experience.
88. My supervisor told me what he or she wanted me to learn from the experience without inquiring about what I hoped to learn.
89. Some of the goals my supervisor and I established were not practical in light of the resources available at my site (e.g. requiring videotaping and not providing equipment).
90. My supervisor and I set objectives which seemed practical given the opportunities available at my site (e.g. if career counseling skills was a goal, was able to work with people with career concerns).
91. My supervisor welcomed comments about his or her style as a supervisor.
92. The appraisal I received from my supervisor seemed impartial.
93. My supervisor's comments about my work were understandable.
94. I didn't receive information about how I was doing as a counselor until late in the semester.
95. I had a summative, formal evaluation of my work at the end of the semester.
96. My supervisor balanced his or her feedback between positive and negative statements.
97. The feedback I received from my supervisor was based upon his or her direct observation of my work.
98. The feedback I received was directly related to the goals we established.

**Page 5**

Almost done! On this page, please answer the open-ended prompts with whatever information you would like to provide.

99. Please describe an experience which you would describe as a positive experience with receiving feedback.
100. Please describe an experience which you would describe as a negative experience with receiving feedback.
101. If you could give your supervisors or teachers one piece of advice about how to give appropriate feedback, what would that be?

**Page 6**

This page contains demographic information. You also have the opportunity to enter a drawing to win a \$25 gift card for Amazon, if you choose.

102. Your age in years: \_\_\_\_\_
103. Gender identity
  - a. Female
  - b. Male
  - c. Transgender
  - d. Nonbinary
  - e. Other
  - f. Prefer not to answer
104. Race or ethnicity
  - a. Asian
  - b. Black or African American
  - c. Caucasian/white
  - d. Hispanic or Latinx
  - e. Middle Eastern
  - f. Mixed racial identity
  - g. Native American
  - h. Pacific Islander
  - i. Other
  - j. Prefer not to answer
105. Is your program CACREP-accredited?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Unsure
106. Approximately how long have you been a counseling student, in months? \_\_\_\_\_
107. As a counseling student, have you ever participated in a formal remediation plan due to concerns about your academic progress or other issues?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Unsure
108. If yes, briefly, what was the primary concern which the remediation plan was made to address? (e.g. “grades,” “counseling skills,” etc.) \_\_\_\_\_
109. If you would like to enter the drawing for a gift card, please click the following link to be taken to a separate entry area, which is not connected to your survey data: [link]

**APPENDIX B**

Definitions of Qualitative Themes

## Definitions of Themes and Subthemes

During the thematic analysis of the entire dataset, the following themes were extracted. Subthemes should be considered as they pertain to the primary theme. For example, the subtheme of shaming has a different connotation when attributed to tribal insecurity (i.e. public shaming) than when it is connected to rejection/detachment (i.e. private shaming).

- **Tribal Insecurity:** The perception that one's place within the tribe was compromised by public rejection.
  - **Unfair standards:** Perceiving oneself as being held to unrealistic expectations.
  - **Shaming:** Perceiving the intentions of the person providing feedback as being punitive, attacking, or disrespectful; or feedback perceived as being a criticism of the individual's personhood, instead of their work.
  - **Stifling:** Perceiving oneself as being silenced or unheard by the person providing feedback.
- **Rejection/Detachment:** The perception that one's relationship with the tribal leader was compromised by private rejection.
  - **Unfair standards:** Perceiving oneself as being held to unrealistic expectations.
  - **Shaming:** Perceiving the intentions of the person providing feedback as being punitive, attacking, or disrespectful; or feedback perceived as being a criticism of the individual's personhood, instead of their work.
  - **Stifling:** Perceiving oneself as being silenced or unheard by the person providing feedback.
  - **Lack of connection:** The perception of a lack of overt caring from the leader.

- **Negativity bias:** The perception that the leader has only focused on mistakes or problems, with no balance of positive feedback.
- **Barrier to Joining:** The perception that one's ability to join with or succeed within the tribe has been compromised by leader behaviors or other circumstances.
  - **Unfair standards:** Perceiving oneself as being held to unrealistic expectations.
  - **Negativity bias:** The perception that the leader has only focused on mistakes or problems, with no balance of positive feedback.
  - **Insufficient effort:** The perception that the leader has not put in enough time or work to help the student succeed.
  - **Inadequate technique:** The evaluation that the leader's feedback technique or strategy was insufficient.
  - **Lack of clarity:** The perception that the leader's feedback was too vague to be of value, was contradictory or confusing, or was not helpful because the leader's intentions were unknown.
  - **Lack of correction:** The perception that the leader's feedback did not contain enough constructive criticism to be of value.
  - **Lack of any feedback:** The experience of receiving no feedback, positive or negative.
- **No experiences of negative feedback:** The participant denied having experienced any feedback interactions which felt negative, or the participant indicated that all feedback is a positive interaction.
- **Tribal Security:** The perception that one's place within the tribe has been validated or improved.



