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## Counselor Educators' Experiences Negotiating Marginalized Identity during Professional Identity Development

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**Counselor Educators' Experiences Negotiating Marginalized Identity during Professional  
Identity Development**

A Dissertation Presented for the  
Doctor of Philosophy  
Degree  
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Nancy Elaine Thacker  
May 2019

## DEDICATION

For counseling professionals, near and far, those here and those to come. May the stories within this document show us how to forge a new landscape. One that breathes intersectional authenticity and functions to embolden our most genuine Self. May our voices be stirred within and rise together, and let us sing our unique melodies.

*I don't care if I sing off key,*

*I find myself in my melodies,*

*I sing for love, I sing for me,*

*I'll shout it out like a Bird Set Free.*

– Sia

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this narrative inquiry was to understand the experiences of marginalized counselor educators (CEs) as they negotiated their personal identities during professional identity development (PID). Three research questions addressed this purpose: *How do personal attributes play a role in CEs' experiences negotiating identity during PID? How are CEs' personal attributes impacted by engagement in the PID process? And, in what ways do CEs express their personal identities in their professional settings?*

Participants in this study were individuals ( $n = 8$ ) who identified as women, racial/ethnic minorities, and/or sexual/gender minorities, earned doctoral degrees in counselor education and supervision between 2015-2018, and were currently employed as full-time faculty members in CACREP-accredited counseling programs. Data were collected via 60-90 minute, semi-structured interviews and written letters to self provided by participants post-interview. The researcher used the transformational task model (Gibson et al., 2010; Gibson et al., 2015) of PID with a constructivist, narrative framework to gather and explore participants' stories negotiating marginalized identity during PID and develop themes.

Findings from a narrative thematic analysis indicated that participants faced multiple types of adversity, primarily through interpersonal relationships in professional settings, that provoked experiences of ongoing identity negotiation. Contexts included environments, norms, and expectations set by individuals within individual environments and heavily influenced participants' experiences with the phenomenon of inquiry. Contexts influenced what, how, and to what degree participants negotiated marginalized identities in professional settings. Participants' identity negotiation experiences included more than suppression of an individual identity form or expression. Participants engaged in a process of navigation that included

negotiation of marginalized identity and action steps to promote intersectional identity development and expression in professional settings. Participants expressed an ongoing need to engage in navigation, which impacted their perceptions and expressions of identity over time. Despite adverse experiences, participants authentically expressed intersectional forms of their personal identities in some professional settings. Inclusive environments and supportive relationships that encouraged and validated intersectionality and authenticity were noted as influential to participants' authentic expressions. Based on these findings, implications for professional practice in counselor education and future research were provided.



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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The counseling profession aims to increase the number of diverse counseling professionals (CPs) throughout the field (Kaplan & Gladding, 2011). The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), an organization widely identified as the singular accrediting organization for the counseling profession (Urofsky, 2013), reflects this aim in the *2016 CACREP Standards*. Sections 1.K and 1.Q require accredited programs to make “continuous and systematic efforts to attract, enroll, and retain a diverse group of students . . . [and] faculty to create and support an inclusive learning community” (CACREP 2016a, p. 6). The American Counseling Association (ACA) *2014 Code of Ethics* also includes a requirement for training programs to “actively attempt to recruit and retain a diverse student body” (p. 15). These requirements indicate increasing diversity and representation of underrepresented, or marginalized, CPs is important for the advancement of the counseling profession.

The call to increase diversity is of the essence considering the counseling profession’s history. The profession has historically reflected a White-centric, male-oriented, heteronormative climate with a homogenous group of middle-class counselors and educators (Croteau, Lark, & Lance, 2005). In 2016, around 60% of counselors-in-training (CITs) and counselor educators-in-training (CEITs) in CACREP-accredited programs were White, and 74% of full-time counselor educators (CEs) were White (CACREP, 2016b). In terms of gender, 83% of CITs and 76% of CEITs identified as female (CACREP, 2016b). More balanced representation in terms of gender has emerged in counselor education, with around 60% female and 40% male identified CEs (CACREP, 2016b). Racial and ethnic diversity in counselor education, however, is sparse (Zeligman, Prescod, & Greene, 2015). CACREP does not currently gather information regarding

diversity in sexual orientation (2016b), nor is it well documented in the counseling literature (Speciale, Gess, & Speedlin, 2015). Nevertheless, the profession's *20/20 vision* has promoted increases in research and advocacy to recruit and retain diverse CITs, CEITs, and CEs in training programs and faculty positions (CACREP, 2016a; Kaplan & Gladding, 2011).

Forming a professional identity is essential to engaging and retaining diverse CPs. Professional identity, the "integration of the personal and professional self" (Moss, Gibson, & Dollarhide, 2014, p. 3), is central to decisions and actions of counseling professionals (CPs; Calley & Hawley, 2008). Professional identity is shaped by the profession's emphasis on wellness, prevention, development, and advocacy (Mellin, Hunt, & Nichols, 2011; Reiner, Dobmeier, & Hernández, 2013; Woo, Henfield, & Choi, 2014). Through developing a professional identity, CPs clarify their purposes, duties, professional roles, and scope of responsibility (Gibson, Dollarhide, & Moss, 2010). Ideally, CPs who offer a range of therapeutic services across numerous settings and populations are united by a common professional identity that shapes ethical provision of services (Mellin et al., 2011). As a result, professional identity and development of marginalized CPs is an emerging important point of discussion.

In this chapter, I will discuss professional identity development (PID), marginalized CPs experiences during the PID process, and identity negotiation. Then, I will provide a statement of the problem, purpose and significance of the study, and definitions of key terms. I end the chapter by describing the organization of the study.

### **Professional Identity Development and Identity Negotiation**

Understanding of how professional identity develops among CPs has evolved over time. Early scholarship provided theoretical developmental models for CIT and counselor PID. These models focused on clinical supervision as a mediating variable for developing professional



dispositions and skills (Blocher, 1983; Hess, 1986; Hogan, 1964). Later models developed during the 1990s through the late 2000s provided empirically-based PID processes. These models expanded understanding of PID as a process that extends across the career lifespan and requires continuous learning through supervision, mentorship, continuing education, and engagement in a variety of professional activities (Auxier, Hughes, & Kline, 2003; Brott & Myers, 1999; Luke & Goodrich, 2010; Skovholt & Rønnestad, 1992a). Research within the past decade has included PID models for CEITs and CEs as well (Calley & Hawley, 2008; Dollarhide, Gibson, & Moss, 2013; Gibson, Dollarhide, Leach & Moss, 2015; Limberg et al., 2013; Protivnak & Foss, 2009). Regardless of the specific process of PID, scholars commonly report that professional identity emerges as CPs integrate personal attributes and professional skills in a professional context (Dollarhide et al., 2013; Gibson et al., 2010; Nugent & Jones, 2009; Woo et al., 2014).

Recent PID models were designed to account for differences in personal inputs and time needed to integrate personal and professional attributes to form professional identity (Auxier et al., 2003; Gibson et al., 2010; Dollarhide et al., 2013; Limberg et al., 2013). These scholars recognized that personal identities are central to successful integration. In particular, methods for achieving integration are partially reliant on external factors (e.g., external validation, mentoring, and modeling from experts) that differ depending on level of support, styles of mentoring, experiences in training programs, and sense of professional community (Gibson et al., 2010; Dollarhide, et al., 2013). When methods for achieving personal and professional integration vary due to external factors, personal identities are accentuated; individual differences and biases amongst professionals may impact PID.

Multiple CPs who identify as women, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, or Questioning (LGBTQ+), or racial and ethnic minorities have reported facing numerous adverse experiences in their professional contexts related to their personal, marginalized identities (Bryan, 2018; Haskins et al., 2013; Healey & Hays, 2012; Henfield, Woo, & Washington, 2013; Pollock & Meek, 2016; Shillingford, Trice-Black, & Butler, 2013; Speciale et al., 2015). Some examples of adverse experiences include microaggressions, tokenism, lack of support or mentorship, and invisibility (Bryan, 2018; Bryant et al., 2005; Hill, Leinbaugh, Bradley, & Hazler, 2005; Speciale et al., 2015; Zeligman, Prescod, & Green, 2015). These experiences can lead marginalized CPs to negotiate aspects of their personal identities as part of the PID process (Henfield et al., 2013).

Identity negotiation is a mechanism of suppressing forms and expressions of self in certain contexts to obtain membership in a particular group (Cohen & Kassan, 2018). Marginalized CPs may engage in identity negotiation during PID to receive needed support and guidance from other CPs, gain access to resources, and join the professional community (Haskins et al., 2013; Henfield et al., 2013; Shillingford et al., 2013). Although identity negotiation can be used as a method to persist and combat adverse experiences related to personal identity (Baker & Moore, 2015), marginalized CPs risk developing an inauthentic professional identity in which personal attributes are not integrated with professional skills.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Adverse experiences can challenge marginalized CPs to form professional identities that are congruent to self (Bryan, 2018; Haskins et al., 2013; Healey & Hays, 2012; Henfield, et al., 2013; Pollock & Meek, 2016; Shillingford et al., 2013; Speciale et al., 2015). Identity negotiation can serve as a tool to integrate into the professional collective. However, identity negotiation is

counterintuitive to the necessary integration of personal attributes and professional skills to form a professional identity (Gibson et al., 2010). If personal attributes are not genuinely reflected in the integration of self and skills during PID, the resulting professional identity may be ingenuine. Lack of genuineness challenges CPs to maintain therapeutic ways of being and conflicts with the profession's value for diversity (ACA, 2014; Spurgeon, Gibbons, & Cochran, 2012).

The profession aims to increase its number of diverse professionals (ACA, 2014; CACREP 2016a; Kaplan & Gladding, 2011). Yet, the very component that makes us diverse, our personal identities and experiences, may not be accepted or validated in professional contexts. Although numbers of marginalized CPs have increased in recent years (CACREP, 2016b), diversity is not fully encompassed by presence of minority individuals. Diversity of thought, ideologies, expressions, and behaviors are needed to diversify the counseling profession and the services CPs provide.

Throughout studies examining the adverse experiences of marginalized CPs, CITs and CEITs discussed the need for increased representation of minority CEs; increased representation is noted as a potential remedy of certain adverse experiences (e.g., lack of mentorship, tokenization, underrepresentation) (Baker & Moore, 2015; Bryan, 2018; Haskins et al., 2013; Henfield et al., 2013). These recommendations place marginalized CEs in a reciprocal process where CEs are tokenized to speak to minority issues and care for marginalized students. Simply increasing representation will not address tokenization, invisible labor, microaggressions, and the host of other adverse experiences marginalized CPs face. Furthermore, issues present for each marginalized group are not the responsibility of that marginalized group; they are relevant for all CPs. Acts for change are a professional collective responsibility. To achieve the vision of diversifying the counseling profession (Kaplan & Gladding, 2011), we must reevaluate the ways

in which marginalized CPs experience counselor education and integrate their personal identities into the profession.

Marginalized CPs' authentic expressions of diversity may be hindered by standards and norms consistent within White, heteronormative, male-centered personal attributes and expressions of the majority of CPs (Croteau, Lark, & Lance, 2005). Remediating this hinderance may be best achieved by focusing examinations on CEs, as they influence the composition of the counseling profession (Gibson et al., 2015). Advancement of the profession is reliant on diverse CEs promoting our collective professional identity and nurturing the development of future counselors (Reiner, Dobmeier, & Hernández, 2013). However, there is limited knowledge of the impact identity negotiation has on marginalized CEs' personal identities and their engagement in the PID process. This makes it difficult to identify meaningful strategies for truly supporting authentic expressions of self and diversifying the counseling profession.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this dissertation study was to understand experiences of marginalized CEs as they negotiate their personal identities during PID. This narrative inquiry gathered stories of lived experience that detailed participants' interactions within self and with others as they negotiated personal identity and developed professional identities (Cohen & Kassan, 2018; Dollarhide et al., 2013; Riessman, 2008). Exploring this phenomenon through narrative methodology supported the interactional process of PID (Gibson et al., 2010), while preserving individualized experiences and meaning-making potential for each marginalized CE (Riessman, 2008). The research questions that guided this study were: (1) How do personal attributes play a role in CEs' experiences negotiating identity during PID? (2) How are CEs' personal attributes

impacted by engagement in the PID process? (3) In what ways do CEs express their personal identities in their professional settings?

### **Significance of the Study**

The counseling profession has increased its efforts to diversify the field in recent years. However, marginalized CPs continue to face adverse experiences in professional settings. These experiences impact their abilities to develop professional identities congruent to self. By examining marginalized CEs' experiences negotiating personal identities during PID, new methods were discovered to nurture authentic expressions of self as personal identity is integrated with professional training to form a professional identity. This discovery sheds light onto ways the profession can shift its norms and expectations to support authentic expressions of self for all CPs, thereby truly increasing diversity among our professionals.

### **Definition of Terms**

Marginalization is generally defined as “persistent inequality and adversity resulting from discrimination, social stigma, and stereotypes” (National Democratic Institute, 2018, p. 1). Thus, I use marginalized identity as a label to describe individuals who have been historically oppressed, discriminated against, and/or stigmatized due to one or more identities. For the purposes of this study, *marginalized CPs* refers to historically oppressed groups of racial and ethnic minorities; women; and/or LGBTQ+ counseling professionals.

*Personal identity* is one's personally constructed, subjective, and evolving understanding of self, which considers both individual and cultural factors (McLean & Syed, 2016). Personal identity includes attributes that are used as descriptive labels or identifiers (e.g., gender and race) and conceptual understanding of self in relation to others and one's environment.

*Professional identity* is one's perception of the integration of personal attributes and professional skills in a professional context (Gibson et al., 2010; Nugent & Jones, 2009).

*Professional identity development* (PID) is the process in which professional identity emerges.

*Identity negotiation* is a mechanism of suppressing forms and expressions of self in certain contexts to obtain membership in a particular group (Cohen & Kassan, 2018).

*Counseling professionals* (CPs) is an umbrella term to describe all counseling roles: CIT, counselor, CEIT, and CE. For the purposes of this study, each counseling role is defined as follows. A CIT is an individual currently enrolled in a Master's counseling program. A counselor is an individual with a master's or educational specialist degree in counseling who is practicing professional counseling in the field. A CEIT is an individual currently enrolled in a counselor education and supervision doctoral program. A CE is an individual who holds a doctoral degree in counselor education and supervision and is a faculty member in a professional counseling program.

### **Organization of the Study**

In Chapter 2, I review the history and definitions of professional identity, including methods and tools used to evaluate it. I also provide an overview of PID theories that offer a foundation for studies of CPs' experiences during the PID process. Additionally, I review the literature regarding marginalized CPs' adverse experiences in their professional roles. I include attention to ways adverse experiences impact marginalized CPs and contribute to personal identity negotiation in this review. In Chapter 3, I include an overview of qualitative methodology, specifically narrative inquiry, and the narrative procedures I utilized in this study. In Chapter 4, I review findings of this study with an opening composite narrative and follow with a discussion of the five major themes derived from participants' stories. In Chapter 5, I discuss

final findings of this study and include implications for practice and research in counselor education.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

In this chapter, I will provide a review of literature regarding the professional identities and developmental processes of marginalized counseling professionals (CPs). I begin the chapter by defining professional identity and components within it. I discuss methods of identifying and measuring professional identity, then I describe specific presentations of professional identity in counselors-in-training (CITs), counselors, counselor educators-in-training (CEITs), and counselor educators (CEs). Next, I review historical and contemporary professional identity development (PID) models for counseling students and practitioners. I also describe CEITs and CEs' PID within each of their professional roles. Then, I elaborate on the Transformational Task Model (TTM) of PID, which will be used as a theoretical framework for this study. Finally, I discuss marginalized CPs' experiences in the profession, including adverse experiences and their impacts on expression, evaluation, and engagement during the PID process.

Professional identity is central to the decisions and actions of counseling professionals (Calley & Hawley, 2008). An understanding of what professional identity is, how it is assessed, and how it is expressed is needed to provide insight into the embodiment of professional identity in CPs and their practice. In the following section, I will discuss the content of professional identity in the counseling profession, including its definition and character components. Next, I will explore existing methods of identifying and measuring professional identity. Finally, I will describe how professional identity is experienced and expressed by CPs.

### **Professional Identity in the Counseling Profession**

Counseling is a unique helping profession characterized by its emphasis on wellness, development, and prevention (Mellin et al., 2011; Reiner et al., 2013). The profession is guided by five core professional values:



(1) enhancing human development throughout the lifespan; (2) honoring diversity and embracing a multicultural approach in support of the worth, dignity, potential, and uniqueness of people within their social and cultural contexts; (3) promoting social justice; (4) safeguarding the integrity of the counselor–client relationship; and (5) practicing in a competent and ethical manner. (ACA, 2014, p. 3)

These values are interwoven into CPs’ shared mission to “promote respect for human dignity and diversity” (ACA, 2014, p. 2) by offering services that “empower diverse individuals, families, and groups to accomplish mental health, wellness, education, and career goals” (ACA, 2014, p. 3). The methods CPs implement to embody this mission greatly vary. However, members of the profession are united through their identities as professional counselors.

Professional identity offers a foundation for forming knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs about the profession and engaging in ethical practices of counseling (Kaplan & Gladding, 2011; Reiner et al., 2011). Historically, the counseling profession has experienced an identity crisis as professionals with different training backgrounds and specializations struggled to promote a collective identity (Gale & Austin, 2003). Counseling leaders have worked to establish a common definition of professional identity to support the development of professionals across the career lifespan and legitimize counseling as a profession (Woo et al., 2014). Over the past two decades, scholars have addressed this crisis by examining common components of professional identity across diverse groups of CPs (Woo et al., 2014). In the following section, I will review existing literature on definitions of professional identity; means of identifying and measuring such definitions; and experiences of professional identity among counselors-in-training (CITs), counselors, counselor educators-in-training (CEITs), and counselor educators (CEs).

## **Defining Professional Identity**

Woo et al. (2014) reviewed existing research on professional identity and its components in counseling, resulting in over 120 articles using the following search terms: “(counselor) identity, professional identity, professionalism, counseling, counselors, identity development, and counselor education” (p. 3). Over several decades, scholars have attempted to establish “a definition of a unified professional identity and explore characteristics related to this definition” (p. 3). The first part of their search resulted in five “current efforts to promote a clear professional identity” ( p. 3). First, identity confusion has been a primary inhibitor in promotion of counseling as a profession, and many scholars have detailed impacts of confusion on individual professionals, training programs, licensure and accreditation boards, and the field as a whole. Second, ACA initiated a task force to develop strategies that address the future of counseling. Third, a significant amount of literature has been published on the PID of CPs. Fourth, curriculum standards set CACREP have supported “efforts to develop and strengthen a clear professional identity within the counseling profession” (p. 4). Fifth, professional identity has remained a significant point of conversation and concern across various online networks.

The second part of Woo and colleagues’ (2014) search resulted in six common constructs of professional identity recorded throughout existing literature: (1) knowledge of the profession, (2) philosophy of the profession, (3) professional roles and expertise, (4) attitude toward the profession and oneself, (5) engagement behaviors, and (6) interaction with other professionals. Woo et al. defined knowledge of the profession as understanding “history, standards for professional preparation, impact of credentials and certification, ethical standards, and counseling associations and counseling journals” (p. 6). Philosophy of the profession has been noted as a shared view of the “human experience through the lens of development, prevention,

wellness, empowerment, and advocacy” (p. 7). Professional expertise describes the importance of determining what counseling methods are meeting clients’ or students’ needs; professional roles details understanding one’s tasks and responsibilities in various settings, including limitations to one’s expertise for a particular issue and setting. Attitude toward the profession and oneself includes pride for the profession and belief in its future. Furthermore, existing literature in relation to this component has highlighted the importance of experiencing “congruence between one’s personal characteristics, goals, and values and the counseling profession” (p. 8). Engagement behaviors include “involvement in professional associations, publishing and presenting, reading professional research and journals, maintaining credentials, and participating in community services, including advocacy efforts” (p. 9).

Engagement in leadership activities particularly promotes professional identity (Woo et al., 2014). For example, McKinney, West, Fye, Bradley, and Storlie (2018) reported that serving as faculty advisors for local chapters and on leadership boards of Chi Sigma Iota supported lifelong evolution of leaders’ professional identities as counselors. Interactions with other professionals involves networking with professional peers, colleagues, mentors, and supervisors. The final two components are noted as essential to professional identity because integration into the community of professionals supports continued development throughout the lifespan (Woo et al., 2014). In sum, Woo et al. provided insight into the common components of professional identity and called CPs to continue efforts towards creating a unified professional identity.

Common components of counselor professional identity are influenced by multiple factors including training programs, mentoring relationships, and supervision (Remley & Herlihy, 2014). To understand impact on professional identity, these factors can be organized within three components: interaction with self and community, sociocultural influences, and

personhood (Skovholt & Rønnestad, 1992b). I expand upon each component in the following paragraphs.

**Components of professional identity.** Professional identity is the perception of self as a professional in context of a professional community (Gibson et al., 2010). This perception is formed through the integration of personal attributes and professional training in a professional context (Nugent & Jones, 2009). Counselors integrate skills and attitudes to build competence and confidence as professionals (Gibson et al., 2010). Furthermore, professional identity is an intra- and interpersonal developmental process that occurs throughout the career lifespan (Moss et al., 2014). CPs internalize learned knowledge and build self-awareness, while simultaneously adopting professional norms and participating in the professional community as they build professional identity (Gibson et al., 2010; Limberg et al., 2013). Interaction with the community informs counselors of professional norms and standards to exemplify; at the same time, awareness of diversity and shifting sociocultural influences is essential to the evolving professional identity.

CPs are a diverse group of professionals ranging in age, race, ethnicity, religious identity, and gender (Mellin et al., 2011). Personal contexts, theoretical foci, range of activities, and societal climate impose relevant historical and current influences on the individual professional and profession as a whole (Calley & Hawley, 2008; Dollarhide et al., 2013). Professional identity shifts over time as professionals grow and society evolves (Moss et al., 2014). Awareness of relevant sociocultural influences and their impacts on professional identity and behaviors highlight needs for growth and areas of personal challenge.

CPs bring personal inputs and experiences into their professional contexts. Personhood is integral to therapeutic relationships with clients and mentoring and instructional relationships

with students and supervisees (Calley & Hawley, 2008; Moss et al., 2014). One's personhood, or personal identity, includes attributes that are used as descriptive labels or identifiers (e.g., gender and race) and conceptual understanding of self in relation to others and one's environment (McLean & Syed, 2016). The personal attributes and experiences CPs carry directly impact professional identities and behaviors (Gibson et al., 2010). CPs continuously develop and encounter new environments that impact their worldviews. As a result, consideration for personal characteristics, attributes, and experiences are important throughout the career lifespan. With these components in mind, professional identity is defined as a counselor's perception of the integration of personal and professional attributes in a professional setting (Gibson et al., 2010; Nugent & Jones, 2009) that includes "values, abilities, knowledge, and sense of unity... possessing personal responsibility to the profession, conducting oneself ethically and morally, and feeling pride for the profession" (Alves & Gazzola, 2011, p. 190).

With a definition of professional identity in hand, the next step in exploring its composition is understanding how to identify and measure it within CPs. Identifying and understanding professional identity is important because we have a responsibility to "transmit the professional identity of counseling to future generations of counselors" (Calley & Hawley, 2008, p. 15). Transmission of identity can be facilitated in numerous ways, but future generations of CPs must first be able to recognize what professional identity is and looks like. Scholars have developed means of identifying and measuring professional identity in order to set up conversations for how CPs experience and develop professional identity. In the next section, I will review literature specific to this process.

## **Identifying and Measuring Professional Identity**

Because professional identity is the foundation of the counseling profession, it is often used as a variable to form and evaluate training programs and professionals' skills and behaviors (Gale & Austin, 2003). Professional identity also plays a key role in ethical practice and is a legal requirement for licensure across states (ACA, 2014; Cruikshanks & Burns, 2017). In the following section, I will review accreditation of training programs, certification and licensure, and measures of assessing professional identity.

**Accreditation and licensure.** CACREP is widely identified as the singular accrediting organization for the counseling profession (Urofsky, 2013). Accreditation promotes professionalization of counseling, unifies its professionals, and offers a means of consistency and evaluation in training programs (Mascari & Webber, 2013; Urofsky, 2013). As a result, accreditation is influential to the definition of professional identity and its embodiment through learning and practice (Lawson, 2016; Urofsky, 2013).

CACREP *2016 Standards* include requirements for master's and doctoral programs in eight and five core curricular areas of learning, respectively. The standards of learning influence all CPs, as professional identity begins in training programs. Furthermore, CEs in CACREP-accredited programs are tasked with creating and implementing curricula that promote professional identity inherent within the standards; thus, their professional identities and behaviors to model such identity are continuously developing as they instruct and mentor new counselors. Section 2 of the CACREP (2016a) standards is dedicated to professional counseling identity for counseling students, including one core area expressly focused on professional orientation and ethical practice. Section 6.B also provides specific criteria for doctoral student professional identity in the five core areas of counseling, supervision, teaching, research and

scholarship, and leadership and advocacy. The standards reflect the collective professional identity that promotes wellness, development, prevention, empowerment, and advocacy (CACREP, 2016a; Mellin et al., 2011; Woo et al., 2014).

As CACREP accreditation has become widely known as the professional standard across training programs (Mascari & Webber, 2013; Urofsky, 2013), national organizations (e.g., ACA) and certification and licensure boards (e.g., National Board for Certified Counselors [NBCC] and state licensure boards) have adopted CACREP requirements to ensure consistency of professional preparation and care (ACA, 2017; NBCC, 2017). In recent research, scholars have discovered connections between accreditation and professional identity. For example, Hurt-Avila and Castillo (2017) conducted a descriptive discriminant analysis and were able to predict accreditation status of master's-level students' programs based on professional identity scale scores. The researchers noted "specific characteristics of professional identity and professional competence [such as understanding of the profession, ethical and competent practice, and engagement in supervision] were indicators of CACREP-accredited program status" (p. 39).

Accreditation also influences licensure for CPs. CACREP accreditation can be a solution to license portability and counselor identity problems with competing helping professions across states (Mascari & Webber, 2013). In *20/20 Principles for Unifying and Strengthening the Profession*, Kaplan and Gladding (2011) recognized licensure portability as a key issue and promoted the establishment of "common counselor preparation standards" (p. 371) as a potential solution. Among other key issues identified, the authors reported strengthening identity and presenting as one profession are essential to support the future of counseling and its professionals. These reports suggest professional identity is foundational to identifying and

distinguishing counseling as a unique helping profession, and this identity must be tied to standards of learning and ethical practice for CPs.

**Measures.** Scholars have created professional identity measures to evaluate knowledge, attitudes, and professional behaviors among CPs. The first reported measure of professional identity appears to be the *Professional Identity and Engagement Survey (PIES)*, a scale developed to measure agreement with counseling philosophy and professional engagement of master's students enrolled in CACREP-accredited programs (Puglia, 2008). The PIES contains counseling philosophy and professional engagement subscales and one exploratory section focused on knowledge sources.

Healey (2009) developed the *Professional Identity and Values Scale (PIVS)* to assess attitudes, beliefs, and practices regarding one's role in the counseling profession. The inventory was developed with specific focus on determining compatibility with the values and perspectives of female professionals. Healey first conducted qualitative interviews to inform development of two subscales for the PIVS inventory: (1) professional orientation and values and (2) professional development. Within the first subscale, 18 items evaluate one's agreement with the philosophy of counseling and measure one's value of professional components (e.g., continuing education and mentorship). The second subscale includes 14 items measuring one's level of identity development. Participants rate items on a Likert-type scale, and internal consistency reliability for all items appears good ( $\alpha = 0.80$ ). The PIVS has been used throughout emerging research on professional identity (Healey & Hays, 2012; Hurt-Avila & Castillo, 2017; Prosek & Hurt, 2014)

Woo and Henfield (2015) created the *Professional Identity Scale in Counseling (PISC)* to measure "criteria of professional identity among CPs across counseling subspecialties and



subpopulations” (p. 96). Using and extensive literature review and previously identified constructs of professional identity including the PIES and the PIVS, the researchers crafted their scale based on “six subdomains of self-perceived ability [related to professional identity]: (a) demonstrate knowledge of the profession, (b) articulate philosophy of the profession, (c) establish expertise required of members of the profession and understand members’ professional roles, (d) validate attitudes toward the profession and oneself, (e) be engaged in professional behaviors expected of members, and (f) interact with other professionals in the field” (p. 96). Using two rounds of ratings and feedback from 20 expert reviewers, the authors finalized 62 items and grouped them within six subscales: engagement behaviors, knowledge of the profession, attitude, professional roles and expertise, philosophy of the profession, and professional values.

Next, Woo and Henfield (2015) conducted an exploratory factor analysis using a sample of 385 counseling students and professionals. Results indicated convergent and discriminatory validity and internal consistency of items across subscales ( $\alpha = 0.92$ ). The researchers’ findings suggested that professional identity can be identified and measured within specific areas of knowledge, beliefs of the philosophy of counseling, engagement behaviors, attitudes and values, and professional roles across populations of CPs. They proposed that the PISC be used in future research, training programs, and professional organizations to promote professional identity, evaluate curriculum and student outcomes, and measure professionals’ levels of engagement and development.

Woo, Lu, and Bang (2018) reexamined the PISC in two stages. First, they sought to explore the factor structure of the original 62-item measure; then, they evaluated the internal construct validity of a shorter version of the PISC. Woo et al. conducted an exploratory factor

analysis on archival data from the 385 CPs surveyed in Woo and Henfield's (2015) study. Woo et al. implemented a principle factor analysis and found support to retain four factors. Next, Woo et al. surveyed 286 CPs and conducted a confirmatory factor analysis on participants' responses to the four-factor PISC, or PISC-S. Results supported a "four-factor, 16-item PISC-S. The four factors are Professional Knowledge (PK), Professional Competency (PC), Attitude toward Profession (AP), and Engagement in Counseling Profession (EP)" (p. 148). In sum, the PISC appears to be a valid measure of professional identity in counseling, and the PISC-S can be used as a tool to measure and promote CPs professional identities in specific areas.

Through the formation of new measurements of professional identity, scholars have been able to examine professional identity levels in counselor trainees and licensed CPs. Prosek and Hurt (2014) used a revised version of the PIVS to conduct a multivariate analysis of variance regarding differences in professional identity levels of novice and advanced counselor trainees. Results indicated increased levels of professional development in advanced trainees compared to novice counselor trainees; however, there were not significant differences between groups on their understanding of professional orientation and values. The ability to measure professional identity in this study led to implications for training and supervision of novice counselors.

Burns and Cruikshanks (2017) created a survey to examine professional identities of 472 independently licensed counselors. The survey included one Likert-type question inquiring about participants' "clarity in consistently identifying professionally as counselor[s]" (p. 193), and an open-ended prompt asking participants to describe how they communicate their professional roles to others. Reports indicated that although there were high self-reports of professional identity, participants struggled to communicate their professional identity when discussing their

occupational roles with others. This study demonstrates the need for increased efforts in articulating professional identity.

In sum, professional identity serves as a foundational variable for identifying and distinguishing professional counselors. As CPs uniquely integrate knowledge, skills, and attributes, their perceptions and expressions of self as professionals can vary. As a result, scholars have explored how CPs perceive and express their professional identities to further our understanding of not only what professional identity is, but how it is embodied. In the next section, I will review literature on how CPs, specifically CITs and counselors, perceive and express their professional identities.

### **Professional Identity in Counselors**

The counseling profession is one of multiple helping professions. Differentiating philosophies, therapeutic approaches, and professional identities can offer theoretical distinction between the professions of counseling, psychology, and social work. However, those distinctions are not always clear in practice. In this section, I will discuss how counseling is distinct from other helping professions, review a theoretical model that describes means of expressing one's counseling professional identity, and describe how counseling students have experienced expression of their professional identities during training.

Mellin et al. (2011) conducted a large-scale qualitative study to examine how 238 practicing counselors defined professional counseling and distinguished counseling from psychology and social work. The majority of participants (96%) identified as mental health counselors, community counselors, and school counselors. Using constant comparative analysis, the researchers discovered three categories that detailed participants' perceived definitions of professional counselors: "(a) counseling tasks and services provided, (b) counselor training and

credentials, and (c) wellness and developmental focus” (p. 143). The researchers identified five ways in which counseling was distinguished from psychology and social work: “(a) case management and community systems, (b) personal growth and wellness, (c) testing and assessment, (d) individual versus global focus, and (e) no differences between professionals” (p. 143). Rather than focus on differences in training or credentials, participants focused on how the three professions’ activities and primary foci are different. Their findings confirmed previous claims that the counseling profession’s distinct identity rests on its “developmental, prevention, and wellness orientation toward helping” (p. 140). This study furthered the understanding of unity in professional identity with results indicating consensus on professional traits and activities of counselors regardless of specialization in areas such as addiction, career, or college counseling.

Increased understanding of what counseling professional identity is calls into question how such identity is expressed. Burkholder (2012) introduced a theoretical model of professional identity expression for mental health counselors based on Boyer’s (1990) professional identity expression model for higher education. The author posited that intentionality acts as an influential mediator between four levels. The first level is professional identity formation and includes personal attributes and professional training. The second level is conceptualization and features awareness of one’s unique professional identity. The third level is contextualization and includes a special focus on environments where professional identity is expressed. Finally, the fourth level, expression, includes specific behaviors tied to professional identity: application, discovery, teaching, and integration. In sum, this model offers a systematic framework for understanding how mental health professionals express their personal attributes and professional training in professional settings (Burkholder, 2012).