- **Empowerment :** The experience of being publicly recognized for an accomplishment, strength, or ability; being valued within the tribe.
- **Shared expectations:** The experience of mutuality and respect within the tribe as it relates to the feedback giving process.
- **Privacy:** Allowing the individual receiving feedback the ability to save face by not receiving corrective feedback publicly.
- **Acceptance/Validation:** The perception that one's relationship with the tribal leader has been validated or improved, as when the leader demonstrates acceptance of the individual as a valuable member of the tribe.
  - **Kindness:** The experience of caring, empathy, or support for the individual as a person.
  - **Praise and encouragement:** The experience of one's work being praised or one's self-doubts being countered by validating, encouraging feedback.
  - **Genuineness and mutuality:** The experience of openness within the relationship, mutual sharing, feeling heard by the leader, or experiencing the leader as a real person with whom to have a relationship.
  - **Respect and individual focus:** The experience of feeling seen, heard, and valued as a unique individual within the tribe, even in the absence of overt expressions of caring or agreement from the leader.
  - **Effort:** The perception that the leader has devoted individual time, effort, or focus on the student and their work.
  - **Acknowledgment of power and privilege:** The perception that the leader is aware of the power differential between themselves and the student or that

sociocultural power differences are being attended to within the relationship.

Acknowledgement includes accepting the role as leader, such as the responsibility to use power to manage the group.

- **Blending positive and negative:** The experience of receiving corrective feedback only when accompanied by affirming feedback.
- **Invitation to Join:** The perception that the feedback being given was offered kindly, as an opportunity to improve and better meet expectations.
  - **Correction and problem-solving:** Feedback which offers recommendations on how to change, or collaboration for the purpose of solving an immediate problem, in which the leader lends their expertise to the student to try on and use in a difficult situation.
  - **Clarity and details:** The perception that the feedback was specific and detailed enough for the student to make the necessary changes to their work or behaviors.
  - **Strengths-focus:** Feedback which reminds the student of their specific strengths and abilities, which can be used for improvement.
- **No experiences of positive feedback:** The participant denied having experienced any feedback interactions which felt negative.

**APPENDIX C**

Permissions

## Instructional Feedback Orientation Scale

**Erin Berzins** <eberzins@antioch.edu>

Tue, Oct 1, 4:34 PM (4 days ago)



to Paul ▾

Hello Dr. King. Thank you again for allowing me to use the IFOS in my research. I am now at the stage of publishing my dissertation and am writing to ask for permission to include the IFOS in the publication as part of the survey, which would appear in its entirety in an appendix. The dissertation would be available in the following places:

- ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Database, a print on demand publisher, <http://www.proquest.com/products-services/pqdt.html>
- OhioLINK Electronic Theses and Dissertations center, an open access archive, <https://etd.ohiolink.edu>
- AURA: Antioch University Repository and Archive, an open access archive, <http://aura.antioch.edu>

Please let me know if this is permissible.

Thank you and I hope your fall is off to a great start!

Kindly,

Erin

**Erin (Wenzel) Berzins**

Ph.D., LMHC

Teaching Faculty

School of Applied Psychology, Counseling, and Family Therapy

Antioch University Seattle

**King, Paul**

to me ▾

Tue, Oct 1, 4:51 PM (4 days ago)



Hi Erin,

First, congratulations on completing your dissertation! That's a great accomplishment. Are you Dr. Berzins yet or do you still have to walk at commencement?

As for the IFOS, it's not something that I am trying to hide and make money on. No, as long as you cite the original publication then I'm delighted for you to publish it. If you publish in an academic journal, they may have to gain permission from the original publication, *Communication Education*. My author's copyright permission is limited. Our journals have generally been very helpful in granting permissions so that shouldn't be a problem.

Best,

Paul King

## Personal Need for Structure

**Erin Berzins** <eberzins@antioch.edu>

Tue, Oct 1, 4:37 PM (4 days ago)



to Megan ▾

Hello Dr. Thompson. Thank you again for allowing me to use the PNS in my research. I am now at the stage of publishing my dissertation and am writing to ask for permission to include the PNS items in the publication as part of the survey, which would appear in its entirety in an appendix. The dissertation would be available in the following places:

- ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Database, a print on demand publisher, <http://www.proquest.com/products-services/pqdt.html>
- OhioLINK Electronic Theses and Dissertations center, an open access archive, <https://etd.ohiolink.edu>
- AURA: Antioch University Repository and Archive, an open access archive, <http://aura.antioch.edu>

Please let me know if this is permissible.

Thank you and I hope your fall is off to a great start!

Kindly,  
Erin

**Erin (Wenzel) Berzins**

Ph.D., LMHC  
Teaching Faculty  
School of Applied Psychology, Counseling, and Family Therapy  
Antioch University Seattle

**Thompson, Megan**

Fri, Oct 4, 7:32 AM (1 day ago)



to me ▾

Hi Erin:

First congratulations!! Of course you may publish the items – with the usual caveats of citing the original source. I think you have it but let me know if you need it again. Any chance I could know what your PNS related results are?