Counselors first encounter the notion of a unified professional identity during their training programs (Gibson et al., 2010). Their ability to articulate the philosophy and values of the counseling profession through their professional identities and expressions evolves as they spend time in the classroom and the field. Woodside, Oberman, Cole, and Carruth (2007) examined pre-practicum students' ( $n = 8$ ) experiences in this learning process through a phenomenological qualitative inquiry. The researchers identified seven themes: "the journey, decision making, self-doubt, counseling is, learning, boundaries, and differences" (p. 19). Because they were on "a journey" that led them to seek degrees in professional counseling, participants' process of becoming counselors began prior to entering their programs. "Decision making" encapsulated questioning whether counseling was a good fit for them, which led to self-doubt about their abilities. Despite anxiety and newness in the field, participants detailed thoughts about what "counseling is," including intentions, attitudes, techniques, and training. "Learning" detailed what participants had discovered and what needed to be discovered to implement knowledge and skills with their clients. "Boundaries" included participants' experiences needing balance in their lives and recognizing limitations to their practice. Finally, participants noted "differences" emerging between themselves and others and within themselves as they learned, including "changing values, maturity levels, and expectations" (p. 24). Overall, participants viewed their experiences as a journey infiltrated with self-doubt that led to shifts in identity, expression, and ways of interacting with others in personal and professional contexts. This study highlights the importance of creating learning processes that support professionals' journeys through experiences of self-doubt, decision making, and boundary setting as emerging professionals determine what counseling is and how to embody and express their professional identity.

Overall, CPs have distinguished their professional identities in congruence with the profession's philosophy of wellness, development, and prevention. This philosophy influences intentional expressions and experiences of professional identity. Changes in roles and responsibilities create the need for new professional decisions and actions throughout the career lifespan (Calley & Hawley, 2008). As counselors become CEs, their experiences and expressions shift to fit their new roles. In the next section, I will describe how CEITs and CEs experience shifts in their professional identity expressions.

### **Professional Identity in CEITs and CEs**

Professional identity first emerges during training, and CEs play a key role in facilitating supportive learning processes for developing counselors. CEs offer unique insight into the learning process because they too began their journeys as professional counselors. The CE professional identity still carries overarching counseling foci on development, prevention, and wellness (Calley & Hawley, 2008). The addition of new roles as educators, researchers, supervisors, and leaders simply shifts embodiment of these foci with new responsibilities and expectations. Thus, professional identities as CEs are integrated with values and behaviors of professional counselors. Integration of old and new creates a distinct professional identity as a CE within the larger counseling profession. In the following section, I will review the distinction of CE identity, experiences of CE identity within CEITs and CEs, and attend to how professional environments influence the experiences and expression of CE identity.

The distinction of identity as a CE emerges during the training program in a similar fashion to that of a counselor. In order to examine themes that influenced experiences and emergence of identity during doctoral training, Protivnak and Foss (2009) explored experiences of 141 CEITs across all five *Association for Counselor Education and Supervision* (ACES)

regions in United States. Using constant comparative analysis, the researchers discovered five themes that influenced students' experiences and budding identities: "(a) departmental culture, (b) mentoring, (c) academics, (d) support systems, and (e) personal issues" (p. 244). Faculty relationships and departmental culture heavily influenced participants' levels of engagement, contribution, motivation, and overall development. Academics and specific training contributed to new learning and application that went beyond the counseling roles and responsibilities students previously held. Support systems were instrumental in continuing studies and offering opportunity to develop identity through interaction with others. Personal issues such as financial difficulty and time management challenges were discussed as potential barriers to progress; however, personal issues contributed to students' persistence and growth as CEs. Overall, CEs were influenced by the makeup of their training programs and experiences within them, which led to various expressions and evolutions of professional identity after training.

With recognition that training programs influence experiences of professional identity, Limberg et al. (2013) employed a consensual qualitative research methodology in which they used cross-sectional focus groups with 18 CEITs to examine how experiences during training helped form professional identity. After interviewing three cohorts of CEITs in first, second, and third years of doctoral training the authors identified four themes of CEITs experiences: (1) programmatic goals aligned with experiences essential to CEITs' PID, (2) experiential learning opportunities enhanced CEITs' PID, (3) relationships with mentors and faculty contributed to their identity as CEs, and (4) being perceived as a CE by faculty members influenced PID. Within these themes, Limberg and colleagues identified eight domains as significant contributors to development of professional identity: teaching, supervision of CITs, conducting research, attending or presenting at conferences, cohort membership, program design, mentoring, and

perceived as a CE by faculty. In sum, CEITs valued experiential instruction, mentorship, and opportunity for collaboration as they integrated their identities as counselors into their roles and responsibilities as CEs. Implications included the need to evaluate current curricula and program goals to ensure CEITs have experiential learning opportunities and open relationships between CEITs and faculty. Limberg et al. noted future researchers may examine pre-tenure faculty members' experiences compared to those of CEITs.

As CEs transition from training into faculty positions, their identities shift once again (Gibson et al., 2015). Scholars have examined how new roles and responsibilities, including influences from the nature of academia, impact new CEs. Magnuson (2002) surveyed 38 new assistant professors about their experiences transitioning into their first year of faculty work. The researchers used two questionnaires with Likert-type scale items to inquire about levels of stress and anxiety, degrees of satisfaction, and experiences of connectedness at mid-year and end of year. Participants' levels of stress and anxiety were up and down throughout the year depending factors such as number of tasks and time management. Most notably, experiences of connectedness decreased, degrees of satisfaction decreased, and stress and anxiety levels increased throughout the year. This study indicated that interaction and support were crucial during the transition from student to CE. A follow-up study by Magnuson et al. (2004) indicated that levels of job satisfaction decreased in the second year. Participants attributed decreased satisfaction to increases in committee work and peer expectations. Magnuson et al. (2004) suggested institutions may play a role in caring for assistant professors past the first year.

Prior job experience and structure of training programs can influence the transition and experience of becoming a CE as well. Milsom and Moran (2015) conducted a phenomenological study of CEs with full-time P-12 school counseling backgrounds ( $n = 8$ ) as they transitioned into



academia. All participants were previously part-time CEITs. Participants' experiences were impacted by internal and external influences in work and home environments. Participants reported four major themes that highlighted unique challenges that accompanied stark transitions between work settings: lifestyle changes, navigating departmental culture, support and mentoring, and confidence. Furthermore, participants found certain aspects of CE identity easier to integrate than others. For example, this group felt more confident in their teaching abilities than research. This study highlights the importance of considering prior experience, structure of training programs, and mentorship among other contextual factors that contribute to the experience of developing a CE identity and transitioning into academia.

To gather insight about professional identity experiences of CEs settled into their roles, Calley and Hawley (2008) surveyed 70 CEs across the country. Academic degrees, professional association membership, theoretical orientation, types of courses taught, scholarship, scope of service activities, career choice, and self-identification were explored with use of the *CEs: Professional Identity & Current Trends Survey*. Factors related to professional identity were grouped within the following areas: distinct values of the profession, scope of professional activities, focus of scholarship, theoretical orientation, understanding of the history of the profession, and credentials and training of counselors. Results indicated that: (1) attendance professional counseling conferences and membership of the organizations were strong, (2) the majority of the respondents' doctoral training was counseling or counseling related, indicating early PID in counseling, (3) the two most common theoretical orientations were humanistic and constructivist, and (4) many participants held licensure and certification. The authors concluded that respondents valued professional identity when it was based on a sense of belongingness and affiliation (e.g., as membership in professional associations, attendance at professional

conferences); however, participants were less active in activities such as leadership, advocacy, and student organizations. This study illuminates the importance of experiencing and expressing community in one's CE professional identity.

The experiences of CEs later in their careers provides valuable insight into the professional identities of CEs. Levitt and Hermon (2009) used phenomenological inquiry to examine experiences of tenure-track CEs ( $n=8$ ). The researchers discovered three overarching categories of CEs experiences near the tenure years (5-10 years): support pre- and post-tenure, doctoral level preparation, and balance. This study supported previous research findings regarding a need for support during early phases of the career transition and impacts of doctoral level training (Gibson et al., 2015; Magnuson, 2002; Milsom & Manson, 2015). Support was essential to developing identity and confidence to complete necessary tasks of the job. Participants reported feeling underprepared by their doctoral programs in certain elements of the job such as equity, earning additional income, and general work environment. These findings suggest professional identity as a CE goes beyond the embodiment of professional values and engagement in CE roles; it also includes skills and responsibilities to navigate academia.

In summary, expressions of CE professional identity are influenced by earlier experiences as counselors, interactions with the professional community, access and inclusivity of mentorship and supervision, and experiences throughout environments of training programs and academic institutions. These influences create unique considerations for the composition of professional identity as a CE and needs to support the expression of CE identity. Differing roles, responsibilities, and environments impact individual CE expression. However, the sum of research indicates training programs, modeling, mentorship, and community all support expressions of CE identity in each role as counselor, educator, researcher, supervisor, and leader.

## Summary

Counseling professional identity is grounded by a professional philosophy that emphasizes wellness, development, and prevention (Mellin et al., 2011). Scholars have developed methods of identifying and assessing professional identity within CPs with increased focus on CACREP accreditation and goals for licensure portability that complement CACREP standards. Professional identity begins in training programs and can persist throughout the career lifespan as CITs become counselors and counselors become CEs (Moss et al., 2014; Limberg et al., 2013; Calley & Hawley, 2008). The expressions and experiences of professional identity may manifest differently depending on one's role and context of professional practice. The research summarized above supports differences in CITs, counselors, CEITs, and CEs' specific expressions of their professional identities. Although individual expressions may differ, the foundation of a counseling professional identity is collective (Woo et al., 2014). With an understanding of what professional identity is and how it is expressed and experienced, the next step is examining how CPs develop professional identities.

Professional identity is one's perception of the integration of personal and professional attributes in a professional setting (Gibson et al., 2010; Nugent & Jones, 2009). How such integration of identity takes place has been a topic of debate throughout counseling literature for decades (Gibson et al., 2010). The majority of research has been conducted on counselors' PID, but recent researchers have explored developmental processes for CEIT and CE PID as well. In the following section, I will review the history of PID process models for CITs and counselors, then move into contemporary understandings of PID for CITs and counselors. Next, I will review PID models for CEIT and CE PID. Finally, I will conclude this section by describing the

Transformational Task Model (TTM) of PID (Gibson et al., 2010) for CITs, counselors, CEITs, and CEs, which will be used as a theoretical foundation for my research inquiry.

### **Professional Identity Development in the Counseling Profession**

PID is a continual process of “learning, practice, and feedback” where CPs encounter a need for both dependence and autonomy in their journey towards “individuation, professional viability, and internal locus of evaluation” (Dollarhide et al., 2013, p. 137). Gibson et al. (2010) described PID as “the successful integration of personal attributes and professional training in the context of a professional community” (p. 23). This successful integration is facilitated through intra- and interpersonal growth (Moss et al., 2014).

Various scholars and mental health professionals have contributed to our current understanding of PID in counseling and counselor education. Beginning with historical conceptual models of PID, then moving into contemporary empirical studies, the following section includes reviews of PID models for CITs, counselors, CEITs, and CEs.

### **Historical Models of Counseling Students and Practitioners’ Development**

The study of professional identity and development in the helping professions can be traced back around the origination of what is currently known as the ACA in 1952 (ACA, 2018). In 1953, Fleming established the psychoanalytic learning model that described three methods of counseling trainees’ learning processes within supervision: imitative learning, corrective learning, and creative learning. Her work began decades of research examining trainees’ needs and processes of professional development with focus on needs for supervision. The six following conceptual models were developed based on theoretical knowledge and scholars’ observations of mental health professionals-in-training.

**Hogan's four-level model.** Hogan (1964) created four levels or stages of clinician development with corresponding suggestions for supervision and teaching at each level. He asserted levels can be cyclical, and clinicians can revisit levels throughout their careers. Each level describes clinicians' approaches to clinical work and their self-confidence.

Clinicians in Level 1 are dependent upon the profession, teachings, and supervisors or instructors. Hogan claimed clinicians at this level are highly motivated to learn and neurosis-bound, insecure, and un insightful about the impact they have on others. Their approach to clinical work is method-driven. Because imitation of the supervisor is desired and necessary, methods for supervision and teaching at this level include "tuition, interpretation, support, awareness-training, and exemplification" (Hogan, 1964, p. 139).

Clinicians move into Level 2 once they begin to insert their personalities into the therapeutic relationship, stepping out of the method-driven mindset (Hogan, 1964). Level 2 features various conflicting roles and experiences. Notably, there is a dependency-autonomy conflict, where clinicians are searching for themselves in their work and simultaneously struggling with needs for dependency. As clinicians search for their unique clinical approach, they oscillate between feeling overconfident and overwhelmed. Motivation fluctuates during this level. Methods for supervision and teaching in Level 2 include support, ambivalence-clarification, exemplification, and a lesser extent of intuition. Hogan also suggested clinicians seek personal therapy during this level.

Clinicians move on to Level 3 when the "dependency-autonomy conflict has given way to increased professional self-confidence" (Hogan, 1964, p. 140). Clinicians develop greater insight and experience clarity surrounding neurotic and healthy motivations during this level.

Supervision and teaching are facilitated in a more peer-to-peer format with methods such as sharing, exemplification, and professional and personal confrontation.

Finally, Level 4 is marked by depth of artistry and intuitive judgment in clinicians' work (Hogan, 1964). Characteristics at this level include personal autonomy and security, insightfulness, adaptable modalities of motivation, awareness of personal and professional challenges to living and practicing counseling. Methods of supervision and instruction include "sharing, confrontation, and mutual consultation" (p. 141). Supervisors and instructors act as peers and consultants and celebrate originality of the new clinician.

**Loganbill, Hardy, and Delworth's developmental model.** Loganbill, Hardy, and Delworth (1982) established a stage model of supervisee development where CITs cycle and recycle through stages at increasingly deeper levels. Three stages are marked by characteristics, attitudes towards self and others, and attitudes towards the supervisor and value of current place in development. The first stage, stagnation, is characterized by supervisees' lack of awareness surrounding deficiencies in professional functioning. Supervisees' views are often restricted with black and white thinking. Self-confidence may be low, or confidence may be high where supervisees view supervision as unnecessary. In stage two, confusion, supervisees experience conflict and instability as attitudes, emotions, and behaviors shift with experience. Supervisees vacillate between feelings of expertise, failure, and incompetence. Supervisees can also alter their feelings towards supervisors from positive dependence to anger and disappointment. Although uncomfortable, this stage provides room for learning to occur as new ways of thinking replace old. The final stage, integration, is marked by new cognitive understanding, personal security, flexibility, and reorganization. Supervisees' attitudes towards self and others are more realistic and positive, and supervisees take more personal responsibility for supervision needs.

**Blocher's cognitive developmental approach.** Blocher (1983) established the cognitive developmental model of supervision to describe counselors' professional development. He asserted supervision is a "specialized instructional process" where supervisors facilitate training counselors' growth by using interactions with clients as a primary educational mechanism (p. 27). Blocher's model is grounded in theories of human learning and cognitive development, and he prioritized change in the psychological functioning of the learner.

Blocher described his model within two dimensions: purpose and process and environment. Within the purpose of supervision, Blocher expanded upon previous notions of supervision goals to include process goals that promote psychological change. Supervisors should vary goals with emphasis on acquiring "more complex and comprehensive schemas for understanding human interaction" (p. 29). Blocher described two categories where process goals can be established: relationship and communication conditions. Relationship that is trustworthy and respectful can promote clear and honest communication between supervisor and trainee. Contract-based goals are needed to establish relationship and requirements for open communication throughout trainees' development and interactions with clients.

Blocher also described the need for specific goals depending on trainee needs. Goals early in practicum may be focused on interview skills, therapeutic relationship conditions, and building comfort and confidence. Later in training, goals may focus on broader issues such as case management, execution of process goals, and clarification of professional roles.

Moving into the process and environment dimension, Blocher described developmental learning environment of supervision. Seven person-environment dynamics encompass interactions between learner and environment: challenge, involvement, support, structure,

feedback, innovations, and integration. Supervisors facilitate balance in learners' experiences of these dynamics as they interact with their environments during supervision and clinical practice.

**Grater's supervision focused stage model.** Grater (1985) established a four-stage model of counselor development in supervision. The four stages are primary issues during the supervision process, and trainees must master each stage before they can move into the next stage. The first stage, developing basic skills and adopting the therapist role, is characterized by development of professional counseling skills where "the trainee learns to replace social patterns of interacting with therapeutic responses" (p. 606). Developing counseling skills elicits extensive anxiety and fear, so supervisors must provide information and encouragement to support development. Supervisors also assist trainees to respond to clients in more natural ways, sensitizing them to their contribution to the therapeutic process in this stage.

The second stage, expanding the range of therapy skills and roles, is characterized by increases in therapist flexibility. Trainees develop more nuanced skills to assess client issues in regard to problem areas and expectations for counseling. Supervisors focus their efforts on providing trainees with clients who would benefit from techniques the trainee has yet to encounter. Supervisors encourage trainees to match appropriate techniques to client issues through assessment practice. Supervisors support trainees' progression to the final two stages by encouraging them to examine "interactions between themselves and the new roles and skills" they have developed (p. 607).

Stage three, using the working alliance to understand clients' habitual patterns, involves recognition of interactive patterns. Trainees explore the therapeutic relationship and develop the ability to recognize how therapist-client interactions contribute to clients' growth and emotional wellbeing. The goal of supervision is to ensure interactions lead to a "corrective emotional



experience” (p. 607). Trainees also develop abilities to recognize habitual and maladaptive patterns that contribute to clients’ presenting issues. “Interventions... [are based] on assessments of the interactions between client, the problems, and the techniques” (p. 608).

Lastly, stage four, using the self in assessment and intervention, is marked by trainees’ understanding how to use themselves in the therapeutic process. Sensitivity to the therapeutic process in assessment, interaction, and intervention is enhanced during this stage. Supervisors focus on supporting trainees to develop and implement interventions based on interactions between themselves, their clients, presenting problems, and available techniques. Supervisors also encourage trainees’ development of new responses to their anxiety, so that client exploration can occur. Although these stages occur sequentially throughout training, new counselors may revisit stages when new challenges and therapeutic situations arise.

**Hess’s synthesized supervision focused model.** Hess (1986) developed a synthesized stage model of supervisee development based on previously established stage models of supervision and supervisee development. He claimed supervisees “can recycle through the stages in an ascending spiral fashion” (as cited in Skovholt & Rønnestad, 1992a, p. 11). The first stage, inception, includes role induction, demystification of counseling, defining skills, and setting boundaries. The second stage, skill development, features developing abilities to modify skills and interventions to meet clients’ unique needs. Supervisees also step into an apprentice role with their supervisors and begin identifying with a philosophy of nature and orientation or system of counseling. The third stage, consolidation, is distinguished by integrating learning and understanding professional identity as only partly defined by counseling skills. Supervisees recognize the role their personality plays in their emerging professional identity. Supervisees also refine clinical skills and build competence in this stage. The fourth stage, mutuality,

includes increased use of peer consultation and ability to implement creativity solutions to problems. The supervisee becomes a more autonomous professional in this final stage.

**Stoltenberg and Delworth's integrated developmental model.** Stoltenberg and Delworth (1987) created the integrated developmental model of supervision (IDM) with influence from Stoltenberg's (1981) original work and the previously established conceptual models summarized above. Empirical support and validation measures following the introduction of IDM (e.g., McNeill, Stoltenberg, & Romans, 1992; Stoltenberg, McNeill, & Delworth, 1998) paved the way for new insight into counselor training and supervision as a developmental process. Although the IDM was later empirically studied and validated, this original work was conceptual. Stoltenberg and Delworth (1987) claimed trainees develop through four levels across three basic structures: self- and other-awareness, motivation, and autonomy. The four levels are characterized by level of training practice, with levels 1-3 describing trainees, and level four describing an integrated counselor. Trainees develop their identity and skills in eight "domains of functioning relevant to professional activities in counseling" (p. 60): intervention skills competence, assessment techniques, interpersonal assessment, client conceptualization, individual differences, theoretical orientation, treatment goals and plans, and professional ethics. Trainees progress through each level of development by integrating new knowledge into existing schemas or adjusting old knowledge to accommodate new learning. As they reach new levels, trainees build competence in each domain of functioning, ultimately forming an integrated counselor.

The conceptual historical models above focus primarily on the needs and process of supervision to develop PID. These models influenced the development of contemporary models where understanding of PID broadened to include other means of learning such as coursework,

diverse clinical experience, professional engagement, and mentoring. Furthermore, focus on personal development during PID increased as scholars began conducting empirical studies to examine experiences of CITs and counselors in multiple settings. The next section will highlight these empirical studies and contemporary models of PID for CITs and counselors.

### **Contemporary Models of Counseling Students and Practitioners' Development**

In recent years, PID has been most often explored through grounded theory research examining the process of development from participants' points of view (Auxier et al., 2003; Brott & Myers, 1999; Dollarhide et al., 2013; Gibson et al., 2010). Scholars have examined the PID process of CITs and counselors in various contexts of their professional practice (e.g., supervision, clinical practice, and engagement in professional activities). In the following section, I will review four models that were developed from such research as well as one conceptual model design to help CEs promote CITs' PID.

**Skovholt and Rønnestad's developmental stage model.** Skovholt and Rønnestad (1992a) sparked a new wave of empirical research by conducting a 5-year longitudinal qualitative study to examine the professional development of training and practicing counselors and therapists. Using grounded theory methodology with inductive analysis, the researchers facilitated individual interviews to gather information about the experiences of 100 counselors and therapists. Participants were selected based on five categories: first-year graduate students, advanced doctoral students, practitioners with a doctorate and five years of post-graduate experience, practitioners with a doctorate and approximately 15 years of post-graduate experience, and practitioners with a doctorate and approximately 25 years of post-graduate experience. Twenty participants (50 men and 50 women, 96% White) in the Twin Cities area of Minnesota were selected for each category (1992a). The researchers also interviewed 20

layhelpers to support their pilot interviews and assist development of practitioner characteristics, and they re-interviewed 60% of the original 100 participants at a later date. A series of thematic analyses ultimately led to the development of a stage model of PID (Skovholt & Rønnestad, 1992a/1992b).

A total of 20 themes in four categories supported an eight-stage model of PID throughout the career lifespan: (1) primary characteristic, (2) process descriptor, (3) source of influence, and (4) secondary characteristic. The stages include: conventional, transition to professional training, imitation of experts, conditional autonomy, exploration, integration, individuation, and integrity (Skovholt & Rønnestad, 1992a/1992b). Stages were experienced sequentially over the course of the career lifespan; however, Skovholt and Rønnestad (1992a) urged professionals to consider flexibility in the model's conceptual and structural framework to account for individual differences across various dimensions such as age, gender, experience level, family of origin, and theoretical training. Within each stage, the researchers included a definition of the time period, central task, predominant affect, predominant sources of influence, role and working style, conceptual ideas, learning process, and measures of effectiveness and satisfaction. Their stage model paved the way for further research about the PID of professional counselors, including revamping of their model through a cross-sectional and longitudinal qualitative study (Rønnestad & Skovholt, 2003).

**Brott and Myers' substantive theory of PID.** Brott and Myers (1999) conducted grounded theory research examining practicing school counselors' ( $n = 10$ ) PID processes. Constant comparative coding of interviews led to emergence of theoretical categories, which contributed to the creation of a substantive theory of development describing the context, conditions, and phases of school counselors' PID. Four phases (structuring, interacting,

distinguishing, and evolving) were identified along with eight strategies (defining, rating, managing, responding, advocating, accounting, sustaining, and intertwining) and corresponding activities that elicited blending influences towards a professional identity. The researchers reported these phases are completed within three conditions (experience, number of service providers, essentials) in the context of a school setting. The researchers were among the first to distinguish PID in counseling as a process rather than an outcome.

**Auxier, Hughes, and Kline's recycling identity formation process.** Auxier et al. (2003) implemented grounded theory methodology to develop a theoretical model of PID that described a "recycling identity formation process that involved conceptual and experiential learning experiences to identify, clarify, and reclarify [CITs] identities as counselors" (p. 25). The researchers conducted one focus group interview and individual interviews with eight full-time master's-degree CITs in their second year of study.

Data analysis led to development of the recycling identity formation process, which included three constituent processes that mutually influence the other: conceptual learning, experiential learning, and external evaluation. The recycling formation process includes how CITs make meaning of their experiences, assimilate to their experiences, and how the constituent processes interact over time in various contexts of learning. Through recycling of conceptual and experiential learning experiences over time, CITs experience shifts in attitudes and behaviors towards learning and practice. Furthermore, CITs become more autonomous in their professional development as they seek less external support to integrate conceptual and experiential learning as they autonomously recycle through experiences.

**Luke and Goodrich's theory of PID in early career counselors.** Luke and Goodrich (2010) used ground theory methodology to examine the PID of early career counselors ( $n = 15$ )

with special focus on how participation as chapter leaders within the counseling academic honor society, Chi Sigma Iota (CSI), influenced their PID. In sum, the core category of the model was authentic learning experience. Causal conditions were personal characteristics and identification and invitation, which included previous leadership experience, beliefs and values, and attitudes and abilities. Contextual conditions detailed the system of the profession and honor society (e.g., individual chapter, academic department, and international community). Intervening conditions described relationships (including mentors and models), networking opportunities, and international communication. Action strategies were identified in internal (cognitive and affective) and behavioral (general and specific) domains. Consequences included bridging or not bridging gaps within personal, local, and international spheres. Each of these six components supported the notion that participation in CSI chapter leadership supported PID.

Luke and Goodrich noted that their findings conflicted Skovholt and Rønnestad's (1992a) model in that integrity appeared to be needed as a precursor to entering the leadership position, contrary to Skovholt and Rønnestad's notion that integrity develops over time. Furthermore, "all participants reported that the context or environment in which they, and their chapters, were situated was very influential in their development as professional" (p. 73), an element missing from Skovholt and Rønnestad's (1992a) model.

**Owens and Neale-McFall's Context-Phase-Stage-Style (CPSS) model.** Owens and Neale-McFall (2014) claimed the development of a counselor identity is inherently socially constructed. They created a conceptual model, the context-phase-stage-style (CPSS) model, to be used to support the development of counseling trainees' professional identities, as the model addresses "both developmental issues and constructivism" (p. 19). They provided a conceptual

framework to address the attitude component of counselor identity development through four dimensions of the CPSS: social context, life phase, developmental stage, and style.

The social context dimension includes questioning how various environmental factors influence trainees' mechanisms of making meaning about the idea of being professional counselors (Owens & Neale-McFall, 2014). Factors to explore may include family of origin, societal messages, cultural traditions, ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic class. The life phase dimension considers developmental stages within the process of identity development. The scholars cited Rønnestad and Skovholt (2003) and Logan, Hardy, and Delworth (1982) as models to reference for the content and process of these stages. During this dimension, examination of chronological components of trainees' development is important. The developmental stage dimension focuses on trainees' processes of meaning-making and how they are gathering knowledge. Owen and Neale-McFall discussed incorporating moral and cognitive developmental theories into this dimension as a method of conceptualizing how trainees engage in meaning-making. The style, or personality, dimension includes trainees' dispositions displayed through their temperament and values. The scholars noted this dimension is intended to be added to the previous three to create a truly constructivist model for understanding how trainees develop their unique professional identities.

Owens and Neale-McFall (2014) offered three methods for CEs to implement to promote trainees' PID, specifically in regard to their attitudes. Three methods include: mentoring relationships, reflexive pedagogy, and using Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) in supervision. Mentoring relationships may include direct instruction and transmission of values, beliefs, and attitudes of the profession. Mentoring also provides a forum for CEs to explore trainees' developmental process in each dimension of the CPSS and support their progress.

Reflexive pedagogy describes instruction that encourages examination of self and others, which directly mirrors needs of PID. ACT is a counseling theory that has been applied to supervisory relationships. The goal of implementing ACT in supervision is to model the “experiential work and application of the six ACT core concepts (i.e., acceptance, cognitive defusion, being present, self as context, defining valued directions, and committed action)” (p. 23). From this supervisory approach, trainees can more readily explore their values and increase their psychological flexibility, which may be transmitted through their counseling practice.

In sum, the contemporary models of PID included here highlight the current understanding of PID as a process rather than an outcome and support the importance of integrating personal attributes with professional training (Brott & Myers, 1999; Gibson et al., 2010). Training programs can support CITs and counselors’ PID by attending to CITs’ personal and professional needs in ways that complement the cyclical nature of PID. As counselors become CEITs and CEs, their PID is influenced by how they developed a counselor identity (Limberg et al., 2013). As counselor identity is integrated with a new identity, the PID process takes new forms. CEIT and CE PID looks different from counselor PID in content and process due to new roles, responsibilities, and settings. In the next section, I will discuss these differences and expand upon CEIT and CE PID developmental models.

### **Developmental Models of CEITs and CEs**

Professional identity of CEs involves an integration of counseling identity with four new roles of educator, researcher, supervisor, and leader. The integrated identity is intersectional, where all roles mutually influence the others. Understanding development of the intersectional professional identity is often accomplished by examining each role individually with a focus on building competence to perform the tasks of that role. However, professional identity also



includes values and beliefs foundational for how CEs engage in their roles and tasks. Keeping competency, professional behaviors, and values and beliefs in mind, I will review literature about development of each individual role, then offer synthesized implications for how development of each role contributes to the integrated, intersectional CE professional identity.

**CE role development.** As discussed earlier in this chapter, researchers have examined the makeup of CE professional identity and experiences during doctoral training that contribute to development of such professional identity (Calley & Hawley, 2008; Limberg et al., 2013; Protivnak & Foss, 2009). CEs become versatile professionals through their intersecting roles as counselors, educators, researchers, supervisors, and leaders. By individually examining the responsibilities and behaviors that accompany each role, we can break down some of the complexity of intersectionality. As each role is distinguished, we may more readily examine ways in which each role contributes to an integrated identity of CE. The counselor identity has been expanded upon throughout the chapter; therefore, I will focus the following four sections on the identity of educator, researcher, supervisor, and leader.

***Educator identity.*** There is a lack of research about the development of educator identity as a CE. However, research in higher education generally has examined the process of developing educator identity. Educator identity in higher education settings is “complex” (Dinkelman, 2011, p. 309), and the developmental process of forming such identity can vary across disciplines, research designation of the institution, and relational contexts. Dinkelman provided an illustrative case study of his experiences developing an educator identity within a research-intensive university. Dinkelman began his discussion describing the interplay of external influences and “internal sense-making” (p. 310) that contributes to identity formation.

The experiences one has in various educational environments influence the ways one makes sense of and forms an identity with language.

Dinkelman (2011) described his development through four perspectives based on the work of Gee (2001): nature, institutional, discursive, and affinity perspectives. By nature, Dinkelman asserted his educator identity was formed through action and relationship with students and colleagues. The institutional perspective frames the nature of identity, but the discursive and affinity perspectives detail how his identity formed over time. In terms of discursive identity, Dinkelman highlighted his engagement in teaching and faculty-related tasks as they contributed to his identity. Specifically, engagement in research influenced his identity to include not only his role in educating students but furthering his field through scholarship. Interactions between tasks and expectations of the institution and academic field, create an educator identity driven in part by setting and role expectations. Dinkelman described the affinity perspective of his identity in response to expectations of his field and institution. Accreditation standards and professional norms and values influenced how he perceived himself and his scholarly production. He noted experiences from his doctoral training, continuing education, and interactions with colleagues that shaped his interpretations of standards and norms for his practice and identity. Overall, Dinkelman reported his educator identity formed and continues to form as new meaning is made through discursive interactions with self, others, and institutions that influence his professional practice as an educator. This illustrative case suggests educator identity is intersectional and influenced by many subjects and interactions with others and environments.

***Researcher identity.*** Scholarship is a central component of counselor education, yet connecting to research and forming a research identity can be challenging for practitioners and

new CEs (Reisetter et al., 2004). The *ACA Code of Ethics* (2014) and CACREP (2016a) *Standards* detail the need to engage in evidence-based practice and formulate a researcher identity. Recently, scholars have examined developmental processes of master's level CITs and CEITs forming researcher identities (Lamar & Helm; 2017, Jorgenson & Duncan, 2015).

Jorgenson and Duncan (2015) implemented a grounded theory approach to examine the research identity (RI) of 17 master's-level counseling trainees and practitioners. Trainees selected were at least mid-way through their training, and practitioners selected were mental health or school counselors who had been practicing for at least two years post-degree. The scholars summarized their emergent theory as an integration of five components:

- (a) RI is considered an outcome that is initiated by the event of coming to understand what it means to be a counselor (professional identity);
- (b) RI is facilitated through the negotiation of internal facilitators, external facilitators, faculty impacts, and beliefs about research;
- (c) RI is affected by the broader contexts of undergraduate major and area of specialization;
- (d) RI is enhanced by accepting fluid conceptualizations of research and professional identity; and
- (e) RI is manifested through research behaviors, attitudes toward research, and a level that symbolizes the various degrees of a student's RI. (p. 22)

In sum, this study suggested RI is formed through internal facilitators (e.g., motivation and curiosity) and external facilitators (e.g., program expectations and relationships with faculty), expressed through research behaviors and attitudes, and influenced by factors such as PID, areas of specialization, and undergraduate backgrounds. The current study did not demonstrate the influence of year of training on RI. Because year in training is influential for overall PID, increased focus on this domain may be more influential towards RI development (Auxier et al., 2003; Dollarhide et al., 2013).

Lamar and Helm (2017) focused on researcher identity development of CEITs. They defined researcher identity as “an individual’s self-concept as a researcher and includes the process of understanding experiences, increasing awareness, and incorporating both into the sense of self” (p. 4). Using a phenomenological approach, the scholars conducted photo elicitation and two series of individual interviews with eight CEITs across ACES regions. Analysis yielded seven themes of experiences of researcher identity and its development: “(a) developing confidence as a researcher, (b) owning researcher identity, (c) developing a researcher voice, (d) juggling the researcher identity with other identities, (e) journeying as a researcher, (f) learning opportunities, and (g) supporting researcher identity development” (p. 6).

The first five themes described participants’ experiences of researcher identity, and the final two reflected development (Lamar & Helm, 2017). Confidence was reported as resting on a continuum where participants reflected on ups and downs of confidence depending on year in program and experience. Owning researcher identity described participants’ intrapersonal struggle to internalize researcher identity; experience conducting research and reflection on the process of growth contributed to increased internalization in this area. Researcher voice was described as an empowering tool to promote researcher identity, as participants were able to express concerns, advocate for clients, and make meaningful contributions. Juggling identity detailed participants’ challenge to incorporate personal identity and other professional identities into their researcher identity. Some participants felt torn between identities, and they creatively sought balance by keeping one’s values and priorities in mind. Journeying reflected participants’ awareness that researcher identity is a process that evolves with time and experience as did their professional identities.