*Cheers,*

*Megan*

**Megan M. Thompson, Ph.D.,**  
Defence Scientist,  
DG Sci Eng, Toronto Research Centre  
Defence Research and Development Canada / National Defence / Government of Canada

Scientifique de la défense,  
DG Sci Ing, Centre de recherches de Toronto  
Recherche et développement pour la défense Canada / Défense nationale / Gouvernement du Canada

...

## OC-Trait Rating Scale

**Erin Berzins** <eberzins@antioch.edu>  
to Roelie ▾

Tue, Oct 1, 4:46 PM (4 days ago)



Dr. Hempel,

Thank you again for allowing me to use the OC-TRS in my research!

I am now at the stage of publishing my dissertation and am writing to ask for permission to include the OC-TRS items in the publication as part of the survey, which would appear in its entirety in an appendix. The dissertation would be available in the following places:

- ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Database, a print on demand publisher, <http://www.proquest.com/products-services/pqdt.html>
- OhioLINK Electronic Theses and Dissertations center, an open access archive, <https://etd.ohiolink.edu>
- AURA: Antioch University Repository and Archive, an open access archive, <http://aura.antioch.edu>

Please let me know if this is permissible.

Thank you and I hope your fall is off to a great start!

Kindly,  
Erin

**Erin (Wenzel) Berzins**

Ph.D., LMHC  
Teaching Faculty  
School of Applied Psychology, Counseling, and Family Therapy  
Antioch University Seattle

**Roelie Hempel**  
to me ▾

Wed, Oct 2, 5:10 AM (3 days ago)



Hi Erin,

Sure, that is fine. I'd be very interested to read your thesis once it's ready for you to share!

Best wishes,  
Roelie

Roelie Hempel, Ph.D.  
Co-Director at Radically Open Ltd  
[www.radicallyopen.net](http://www.radicallyopen.net)  
[roelie@radicallyopen.net](mailto:roelie@radicallyopen.net)



## Acceptance and Action Questionnaire-II

**Erin Berzins** <eberzins@antioch.edu>

Tue, Oct 1, 4:45 PM (4 days ago)



to Frank ▾

Dr. Bond,

Thank you again for allowing me to use the AAQ-II in my research! I am now at the stage of publishing my dissertation and am writing to ask for permission to include the AAQ-II items in the publication as part of the survey, which would appear in its entirety in an appendix. The dissertation would be available in the following places:

- ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Database, a print on demand publisher, <http://www.proquest.com/products-services/pqdt.html>
- OhioLINK Electronic Theses and Dissertations center, an open access archive, <https://etd.ohiolink.edu>
- AURA: Antioch University Repository and Archive, an open access archive, <http://aura.antioch.edu>

Please let me know if this is permissible.

Thank you and I hope your fall is off to a great start!

Kindly,  
Erin

**Erin (Wenzel) Berzins**

Ph.D., LMHC  
Teaching Faculty  
School of Applied Psychology, Counseling, and Family Therapy  
Antioch University Seattle

**Frank Bond**

Wed, Oct 2, 5:11 AM (3 days ago)



to me ▾

Hi Erin,

You have my permission to reproduce the AAQ-II questionnaire in the way that you used it (or in a way that is understandable) in your dissertation.

I wish you well with it!

Best wishes,

Frank

---

Frank W. Bond, PhD, CPsychol  
Professor of Psychology and Management  
Institute of Management Studies  
Goldsmiths, University of London  
[REDACTED]  
United Kingdom

## Evaluation Process within Supervision Inventory

**Erin Berzins** <eberzins@antioch.edu>

Oct 1, 2019, 4:35 PM (4 days ago)



to Debbie ▾

Hello Dr. Waterman. Thank you again for allowing me to use the EPSI in my research. I am now at the stage of publishing my dissertation and am writing to ask for permission to include the EPSI items in the publication as part of the survey, which would appear in its entirety in an appendix. The dissertation would be available in the following places:

- ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Database, a print on demand publisher, <http://www.proquest.com/products-services/pqdt.html>
- OhioLINK Electronic Theses and Dissertations center, an open access archive, <https://etd.ohiolink.edu>
- AURA: Antioch University Repository and Archive, an open access archive, <http://aura.antioch.edu>

Please let me know if this is permissible.

Thank you and I hope your fall is off to a great start!

Kindly,

Erin

**Erin (Wenzel) Berzins**

Ph.D., LMHC

Teaching Faculty

School of Applied Psychology, Counseling, and Family Therapy

Antioch University Seattle



**Debbie Waterman**

Oct 1, 2019, 4:38 PM (4 days ago)



to me ▾

Yes, that's fine. Best Wishes!

Sent from my iPhone