The final two themes focused on development processes (Lamar & Helm, 2017). Learning opportunities, such as taking research classes, participation in research, and research-related discussions, were directly impactful towards the creation of a researcher identity. Supporting researcher identity development detailed encouragement, reassurance, assistance, and nurturance participants needed from faculty, peers, friends, and family throughout the duration of their training. Experiences with and without these supports indicated differences in how researcher identity was developed. Furthermore, researcher identity was as cyclical for participants, which suggests that coursework and opportunities for research activity may need to be offered throughout the training program (Lamar & Helm, 2017). Overall, this study highlighted the importance of didactic and experiential learning opportunities and supportive environments and relationships to develop researcher identity.

***Supervisor identity.*** Research on the training needs, experiences, and development of clinical supervisors is vast (Bernard, 1997; Borders, Welfare, Sackett, & Cashwell, 2017; Gazzola, De Stefano, Thériault, & Audet, 2013; Hess, 1986; Majcher & Daniluk, 2009; Stoltenberg et al., 1998; Watkins, 1994). Various models of supervisory development have focused on skills acquisition, supervisory theoretical formation, personal dispositions, and methods of giving and receiving feedback to trainees. Scales, such as the *Psychotherapy Supervisor Development Scale*, have also been created to measure supervisor development over time (Watkins, Schneider, Haynes, & Nieberding, 1995). Despite the breadth of research, there is a need for specific focus on supervisor development as it relates to professional identity. With understanding that professional identity is a process of integrating professional skills and attitudes to build competence and confidence in a professional context (Gibson et al., 2010), the

following supervisor identity development models focus on processes of developing competency in skills and attitudes as supervisors.

Watkins (1990/1993) created the Supervisor Complexity Model, a supervisor developmental model designed for beginning supervisors. The model has been used widely throughout the helping fields and validated through empirical research over time (Baker, Exum, & Tyler, 2002). The model includes four stages of development: (1) role shock, (2) role recovery/transition, (3) role consolidation, and (4) role mastery. There are “tasks, crises, and stage specific characteristics inherent in each of the stages” (p. 554). Watkins noted the stages are not time limited.

Stage one includes feelings of being an imposter and questioning roles, specific tasks, and responsibilities (Watkins, 1990/1993). The central developmental issue in stage one is confidence in current supervisory skill. As new supervisors begin to gather experience, stage two details new supervisors beginning to gather perspective on the process of providing supervision. Supervisory style and awareness of weak areas emerge during stage two. Insight about impact on supervisees emerges as a developmental issue in stage two as well. Stage three describes integration of roles and tasks where new supervisors increase consistency in their ways of thinking, acting, and behaving in supervision, and they develop a broadened, more informed perspective about supervision. Confidence and trust in self increase and supervisory style is more solidified. Approaching a theoretical framework is prioritized as a developmental issue during stage three. Stage four involves the new supervisor enhancing integration of roles, tasks, responsibilities, disposition, and supervisory style they have developed over time. Supervisors feel competent, able, efficacious, and stable during this final stage. Sense of professional identity emerges as a developmental issue to be mastered. Supervisory styles become flexible to function

with a variety of supervisee needs but remain theoretically consistent as new supervisors form a sense of supervisor identity. Overall, this model provides an understanding of supervisor identity developing through the experience of specific tasks and corresponding emotions and attitudes that develop over time. Experiences must be integrated to successfully develop a supervisor identity.

In an attempt to focus on building skills competency as a supervisor, Destler (2017) proposed the SuperSkills Model (SSM) of supervisor competency training that “combines microskills training with supervision common factors” (p. 273). The model was designed to encompass the development and implementation of supervisory behaviors before, during, and after supervision sessions. The model does not replace theoretical approaches to supervision; rather, it supports conceptualizations of supervision theories and roles as they are carried out through supervisory behaviors. Destler created a SSM worksheet to assist supervisors-in-training (SITs) to integrate essential aspects of supervision into their sessions with counselors or CITs. The worksheet includes five components of supervision: (1) pre-session contemplation, (2) tangible supervisory behaviors, (3) supervisory goals and tasks, (4) feedback and reflection, and (5) post-session reflection.

The first component details SITs’ intentionality and area of focus for their upcoming supervision session (Destler, 2017). The second component “emphasizes tangible supervisory behaviors that work toward creating and fostering a strong supervisory relationship hinging on cultural interest and awareness” (p. 276). The third component describes understanding differences in practical versus process goals and various task foci. The fourth component “includes attention to direct and indirect feedback and positive and constructive feedback” (p. 276). The fifth component involves assessment of the supervision session through post-session

reflection. Throughout all five components, Destler noted how parallel processes of development influence supervisory behaviors and identity. Counselors or CITs develop their counseling skills and dispositions to counsel clients, while SITs develop supervisory skills and disposition to supervise CITs. Supervisors-in-training model effective relational behaviors for CITs and promote professional values through their instruction and guidance. On the other hand, CITs provide SITs the opportunity to develop competence in supervision skills through praxis. This model demonstrates building competence as a supervisor can develop through attention to microskills in the supervisory relationship. Because it focuses on common supervisory components across theories, the SSM is flexible in application across diverse populations of supervisors and theoretical frameworks.

***Leader identity.*** CPs are inherently leaders in their practice of helping and advocating for diverse populations in need (ACA, 2014). The development of an identity surrounding this role has been examined from multiple angles in various contexts. For counselors in particular, Gibson (2016) examined parallels between process of PID to that of leadership identity development. Gibson reviewed previous research on leadership identity development recognizes the importance of intra- and interpersonal factors as they contribute to the development process. Perceptions of self, interactions with others, and engagement in leadership tasks influence formation of an identity that encompasses both doing and being as a leader. With this foundational understanding, Gibson described parallels between leadership identity and PID in four domains: developmental processes, transitional guidance, professional experience, and personal and professional congruence.

The first domain describes the cyclical nature of development and reliance on external validation as autonomy develops over time (Gibson, 2016). The second domain includes needs



for guidance from experts in the field, supervisors, mentors, and faculty during transitions throughout training (e.g., entry into internship). The third domain reflects counselors' needs to gather experience to confirm their values, beliefs, and identity as leaders. The fourth domain details the convergence of personal and professional attributes over time and experience. In sum, Gibson's discussion of parallels suggests leadership identity develops over time, through intra- and interpersonal domains, with experience, training, supervision, and mentoring focused on increasing self-awareness and engagement with the counseling field.

Within the CE role of leader, there is a responsibility and privilege to advocate. Brat, O'Hara, McGhee, and Chang (2016) discussed promoting advocacy through PID using Boyer's (1990) Professional Identity Expression (PIE) model. The scholars incorporated six advocacy themes as established by Chi Sigma Iota through the PIE model framework. The PIE model includes four domains: application, discovery, teaching, and integration.

Brat et al. (2016) asserted that the implementation of basic counseling skills should include advocacy skills and elements of identity that exemplify advocacy from our wellness philosophy roots. Understanding differences between social/client advocacy and professional advocacy is important to focus advocacy behaviors and refine professional identity. In social/client advocacy, counselors optimize development in clients and work to remove barriers to clients' wellness; professional advocacy includes strengthening the development of the counseling profession and reducing barriers to counselors' abilities to serve others. Both types of advocacy are fundamental professional behaviors incorporated within CEs' professional identities. In discovery, research is a central element to learning and growth; advocacy may be promoted in this domain through targeting research efforts on professional advocacy efforts in both social/client and professional spheres. Seasoned CEs can also act as models of advocacy to

promote PID in this domain. The teaching domain includes activities that educate and invigorate developing CPs. Involvement in professional organizations and modeling attitudes, behaviors, knowledge, and professional counseling identity are key activities in this domain. Brat et al. also noted the importance of training counselors and CEs to “identify their professional identity,” emphasizing core components of wellness, prevention, and development (p. 67).

Integration involves linking intra- and interprofessional issues and relationships. Promoting identity and advocacy in this domain includes integrating learning and research into professional behaviors and relationships. Collaboration and open communication between professionals are crucial to promote collective identity and meet a wide range of client populations and issues successfully. Connecting developing students with resources to use in advocacy efforts in both social/client and professional domains is important here as well. Overall, Brat et al. offered a conceptual framework for promoting advocacy and PID through engagement in advocacy behaviors and learning from exemplar professional models in the field.

Finally, an imperative aspect of CE professional identity is awareness and integration of multiculturalism. CEs hold power and privilege in their roles (Brat et al., 2016), so developing a multicultural leader disposition, stance, and agenda can promote a professional identity reflective of the profession’s mission to “promote respect for human dignity and diversity” (ACA, 2014, p. 2). Storlie, Parker-Wright, and Woo (2015) defined “multicultural leadership in counseling as those experiences in which professional counselors recognize their privilege, roles, and abilities to serve all individuals and groups from a variety of diverse backgrounds in a competent, ethical, and just fashion” (p. 157). As CEs form and nurture the development of their personal multicultural leader identity, they take part in influencing the professional collective of CEs who

are tasked with the responsibility to exemplify inclusivity and justice for all humans. This effort passes on to counseling students, counselors, and others who come in contact with CPs.

**Summary.** Integrating each CE role to form a CE professional identity is complex and cannot be completed during training programs. As with counselor PID, CE PID is a lifelong process (Calley & Hawley, 2008; Moss et al., 2014; Woo et al., 2014). Each CE role produces specific experiences that influence the needs of CEITs and CEs to develop competency and confidence in their abilities to perform tasks in that role. As a result, some roles may be more easily integrated into their unified identities as CEs depending on how competence and confidence builds in their engagement with each role. The successful development of CE professional identity may subsequently be dependent on access to diverse resources, modeling, and support to meet the unique needs of each role. Overall, the models reviewed above provide insight into the need for exposure to different tasks within each role. Some type of supervision or support to promote competence and confidence in that role is also needed as CEITs become CEs and new CEs become seasoned CEs.

Because previous research on CE PID has commonly been conducted through siloed role examinations, there are few sources that provide a synthesized CE PID model covering the development of all CE roles simultaneously. In an effort to examine PID through one theoretical frame, I searched for an integrated model to attend to each role in one theoretical process. My search led me to the TTM, which will serve as the theoretical foundation of my research inquiry. I will review the TTM in detail in the next section.

### **Transformational Task Model**

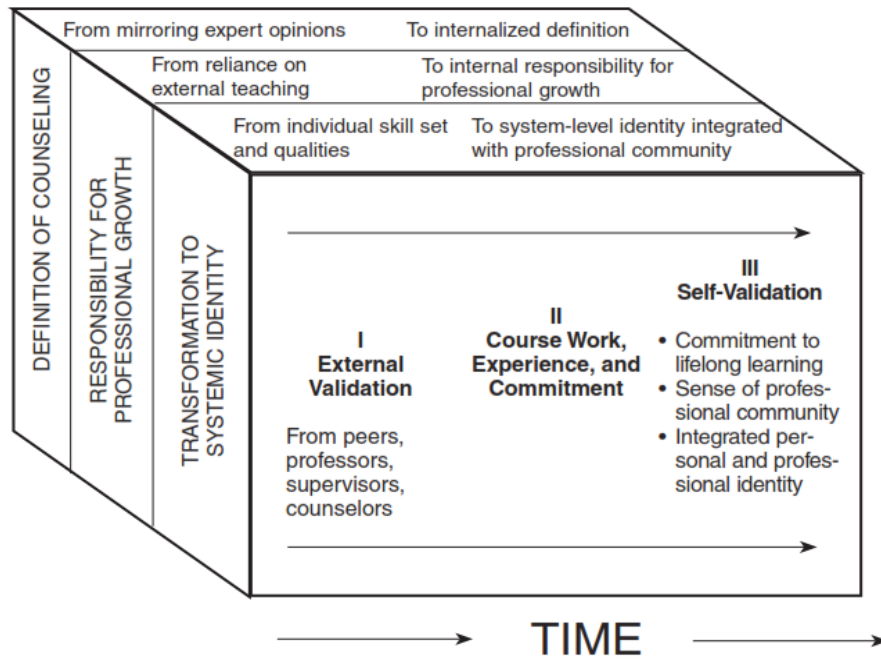
Previous studies have primarily focused on counseling students or counselors' experiences at a certain point in time rather than examining the contents of the PID process

across time (Gibson et al., 2010). In order to fill this gap in knowledge, Gibson et al. (2010) examined the content and process of developing professional identity over time with CITs and established the TTM of PID. Throughout the next five years, the TTM was adapted and applied to the PID of counselors, CEITs, and CEs through a series of grounded theory research studies (Dollarhide et al., 2013; Gibson et al., 2015; Moss et al., 2014). In the following section, I will discuss the development, content, and process of the TTM for CITs, counselors, CEITs, and CEs.

**CITs.** Gibson et al. (2010) examined the PID of 43 CITs in school and marriage and family counseling programs at two institutions, one in the Southeast and one in the Midwest. Other demographic data were not collected to reduce power differentials between students and professors. Using a grounded theory design, the researchers facilitated seven focus groups to inquire about CITs' "history, present status, and future needs relative to professional identity" (p. 26). Data analysis "yielded a developmental grounded theory of the transformation of counselor professional identity in CITs," the TTM (p. 27). The TTM for CITs includes three transformational tasks: internalized definition of counseling, internalized responsibility of professional growth, and transformation of systemic identity.

CITs complete tasks via a transformational process described as an evolution of knowledge and practice that moves from "external validation, through course work, experience, and commitment, to self-validation" (Gibson et al., 2010, p. 28). This process supports the notion of PID as an intra- and interpersonal growth experience. CITs initially rely on external support and resources to guide their thinking and practice. As they progress through their training, they develop more internalized definitions of counseling and accept greater responsibility for their clients.

Counselors also develop their identities by connecting with the profession through activities such as supervision, professional conferences, and continuing education. CITs early in training focus on “professional criteria . . . such as certification, licensure, or job title” to define their identities and largely seek external validation (Gibson et al., 2010, p. 30). However, CITs in the latter stages of their training hold a view of professional identity that is more integrated with the counseling community; the focus of identity is not just on personal skills or qualifications, but also how the counselor contributes to the profession. Figure 2.1 demonstrates the content and process of PID for CITs over time and experience. The three transformational tasks are listed on the left side of the figure. The top of the figure describes how identity transforms as CITs engage in each task. The face of the figure describes the process of transforming identity over time.



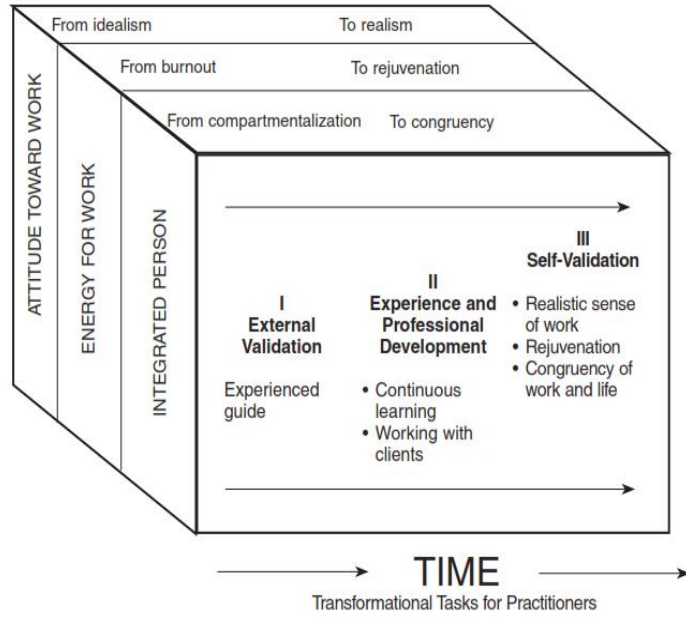
Transformational Tasks: A Process View of Professional Counselor Identity Development

Figure 2.1 (Gibson et al., 2010, p. 28)

**Counselors.** Gibson et al.'s (2010) TTM was used as a foundation to explore PID throughout counselors' careers (Moss et al., 2014). Using similar grounded theory methodology, Moss et al. conducted focus groups with 26 CPs. Participants were grouped based on experience and area of expertise (school and community-based counselors with 1-2, 5-15, and 20 or more years of experience respectively). The majority of participants were White ( $n = 22$ ) and female ( $n = 21$ ). Results indicated six themes that led to the development of a TTM for counselors: adjustment to expectations, confidence and freedom, separation versus integration, experienced guide, continuous learning, and work with clients.

Transformational tasks included: integrated person from compartmentalization to congruency, energy for work from burnout to rejuvenation, and attitude toward work from idealism to realism. Experienced counselors complete these transformational tasks "through the processes of continuous learning, work with clients, and help from an experienced guide" (Moss et al., 2014, p. 6). Completion of tasks led counselors to feel more confident, be able to clarify their own expectations for their roles as counselors, and have greater ability to separate and integrate their other identities from and with their professional identity.

This research study (Moss et al., 2014) showed PID is as an ever-evolving process that requires counselors to continually integrate their personal attributes, external experiences, and validation from self and others throughout their careers. Figure 2.2 demonstrates the content and process of PID for counselors over time and experience. The three transformational tasks are listed on the left side of the figure. The top of the figure describes how identity transforms as counselors engage in each task. The face of the figure describes the process of transforming identity over time.

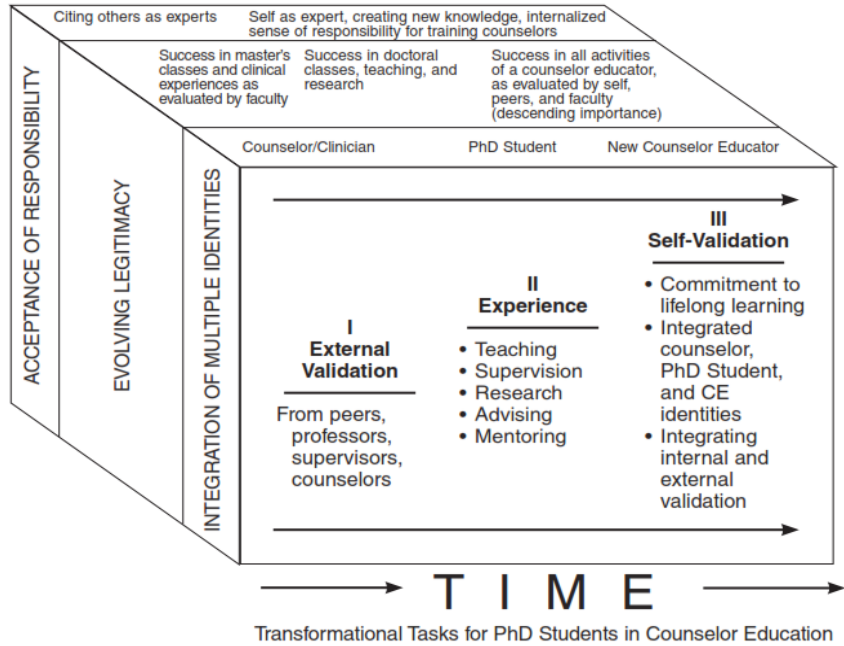


**Figure 2.2** (Moss et al., 2014, p. 6)



**CEITs.** Dollarhide et al. (2013) examined the PID of 23 CEITs ( $n = 23$ ; 18 women and 5 men) at two institutions during different points in their graduate training (e.g., first-year, second-year, after completion of comprehensive exams, and after completion of dissertations). Participant demographics included: ethnicity (White = 14; African American/Black = 8; Multiracial = 1), age ( $M = 32$ ), and specialty area of counseling (school = 13; clinical/community = 6; marriage and family = 2; rehabilitation = 1; pastoral counseling = 1). Using grounded theory methodology, the researchers conducted seven focus groups and five individual interviews.

Data analysis resulted in three transformational tasks that promote integration of professional identity as a CEIT: integration of multiple identities, evolving legitimacy, and acceptance of responsibility. Similar to the TTM for CITs, the tasks occur simultaneously and develop over time with study and practice. Dollarhide et al. (2013) reported CEITs progress from a role of counselor, to doctoral student, and eventually to new CE. Movement through the tasks is driven first by external validation. Then, CEITs progress to self-validation as they gather experiences that lead to feelings competence and confidence. Figure 2.3 demonstrates the content and process of PID for CEITs over time and experience. The three transformational tasks are listed on the left side of the figure. The top of the figure describes how identity transforms as CEITs engage in each task. The face of the figure describes the process of transforming identity over time.

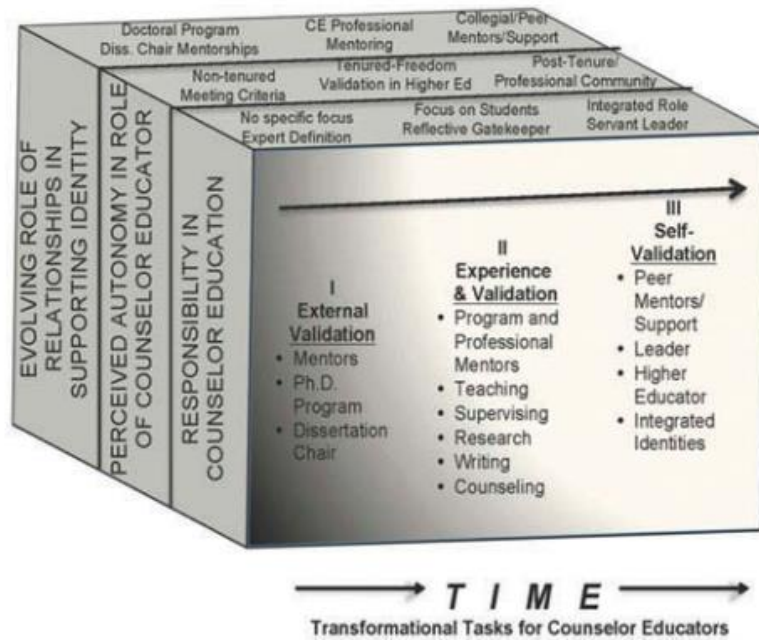


**Figure 2.3** (Dollarhide et al., 2013, p. 142)

**CEs.** Using grounded theory methodology, Gibson et al. (2015) explored the PID of 18 tenure-track CEs at Assistant ( $n = 6$ ), Associate ( $n = 6$ ), and Full ( $n = 6$ ) Professor ranks. Participant demographics included: age (Assistant:  $M = 35$ ; Associate:  $M = 43$ ; Full:  $M = 59$ ), gender (female = 10; male = 8), ethnicity (White = 15; Asian = 1; Japanese American = 1; American Indian = 1), years of counseling experience (Assistant:  $M = 7.5$ , Associate:  $M = 13$ , Full:  $M = 14$ ), years of professorial experience (Assistant:  $M = 3.75$ , Associate:  $M = 10$ , Full:  $M = 20$ ), Carnegie classification of higher education institution (Very High = 3, High = 4, Master's granting = 7, Doctoral granting = 4), U.S. region of higher education institution (Northeast = 4, Midwest = 2, Southeast = 9, Southwest = 2), sexual orientation (Heterosexual = 16, Gay = 1, Lesbian = 1), and earned doctoral degree (Counselor Education and Supervision = 14, Counseling = 2, Counseling Psychology = 2) (p. 117). Gibson and colleagues implemented semi-structured individual interviews to inquire about participants' "definition of counselor education and any changes over time, definition of professional identity and factors that influenced their own needs to progress in their professional identity, and prioritization of counselor educator roles" (p. 116).

Data analysis yielded three transformational tasks CEs encounter that affect professional identity: evolving role of relationships in supporting identity, gaining a sense of autonomy, and responsibility in counselor education (Gibson et al., 2015). The tasks are achieved simultaneously across time through sequential processes of external validation, experience, and self-validation. The researchers noted participants at the assistant professor rank reflected heavily on their doctoral training and reported relying on doctoral program faculty and dissertation chairs for guidance, mentorship, and validation. Doctoral training appeared to have a significant effect on the long-term as well, as it reportedly set the stage for continued development throughout the

academic career lifespan. Figure 2.4 demonstrates the content and process of PID for CEs over time and experience. The three transformational tasks are listed on the left side of the figure. The top of the figure describes how identity transforms as CEs engage in each task. The face of the figure describes the process of transforming identity over time.



**Figure 2.4** (Gibson et al., 2015, p. 119)

**Summary.** Overall, the TTM offers a developmental, process-oriented theoretical framework to understand the how and what of PID for CPs across roles and developmental levels. Cumulative findings show that the process of forming professional identity is similar across CP distinctions. Despite differences in transformational tasks, all CPs move towards a professional identity beginning with “external validation, [then] through coursework, experience, and commitment, [and finally] to self-validation” (Gibson et al., 2010, p. 28). There is a need for intra- and interpersonal development to successfully integrate identity.

This synthesized understanding of the PID process provides training programs, CACREP, licensure boards, and professional organizations with a framework to organize and implement support for the promotion of a unified professional identity over time (Urofsky, 2013; Woo et al., 2014). The consistency of the TTM process across groups also presents promise that CPs of diverse backgrounds may engage in a similar process despite different experiences, expressions, and needs for development. Thus, relevant counseling bodies listed above can meet unique needs within the given structure of the TTM process.

Although the TTM contributes to understanding of PID, procedures and findings for each individual study are limited. Limited samples may not be transferable to all CPs, especially given that participants in three of the four studies were overwhelmingly White, and Gibson et al. (2010) did not report participant demographics. Three of the four studies used focus groups as a primary means of data collection, which may have limited depth of participant disclosure or emergence of alternate perspectives. In terms of findings, the TTM provides insight into *what* tasks are completed and in what manner in order to develop professional identity. However, the TTM does not address *how* differences in personal attributes impact the experience of each task nor how personal attributes are impacted by engagement in each task. Personal attributes are half

of the formula (personal attributes + professional training = professional identity [Gibson et al. 2010]) needed to integrate within the professional community and solidify professional identity. Thus, increased attention to the impact of personal attributes is needed to extend the implications and use of the TTM and further knowledge of PID.

## **Summary**

PID is a continual process of “learning, practice, and feedback” (Dollarhide et al., 2013, p. 137), where personal attributes and professional training integrate within the context of a professional community (Gibson et al., 2010). Successful integration occurs through intra- and interpersonal domains as CPs journey towards “individuation, professional viability, and internal locus of evaluation” throughout their roles and responsibilities (Dollarhide et al., 2013, p. 137).

Scholars have developed conceptual and empirical models of PID that target the experiences and needs of CITs, counselors, CEITs, and CEs during training and in practice. Historical models offered conceptual insight primarily into the supervision needs of CITs and counselors. Contemporary models focused on a breadth of experience (e.g., coursework, field experiences, and professional activities) and guidance (e.g., supervision and mentorship) needed through empirical studies of CITs, counselors, CEITs, and CEs. As counselors become CEs, research focused on the development of each CE role: counselor, educator, supervisor, researcher, and leader.

Across research studies, the TTM emerged as a synthesized, developmental process model of PID. The TTM was created through a series of grounded theory research studies and offers support for a consistent process of PID across counseling professional distinctions. Despite differences in tasks and needs to develop PID, all CPs experience a similar process. The TTM has emerged as a leading PID model for counseling (Woo et al., 2014). Further research is

needed to understand how differences in personal attributes impact CPs' experiences of the transformational tasks and how CPs' personal attributes are impacted by engagement in each task. Personal attributes may privilege or disenfranchise CPs' PID processes in different ways. Namely, marginalized CPs bring distinct personal attributes into their professional contexts that may challenge their abilities to integrate into the professional collective. In the following section, I will review marginalized CPs' experiences in their training programs, in practice, and during their engagement in professional activities. I will include impacts of reported experiences on CPs' expressions of professional identity and PID processes as well.

Systemic oppression has contributed to the marginalization of racial/ethnic minorities, women, and LGBTQ+ individuals throughout our society. The counseling profession is no exception to societal influence, and these marginalized individuals have reported facing adverse experiences such as discrimination and tokenism in their training programs and in practice (Baker & Moore, 2015; Bryan, 2018; Bradley & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Healey & Hays, 2012; Speciale et al., 2015; Pollock & Meek, 2016). Personal attributes and experiences contribute to CPs evolving professional identities and their subsequent professional decisions and actions (Calley & Hawley, 2008). In the following section, I will review commonly reported adverse experiences of CPs who identify as racial/ethnic minorities, women, and LGBTQ+, with consideration for how marginalized status may impact the experience and expression of professional identity. Then, I will discuss implications for how marginalized CPs integrate personal attributes with professional training through the TTM.

### **Marginalized Counseling Professionals**

Because CPs' first field experiences are during training, and PID begins during training, most research on marginalized CPs' experiences related to professional identity is conducted in



the context of training programs. Because CEs are integral to the training and preparation of all CPs, researchers have also focused on marginalized CEs' experiences as faculty members. Therefore, I will review literature about adverse experiences of marginalized CITs, CEITs, and CEs who identify as racial/ethnic minorities, women, and LGBTQ+ in the next section. Then, I will discuss the impacts of these adverse experiences on professional identity and PID.

### **Adverse Experiences**

CPs live and express their identities in professional settings as holistic beings, and intersectionality is an integral component of understanding identity formation and expression. In the following section, I will summarize a number of reported adverse experiences of traditionally marginalized CITs, CEITs, and CEs by theme rather than siloed marginalized identity categories. I will attend to intersecting marginalized identities and their influence on experiences throughout. Themes include: microaggressions, stereotyping, tokenism, invisibility, underrepresentation and isolation, disconnection and isolation, mentorship difficulties, invalidation and discouragement, pressure and expectations, and challenges of intersecting marginalization.

**Microaggressions.** Microaggressions are “brief and commonplace daily verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, insults, invalidations, and indignities, whether they are intentional or unintentional, which are directed toward [marginalized individuals]” (Sue et al., 2007, p. 271). Marginalized CPs have experienced various prevalence rates and types of microaggressions that can stem from multiple sources throughout multiple contexts.

**CITs.** Marginalized CITs commonly experience microaggressions within the context of their training programs and between peers and faculty. Over 46% of LGBTQ+ CITs experienced microaggressions from other students, and more than one fourth reported the same from faculty

(Pollock, 2016). Variances in the content and delivery method of the microaggression contributed to differences in participants' categorization of their experiences.

Through an effort to uncover types of microaggressions in counselor education specifically, Bryan (2018) discovered LGBTQ+ CITs and CEITs experienced 15 different types of microaggressions within the counselor education context. Overt microaggressions such as slurs and hate speech about LGBTQ+ people were commonly experienced by participants. Some participants reported being misgendered or outed by peers and faculty in their programs. One student reported receiving an email with a conversion therapy website link, encouraging him to change his LGBTQ+ identity. Differences between CITs and CEITs experiences were not distinguished; however, it appears that the counselor education environment created distinct forms of microaggressions that contributed to adverse experiences.

*CEITs.* Closer examinations of marginalized CEITs have revealed experiences of microaggressions specific to doctoral study. Henfield, Owens, and Witherspoon (2011) qualitatively examined the support systems African American doctoral students used to navigate challenges in their programs. Their findings indicated participants used assertiveness as a navigation tool, in part because of experiencing microaggressions in the classroom. Participants reported their peers commonly challenged their contributions in class, leading them to feel silenced and invalidated.

Women CEITs also reported experiencing microaggressions in counselor education contexts. Holm, Prosek, and Godwin Weisberger (2015) examined experiences of women CEITs becoming mothers, and participants reported experiencing overt microaggressions from CEs. One participant shared her experience attending a conference while visibly pregnant; a CE she encountered "said, 'You don't actually expect that you're going to get a job with that, do you?'"

(p. 11). This statement implied that women who are mothers are less likely to be employed and promoted the ideal that career should come before family, both of which are only two examples of discriminatory actions and beliefs working against mothers in professional settings.

Baker and Moore (2015) examined racial/ethnic minority CEITs' perceptions of their counselor education programs' cultural competence, which offered insight into some microaggressions faculty may inadvertently engage in against CEITs of color. Participants reported CE actions either exemplified cultural competence or contradicted their self-proclaimed competence. The latter resulted in one participant experiencing a microaggression when he was "shut down" by a faculty member when attempting to share his perspective on cultural competence in a class discussion. This shows CEs may conduct microaggressions despite efforts to promote cultural competence in CEITs.

*CEs.* Although students have reported experiencing microaggressions from faculty members, CEs also experience microaggressions from students. Shillingford, Trice-Black, and Butler (2013) conducted a qualitative study on the wellness of racial/ethnic women CEs. Participants reported that their students lacked trust in their skills and abilities. For example, students would question a participant's guidance and go to another CE who reflected the student's racial/ethnic group for confirmation or further instruction. Participants noted that their students had covert biases related to race and gender which led some participants to address their minority status in front of the classroom (e.g., "What's it like having an African American woman standing in front of you teaching you?" (p. 260). This study suggested that racial/ethnic women CEs face microaggressions against multiple identities.

CEs also experience microaggressions from other CEs and members of the academy. In an autoethnographic study on the experiences of LGBTQ+ women CEs, Speciale et al. reported

facing microaggressions in their professional environments, mainly through interpersonal discourse with “well-intentioned friends and colleagues” (2015, p. 260). These experiences often occurred in private settings, suggesting that LGBTQ+ women CEs face marginalization in both broad and intimate professional settings.

In sum, microaggressions occur both overtly and covertly, and at times, outside conscious awareness. Variances in adverse experiences are reported throughout the professional literature as a result of different types of microaggressions. The remainder of this section highlights themes of specific microaggressions commonly reported among marginalized CITs, CEITs, and CEs.

**Stereotyping.** “Stereotyping involves generic categorizing of people into categories of preconceived characteristics” (Baker & Moore, 2015, p. 79). Stereotypes are often reported as misrepresentations of marginalized CPs identities and behaviors, which subsequently lead to adverse experiences. More detailed experiences are highlighted within each counseling distinction below.

**CITs.** Negative stereotypes about identity and expression are prevalent for LGBTQ+ CITs and CEITs. Bryan (2018) reported half of the LGBTQ+ participants witnessed or received comments from faculty members or peers that conveyed the assumption that homosexual relationships are less healthy or mature than heterosexual relationships. Peers and faculty members also made assumptions about the psychological health and relational quality and status of LGBTQ+ people. These stereotypes challenged LGBTQ+ students’ abilities to connect with peers and faculty in genuine ways.

**CEITs.** Baker and Moore (2015) reported that more than one-third of the racial/ethnic minority participants in their study experienced stereotyping in their programs. Salient examples

from their findings included African American women being stereotyped as angry Black women and Asian students stereotyped as gifted with propensity towards mathematics and statistics. These stereotypes led to false expectations for behavior and negatively impacted relational dynamics between students and faculty.

Henfield et al. (2013) examined the experiences of 11 Black CEITs and reported Black students experienced distancing, discomfort, and labeling from faculty. For example, a Black student reported feeling judged by his faculty based on his casual dress style, which is stereotyped to the culture of hip-hop; he experienced distancing from faculty who indicated discomfort when around him. The negative beliefs associated with a culture of hip-hop, which is associated with Black men, led to distinct marginalization. This shows marginalization can be inflicted based on compounded stereotypes related to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and/or cultural expressions.

*CEs.* CEs experience stereotypes on multiple levels and in compounded forms as well. Speciale et al. (2015) faced stereotypes related to LGBTQ+ identity, woman identity, and racial/ethnic identity. One author, a bisexual woman, often faced the stereotype that bisexuality is a “transitional sexual identity” and therefore not as legitimate as other identities (p. 263). All three authors were stereotyped based on their feminine gender expressions; namely, others assumed they were straight or implied they were not equipped to speak to LGBTQ+ related issues because they did not “appear” LGBTQ+. Some stereotypes came within counselor education discourse. For example, one author’s supervisor assumed she would struggle with a supervisee who was working with a cross-dressing client.

Overall, stereotypes are threaded throughout individual identities, expressions, and relational interactions between people. Stereotypes often result in adverse experiences where

personal identity is marginalized. As a result, marginalized CPs' professional relationships and behaviors are negatively impacted.

**Tokenism.** Tokenism is as a “process by which members of a non-dominant group are treated as representatives of their marginalized group” (Speciale et al., 2015, p. 264).

Marginalized CPs report tokenization at individual and programmatic levels. Tokenism may be particularly present in higher education programs that emphasize cultural competency with “over-visibility” of racially or ethnically diverse students (Bryant et al., 2005).

**CITs.** A common form of tokenization comes through the belief that all people of an identity are the same. Bryan (2018) noted LGBTQ+ CITs and CEITs encountered others in their environments who believed all “LGBT people are all the same” and thus have the same experiences and expressions of LGBTQ+ identity (p. 129). Participants in Bryan’s study were looked to as the only individuals who could speak about people and issues within their identity category and thus expected to educate others about LGBTQ+ issues and the community.

Another common form of tokenization is related to representation. In a qualitative study of the experiences of Black CITs during training, Haskins et al. (2013) reported some participants felt they were only admitted into their programs to be the “token minority” (p. 168). Furthermore, all participants in their study indicated feeling like they were an example of all Black people, which led to feelings of discomfort, isolation, and frustration.

**CEITs.** CEITs’ experiences of tokenization are similar to those of CITs. Zeligman, Prescod, and Green (2015) conducted a qualitative study of racial/ethnic women CEITs and found the participants experienced a strong desire to serve as role models for other racial/ethnic minorities. The desire to be a role model led some participants into the field, thus a positive connotation was associated with representation. However, participants who did not intend to be

role models found themselves in that position due to a lack of representation. This suggests tokenization may occur due to a lack of representation of multiple diverse CEITs in programs.

*CEs.* Marginalized CEs face representation foes as well. Their tokenizing experiences are distinct from CITs and CEITs as membership in the academy creates new expectations, roles, and responsibilities. For example, racial minority faculty members are often expected to speak for their own racial groups, and the research they conduct is regularly assumed to be in the context of their racial identity (Sue et al., 2011). However, promotion and tenure processes may not consider research regarding race to be of similar value to other topics (Bradley & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004). Racial minority faculty members are also often called upon for service positions at increased rates due to a need for diverse representation within groups, such as hiring committees (Shillingford, Trice-Black, & Butler, 2013). In their autoethnography as women faculty of color, Marbley et al. (2011) reported experiencing tokenism through the burden of representing African Americans not just in counselor education, but throughout the academy broadly. These experiences are elements of invisible labor that can leave marginalized CEs feeling tokenized, overworked, and only valuable for their minority status (Shillingford et al., 2013).

Tokenization can be compounded for CEs. Speciale et al. (2015) discussed experiences of tokenism as a representative for LGBTQ+ issues. For one author, a lesbian woman of color, she experienced extreme tokenism as she was the only LGBTQ+ woman of color in her academic setting. However, she noted feeling “forced to submit to this tokenization within [her] academic relationships, otherwise, [she] would remain invisible” (p. 264). This suggests tokenism is an adverse experience but offers visibility to various marginalized CPs who would otherwise be ignored or have their experiences invalidated.

**Invisibility.** Invisibility relates to experiences of being physically invisible as a person of one's identity throughout society as well as having one's identity invalidated or erased. A well-known form of invisibility is LGBTQ+ identity, as sexual orientation and gender identity must be verbally disclosed to be known. Another form is lack of representation of certain groups and issues affecting those groups in research or curricula. Expressions of dominant beliefs or behaviors that promote only one identity as normal or accepted evokes invisibility as well (e.g., heteronormativity promotes the belief that cisgender, heterosexual identity is the only normal and accepted identity). Invisibility is especially challenging for LGBTQ+ people whose gender expressions match heteronormative stereotypes (Speciale et al., 2015). Because gender identity and sexual orientation are often incorrectly viewed as accompanying identities and expressions, LGBTQ+ individuals can face stereotypes that are mislabeling and discriminatory. Other marginalized groups, such as women and racial/ethnic minorities, also face challenging stereotypes and discriminatory beliefs and actions that lead to neglect and invalidation as forms of invisibility.

**CITs.** LGBTQ+ CITs have distinct experiences with invisibility in their programs. Bryan (2018) reported LGBTQ+ students felt invisible due to heteronormativity. For example, women students would be asked if they had boyfriends, with the assumption they were heterosexual, or role plays in class discussions would always involve heterosexual, White, cisgendered clients. Environmental heteronormativity (e.g., lack of gender neutral restrooms, check-box demographic forms with heterosexual, cisgender only options) influenced participants as well. Heteronormative ideals and behaviors invalidated their identities and led to feeling invisible.

**CEITs.** Black CITs and CEITs experienced invisibility in their programs as well. Some contributions to such experiences include lack of representation of racial/ethnic minority students



and faculty members, instances of silencing, lack of support, and feeling that issues pertinent to Black lives are invisible within the graduate counseling curriculum (Haskins et al., 2013; Henfield et al., 2011). Henfield et al. (2013) reported one Black CEIT student was discouraged from researching Black females by a White CE, which “indicates that she and her needs were invisible to the faculty member” (p. 13).

*CEs.* Lack of representation of racial and ethnic minority faculty members in the academy and in counselor education create feelings of invisibility for this population (Sue et al., 2011). LGBTQ+ CEs may experience invisibility with students and between colleagues. Although not specific to counselor education, Orlov and Allen (2014) discussed the impact of faculty member disclosure of sexual orientation to students in the classroom, finding that LGBTQ faculty members felt freedom to be who they were once identity was known. This indicates that visibility can be important for LGBTQ+ CEs to engage freely in their roles as educators.

Invisibility also can occur within marginalized groups. Speciale et al. (2015) reflected on an experience of invisibility as a bisexual woman. She reported being in a relationship with a cisgender man for about a year, and when that relationship ended, began dating a transgender man. She stated her colleagues made comments like “welcome to the club,” as if she were not always a bisexual woman. This indicates that invisibility of identity is multifaceted and can impact relationships within and outside one’s marginalized community.

**Underrepresentation and isolation.** Isolation due to underrepresentation is a common theme throughout reports of marginalized CPs experiences. CPs of color and LGBTQ+ CPs are often the only individual or one of few of their identity group in a given counselor education program (Bryan, 2018; Haskins et al., 2013; Shillingford et al., 2013). Consequently, marginalized CPs can experience isolation in social, academic, and professional spheres.

*CITs.* All Black CITs in Haskins et al. (2013) experienced isolation in their programs due to underrepresentation, feeling unsupported, or feeling like they did not fit in. Participants felt they had to teach faculty members and students about Black issues because of a lack of representation of Black faculty members and insufficient curricula surrounding “interactions and issues related to their experiences as Black counselors” (p. 170). Furthermore, “they felt a need to suppress aspects of their personalities to try to fit in and be less isolated” (p. 169). Although representation is needed, the importance of connection is vital, even at the expense of self.

LGBTQ+ CITs experience isolation sometimes invisibly, as they often have to disclose marginalized status for others to be aware. Bryan (2018) noted the invisibility and stigmatization of LGBTQ+ identity often means underrepresentation of LGBTQ+ CITs if they are not out to professional peers and faculty. Pollock and Meek (2016) reported “just under 60% [of LGBTQ+ CITs] were out to faculty and fellow students” (p. 236). This suggests LGBTQ+ CITs face unique forms of isolation due to the invisibility of their marginalized identities.

*CEITs.* Marginalized CEITs experience similar isolation with few individuals of their identities present in their programs. The majority of racial/ethnic minority CEITs in Baker and Moore’s (2015) study felt well represented due to racial/ethnic minority faculty presence in their programs. However, five participants did not feel represented, and some participants entered counselor education to address underrepresentation of racial/ethnic minorities in the field.

In a study of Black CEITs’ experiences at Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs), Henfield et al. (2013) reported Black CEITs experienced isolation as the only or one of few Black students in their programs and on their PWI campuses. Participants who had previously attended PWIs felt more prepared for the isolation whereas their peers experienced more discomfort. Racial makeup of the area surrounding the University also played a role in students’

experiences of isolation. In another study of Black CEITs experiences, Henfield et al. (2011) reported participants sought support from race-based organizations outside of their programs due to limited numbers of Black students in their programs and across their campuses. These studies suggest that marginalized CEITs can experience isolation in nuanced ways depending on environments and experiences beyond the counselor education program.

*CEs.* CEs often report experiencing isolation in multiple environments. In one study of the experiences of racial/ethnic CEs, participants noted living in a racially and culturally diverse area as a primary factor when considering employment because of experiencing isolation in the academy (Bradley & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004). Shillingford et al. (2013) reported Black women CEs experienced feelings of alienation and lack of support, impacted their wellness. Speciale et al. (2015) noted underrepresentation of LGBTQ+ women of color created challenging experiences, such as tokenism and invisibility, in addition to feelings of isolation.

Issues of underrepresentation, alienation, and lack of support extend into the broader context of the academy. Marbley et al. (2011) reported feelings of cultural isolation throughout their experiences as higher education faculty members. One author, a CE, was “the first African-American to graduate with a doctorate from [her] degree-granting institution, the only Black in [her] program, one of two Black Counselor Educators in the state of Texas, and the only licensed professional counselor in [her] surrounding area” (p. 168). The other authors, women of color professors of history, foreign language, and architecture, experienced isolation in University service groups and research engagement, in addition to their individual academic units. Overall, isolation and lack of representation go hand in hand. Experiences of isolation manifest in individual and group contexts, within and beyond counselor education, and can result in negative perceptions and experiences.

**Disconnection and isolation.** Marginalized CPs can experience isolation as a result of adverse experiences that inhibit or sever connections between professionals. For example, disconnection can occur when one professional does not approach another based on stereotypes related to one's marginalized status (Henfield et al., 2013). As a result, isolation may stem from efforts to connect despite lack of representation.

*CITs.* LGBTQ+ CITs and CEITs reported experiencing distancing from non-LGBTQ+ peers and faculty (Bryan, 2018). "Two participants indicated that heterosexual or cisgender students or faculty tried to avoid them or limited social discussion of LGBT-related topics with them" despite participants efforts to engage in conversation (p. 130). One participant noted peers would avoid talking about romantic partners to avoid discomfort. Avoidance left participants feeling isolated, lesser than, and unaccepted. In their survey on experiences of discrimination, harassment, or microaggressions for lesbian or gay counselor education students, Pollok and Meek (2016) reported less than one-half of the 43 participants totally agreed with feeling affirmed and accepted as lesbian or gay.

Black CITs felt disconnection throughout their programs due to a lack of community for Black students, discomfort between peers in their program, and being disregarded due to their racial/ethnic minority status (Haskins et al., 2013). Furthermore, participants experienced disconnect from faculty members specifically due to White faculty members' tendency to include only their perspectives in class activities and lectures (e.g., case studies only included White counselors). Again, avoidance from non-Black professionals led to experiences of disconnection and isolation.

*CEITs.* CEITs' experiences of disconnection are similarly related to avoidance. African American doctoral students sought support from more experienced African American students in

and out of their academic programs due to feeling disconnected from most of their peers and faculty (Henfield et al., 2011). These students also reported becoming more interested in connecting with those of similar backgrounds and focusing solely on getting their degrees rather than forming relationships with their faculty. Experiences of disconnection disrupt engagement in the profession as a whole, as Black students may be focused on doing what needs to be done for the degree rather than building professional networks.

*CEs.* Marginalized CEs also experience disconnection throughout their roles. Shillingford et al.'s (2013) participants felt a lack of support due to alienation. Participants reported not being asked to engage in some professional opportunities or left out of conversations all together. Avoidance from others was attributed to their minority statuses as racially and ethnically diverse women.

In sum, CPs experience isolation as a result of disconnection between professionals and avoidance of marginalized individuals and issues. These experiences challenge marginalized CPs in their quests to connect with other professionals and grow in their professional roles.

**Mentorship difficulties.** Lack of representation, disconnection, and isolation create fewer opportunities for and challenges associated with mentorship. Despite the necessity of mentorship throughout training and professional practice, marginalized CPs commonly experience difficulty accessing and receiving quality mentorship.

*CITs.* Multiple forms of supervision and mentorship are integrated into training programs due to the need monitor the development of CITs' clinical skills. However, marginalized CITs have reported distinct experiences with mentorship related to their marginalized identities. Haskins et al. (2013) reported Black CITs experienced two forms of support from mentors: proactive and reactive. Proactive support came from Black faculty members and was provided

without the students' prompting. Although support from White faculty members was helpful and well-received, it was reactive in nature, where participants had to share a concern before receiving support. This suggests mentorship may be best delivered and received proactively with cultural sensitivity.

*CEITs.* LGBTQ+ CITs and CEITs experience challenges related to mentorship partially due to invisibility of identity and lack of representation of LGBTQ+ CEs (Pollock, 2016). Thus, accessing mentorship from a CE who shares some commonality in identity is challenging. Henfield et al. (2011) reported Black CEITs did not feel supported by their advisors. Their advisors gave little guidance and were unconcerned with students' overall wellbeing. However, some students reported experiencing supportive advisor relationships. Students connected with advisors who showed support for their holistic wellbeing rather than academic output or success. Lack of mentorship was also an issue for women CEITs becoming mothers (Holm et al., 2015). Women CEITs becoming mothers reported needing mentors who supported their efforts to balance doctoral study and motherhood and assist them through issues related to university policies after the arrival of a child. These studies suggest quality mentorship must address issues outside of professional skills, including issues relevant to one's marginalized identity.

*CEs.* Lack of mentorship is an all too common issue for CEs in tenure-track positions (Hill, 2004; Levitt & Hermon, 2009; Magnuson, 2002). For marginalized CEs in particular, the isolation and lack of representation throughout the academy limits opportunities for mentorship. In one study, African American CEs felt that they had to figure out how to navigate their programmatic and university roles and responsibilities on their own (Bradley & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004). In a study of encouraging and discouraging factors for women faculty members, Hill, Leinbaugh, Bradley, and Hazler (2005) reported lack of mentorship as a leading

discouraging factor. Speciale et al. (2015) also reported discriminatory actions related to LGBTQ+ identity in mentoring relationships.

In sum, mentorship is important for marginalized CPs to develop personally and professionally. However, challenges to finding and securing nurturing mentorship may leave marginalized CPs to navigate training and practice, and the adverse experiences throughout each, on their own.

**Invalidation and discouragement.** Invalidation and discouragement are related adverse experiences that impact openness of one's expression of self. Various microaggressions, stereotypes, and experiences of isolation related to marginalized status create potential for invalidation that evokes suppression of authentic expressions of personal identity.

*CITs.* Experiencing invalidation of identity can prompt marginalized CITs to hide or suppress their personal identities. Bryan (2018) reported LGBTQ+ CITs and CEITs experienced numerous microaggressions such as hate speech, invalidation of experience, and social shunning that invalidated their identities. For example, one bisexual participant's peers did not recognize bisexuality as a real or stable identity, which increased her feelings of isolation. As a result, discussing and expressing bisexual identity was discouraged. Other participants noted invalidation created a salient sense of inequity throughout their programs, which discouraged them from engaging in certain professional activities.

*CEITs.* CEITs face similar potential inequity as a result of invalidation of marginalized identity. Baker and Moore (2015) reported racial/ethnic minority CEITs experienced a lack of voice in their programs. Specifically, one participant described feeling shut down by a faculty member during conversations about multicultural issues because his views did not match the

faculty member's. Thus, he reported feeling invalidated as his voice was not treated as a valid contribution.

*CEs.* Invalidation is also a prevalent experience for marginalized CEs. Hill et al. (2005) conducted a survey examining experiences of 115 women CEs and found that women CEs experienced more discouraging than encouraging factors in their professional roles. Some discouraging factors included: sense of being controlled by others in your work; understanding unwritten rules for merit pay; colleagues less skilled, knowledgeable, or motivated than yourself; lack of mentorship; office gossip; need for additional income; office politics; toxic faculty environment; and expenses related to faculty work. This study highlighted the impact certain factors can have towards experiences of invalidation and consequently hindering of professional engagement and personal expression.

Speciale et al. (2015) reported experiencing invalidation and devaluing of their identities as queer women. One author, who identified as a cisgender femme woman, experienced invalidation of her bisexual identity because she did not look like someone's stereotyped perception of a LGBTQ+ woman. She discussed an experience where someone questioned how she would be able to relate to potential LGBTQ+ clients, because the individual seemingly believed she was heterosexual. This report indicates stereotypes based on one identity can impact invalidation of another.

**Pressure and expectations.** Marginalized CPs often report experiencing pressure to work harder to seem competent amongst colleagues, yet still being overlooked or seen as less competent due to stereotypes. Such pressure leads to the development of internal and external expectations of what is needed to be successful as a marginalized CP.



*CITs.* Haskins et al. (2013) reported Black CITs faced pressure and expectations to speak for their race, as they were often tokenized in their programs. The participants discussed their dislike of serving as representatives for their race, yet reported that pressure to speak to Black issues was constant.

*CEITs.* African American CEITs expressed feelings of pressure to perform twice as well as others in the classroom (Henfield et al., 2011). Pressure reportedly stems from stereotypes that African Americans are not as competent as White individuals. Pressure to perform is also prevalent for women CEITs, although due to different circumstances. Holm et al. (2015) reported women CEITs becoming mothers experienced pressure to meet the expectations of their programs while balancing roles and responsibilities as mothers. One participant reported facing unexpected adverse experiences (e.g., financial difficulty, losing health insurance, and missing academic deadlines) when medical emergencies related to childbirth prevented her from consistent enrollment in her program. Yet, she was expected to maintain academic engagement at a similar pace as if she were not facing adverse experiences. Women CEITs also felt pressure to work harder to prove competence next to their male colleagues due to the stereotype that women are less intellectually capable than men (Healey & Hays, 2012).

*CEs.* Pressure and expectations to perform through stress are high for CEs of all backgrounds, but particularly for marginalized CEs working to combat inequity. Shillingford et al. (2013) reported Black women CEs experienced challenges with overwhelming workloads and high expectations from administrators, other faculty members, and themselves. Specifically, participants indicated feeling like they had to work “10 times harder” than all others to prove competency and ability (p. 261). This finding suggests pressure and expectations can reach

insurmountable heights when multiple marginalized identities contribute to compounded negative stereotypes of incompetence and unworthiness.

**Challenges of intersecting marginalization.** Throughout the research studies reviewed in this section, experiences of adverse events and interactions are often multifaceted as identity is intersectional. Particularly for CPs who carry intersecting marginalized identities, adverse experiences can be heightened in certain contexts over others with certain identities facing focused discrimination over others.

*CITs.* LGBTQ+ students of color reported experiencing racial and LGBT-related microaggressions evenly (Bryan, 2018). However, at times, these students faced unique challenges due to multiple marginalized statuses. For example, an African American lesbian student reported a Black peer saw her as less Black because she was a lesbian. This finding suggests one marginalized identity may be deemed more valid, accepted, or supported in certain contexts over others.

*CEITs.* In Baker and Moore's (2015) study of racial/ethnic CEITs, individual characteristics and attributes either contributed to or inhibited personal success in the program. Part of this dissonance was due to intersectionality of identity; participants were at times uncertain what aspect of their identities contributed most to negative encounters with peers or faculty. For example, some participants reported clients seemed to avoid working with them due to their age rather than race. Others perceived their gender to be more of a barrier than race or ethnicity, particularly in context of teaching and supervising students.

*CEs.* Multiple studies have highlighted the compounded marginalization of racial/ethnic women in counselor education (Marbley et al., 2011; Shillingford et al., 2013). Adverse

experiences in higher education can be related to gender or race and ethnicity, but often they are intertwined as racial/ethnic women CEs are intersectional beings.

Speciale et al. (2015) noted how intersection of gender expression and LGBTQ+ identity do not always align with societal stereotypes. Sexual identity, gender identity, and gender expression are exclusive, running along separate spectrums; however, they are often grouped together. This was demonstrated by one author's experience where her cisgender expression as a feminine woman conflicted with stereotypes of queer sexual orientation. Her ability to "pass" as heterosexual offered her safety in certain spaces, but it led to invisibility of her bisexual identity. Another author, a lesbian woman of color, experienced different forms of marginalization due to her racial, gender, and sexual orientation minority identities.

In sum, these studies show that intersecting marginalized identities create uniquely compounded adverse experiences dependent on environmental and relational contexts. CPs with multiple marginalized identities are faced with an increased risk of experiencing microaggressions throughout their environments (Marbley et al., 2011). Thus, consideration of ways in which context impacts marginalized CPs experiences of adversity are essential to understand their challenges, offer support, and advocate for social change.

**Summary.** Adverse experiences contribute to marginalization of racial/ethnic minority, women, and LGBTQ+ CPs in their professional roles. Marginalization impacts one's ability to express self and build confidence and competence as a CP. As a result, marginalized CPs may struggle to integrate their personal identities with their professional training during PID. For example, all authors in Marbley et al.'s (2011) study alluded to the need, importance, and struggle to integrate their professional identity as CEs into their personal, gendered, and cultural identities. Haskins et al. (2013) also indicated "the participants indicated that they felt a need to

suppress aspects of their personalities to try to fit in and be less isolated” (p. 169). This suggests marginalized CPs are active agents in their quest to form professional identity despite adversity, and they negotiate personal identities or attributes in order to accommodate their needs for successful PID. These reports demonstrate a need to consider the impact of adverse experiences on the expression, evaluation, and developmental process of professional identity. In the next section, I will expand on these areas of consideration.

### **Impacts on Professional Identity**

Personal identity is an integral component for development and expression of a professional identity (Gibson et al., 2010). When adverse experiences contribute to the marginalization of one’s personal identity, professional identity is negatively impacted. In the following section, I will discuss how adverse, marginalizing experiences impact expressions of professional identity, methods of measuring professional identity, and the PID process for marginalized CPs.

**Expression.** Professional identity expression is characterized by CPs’ displays of personal attributes and professional training in professional settings through means of practice, teaching, and research (Burkholder, 2012). The ways in which personal attributes are expressed are dependent upon how CPs are influenced by environmental contexts, professional norms, and modeled behaviors (Woo et al., 2014). When CPs first enter the profession, they look to others for external validation and guidance to grow (Gibson et al., 2010). However, the invisibility and underrepresentation marginalized CPs often face create barriers towards receiving mentorship and modeling related to their personal identities (Bryan, 2018; Haskins et al., 2013; Shillingford et al., 2013). As a result, marginalized CPs may conform expressions to match the majority culture in order to join the professional community.

Code-switching involves systematically shifting self-expressions (i.e., verbal and nonverbal language, behaviors, physical presentation) depending on setting (Celious & Oyserman, 2001). Code-switching can be used as a mechanism of safety or a tool to enter a particular setting or fit in with a certain group of people (Celious & Oyserman, 2001). Experiences of marginalization often prompt marginalized CPs to code-switch. For example, seven CEITs in the Henfield et al. (2013) study reported feeling “pressured to pretend to be someone they were not when in the program environment, or to code-switch, in order to give the appearance to faculty that they have an affinity for their peers in particular and for the program” (p. 130). A male CIT in the Haskins et al. (2013) study stated, “I do not want to act Black. . . I don’t act gangster, or speak in slang” (p. 169) when describing his efforts to fit into his program. Marbley et al. (2011) also described racial/ethnic minority women faculty members’ experiences adapting behaviors and forms of language to accommodate various settings within higher education.

In each of these examples, code-switching prompted marginalized individuals to suppress their own personal or cultural expressions for those of the majority culture around them. This process can be described as cultural identity negotiation (Cohen & Kassan, 2018), where individuals negotiate which elements of self can be expressed and to what degree in certain contexts. Although code-switching may offer entry into the majority culture, it does so at the expense of one’s personal, authentic identity and expression of self. As a result, marginalized CPs are at risk of negotiating their authentic personal identities and expressions in order to form a professional identity.

**Evaluation.** CPs may use a number of quantitative and qualitative measures to evaluate knowledge, attitudes, professional dispositions, and professional behaviors in counseling (Healy,

2009; Puglia, 2008; Spurgeon, Gibbons, & Cochran, 2012; Woo & Henfield, 2015). Measures were developed based on common themes found in the literature and common training standards of learning. The CACREP (2016a) standards have been noted as a primary method to promote collective professional identity amongst CPs and evaluate student learning and growth during training programs (Lawson, 2016; Mascari & Webber, 2013; Urofsky, 2013; Woo et al., 2014). Scholars have acknowledged differences in areas such as personal attributes, clinical experiences, and theoretical approach can impact the manifestation of professional identity in practice (Gibson et al., 2010; Mellin et al., 2011). However, the profession is grounded by its professional values (ACA, 2014) and emphasis on wellness, prevention, development, and advocacy (Mellin et al., 2011; Woo et al., 2014). CPs are expected to embody and exemplify professional attitudes, dispositions, and behaviors that reflect these values and areas of emphasis.

Although common grounding aims to create unification across CPs, marginalized CPs may be challenged to fulfill the expectation to embody the profession's values and areas of emphasis when confronted with adverse experiences. For example, Shillingford et al. (2013) reported racial/ethnic minority women CEs developed intentional wellness practices to combat marginalizing experiences of alienation, challenges with students, and overwhelming workloads that stemmed from tokenization. As a result, their views of wellness and advocacy encompassed more nuanced factors related to marginalization, which led to variances in professional attitudes and behaviors.

Marginalized CPs' professional values may also manifest in unique ways. Reports from numerous studies summarized earlier in this chapter indicate this population faces adverse experiences that disrespect and marginalize individuals based on their personal identities. These reported experiences have led some marginalized CPs to code-switch in order to accommodate

their settings and avoid marginalization (Haskins et al., 2013; Henfield et al., 2013), which hinders authentic personal identity expression. Their experiences run counterintuitive to a core professional value to “[honor] diversity and [embrace] a multicultural approach in support of the worth, dignity, potential, and uniqueness of people within their social and cultural contexts” (ACA, 2014, p. 3). Marginalized CPs may consequently develop a zealous need to promote values of social justice and multiculturalism in distinct ways, with emphasis on serving as models for others around them (Henfield et al., 2011; Zeligman et al., 2015). On the other hand, some marginalized CPs may not develop initiative, but rather retreat in order to avoid marginalizing experiences.

These notable differences may create challenges for measuring professional identity consistently and justly across all CPs. Thus, marginalized CPs may be at risk for being evaluated without consideration for impacts of adverse experiences related to their personal identities. Furthermore, evaluations of marginalized CPs’ expressed attitudes and behaviors may be unknowingly based on their ability to negotiate identity, which reinforces a majority culture rather than encouraging diversity of expressions. This is problematic for the profession’s mission and vision to diversify the field (Kaplan & Gladding, 2011), and it may negatively impact PID processes.

**PID.** PID is a lifelong process of “learning, practice, and feedback” (Dollarhide et al., 2013, p. 137) where CPs work to integrate their personal attributes and professional training in the context of the professional community (Nugent & Jones, 2009). The process of PID occurs through engagement in transformational tasks over time and experience (Dollarhide et al., 2013; Gibson et al., 2010; Gibson et al., 2015; Moss et al., 2014). As CPs engage in the PID process,

they must develop in intra- and interpersonal domains to successfully form professional identity and integrate into the field (Auxier et al., 2003; Moss et al., 2014).

Marginalized CPs may struggle through their PID processes as a result of adverse experiences related to their personal attributes or identities. Regardless of CP role and the transformational tasks at hand, the first step in the process of forming professional identity through the TTM is to seek and receive external validation from professors, supervisors, peers, and/or other counselors (Gibson et al., 2010). Validation of personal attributes and professional training is needed (Moss et al., 2014). However, multiple studies highlighted in this chapter show marginalized CPs struggled to receive mentorship, faced isolation, and experienced microaggressions from peers and faculty members. If external validation is not received, CPs at all levels of development, from CIT to CE, can struggle to build competence and confidence in their professional roles (Gibson et al., 2010; Gibson et al., 2015). Because the transformational tasks are completed simultaneously, marginalized CPs may be stunted in each task as they struggle to reach self-validation in their process. Consequently, marginalized CPs may be pressured to negotiate their personal identities to increase opportunities to receive the adequate support and validation they need to form professional identity (Haskins et al., 2013).

Identity negotiation serves as a method of persistence among marginalized CPs. When adverse experiences inhibit PID, marginalized CPs must act as active agents to persist despite adversity. In Bruner's (2017) grounded theory inquiry into the persistence of traditionally marginalized CEITs, participants reportedly persisted by navigating understandings of who they were, why they were in their programs, and discovering what they would do to persist. Some influential factors within this mission to persist were finding specific motivations, strategically advocating, and solidifying identities early in their programs. Developing agency to persist early



in training proved to be an important step in negotiating identity and accommodating cultural norms. Other studies have highlighted the importance of securing social support amidst identity negotiation in professional settings. Haskins et al. (2013) reported peer support, from White and Black peers, helped racial/ethnic minority CITs successfully navigate their programs.

Shillingford et al. (2013) also discussed setting boundaries and developing and maintaining positive support systems as methods of achieving wellness as marginalized CEs. Together, these findings affirm the importance of external validation during PID and indicate marginalized CPs must actively negotiate their identities and expressions to secure support.

In the process of negotiating personal identities, authentic expressions of self may be suppressed or conformed (Cohen & Kassan, 2018). If personal attributes are suppressed and not integrated with professional training during PID, marginalized CPs are not forming a professional identity that is genuine to who they are. Lack of genuineness as a CP is problematic in multiple ways. Genuineness is a central element to therapeutic ways of being, maintaining self-awareness, and providing ethical care (ACA, 2014; Spurgeon et al., 2012; Woo et al., 2014). Furthermore, across professional identity literature, genuineness is valued as an integral factor towards the development of a strong professional identity (Woo et al., 2014). This highlights the importance of nurturing authentic, genuine expressions of self during PID so that personal attributes may be integrated with professional training.

Scholars have recognized that solidifying identity as a counselor is important for successful lifelong growth as a CP (Gibson et al., 2015; Levitt & Hermon, 2009). PID throughout one's career is influenced by early experiences and identity as a CIT and counselor (Calley & Hawley, 2008; Milsom & Moran, 2015). This recognition indicates successful PID during training is critical. Because the process of PID begins with external validation, CEs play a

vital role in the successful development of all CPs. CEs hold a significant amount of power and influence on CITs and CEITs in their evaluative roles as educators and supervisors; and, CEs' roles as scholars, master clinicians, and leaders influence the counseling profession at large (Calley & Hawley, 2008). The professional identities of CEs directly influence those of all CPs. Therefore, marginalized CEs' experiences navigating personal identity negotiation during PID influence the identity negotiation processes within all marginalized CPs. This provides justification to address impacts of marginalizing experiences on personal identities during PID first with CEs.

**Summary.** Marginalized CPs face adverse experiences that have significant effects on the expressions, evaluation, and development of their professional identities. Marginalizing experiences often lead this population to negotiate aspects of their personal identities and suppress authentic expressions of self (Cohen & Kassan, 2018) in order to accommodate the norms of their surroundings and gather support and validation to develop professional identity. These shifts in expression impact the ways in which professional identity is consistently and equitably measured across CPs. Marginalization also negatively impacts PID as marginalized CPs receive inadequate external validation of their personal attributes and attempts to integrate into the profession. In order to address these pertinent issues, examination of marginalized CEs' experiences as they negotiate their personal identities is needed, because CEs' professional identities influence the makeup and developmental processes of all CPs' professional identities.

### **Summary**

In this section, I have reviewed ten common adverse experiences racial/ethnic minority, women, and LGBTQ+ CPs face during training in counselor education. These adverse experiences contribute to distinct forms of professional identity expression, difficulty evaluating

professional identity with current measures, and personal challenges in the PID process. Marginalized CPs often engage in cultural identity negotiation (Cohen & Kassan, 2018) to accommodate their settings and persist through experiences of marginalization (Haskins et al., 2013; Henfield et al., 2013; Shillingford et al., 2013). Although the process of identity negotiation is a method of persistence, it can lead to development of inauthentic professional identities, which is counterintuitive to our professional mission and vision to diversify the counseling profession (Kaplan & Gladding, 2011). Examining marginalized CEs' experiences of identity negotiation during PID may shed light onto ways of remedying these challenges and promoting genuine, authentic expressions of self for all marginalized CPs.

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have reviewed literature about professional identity, PID, and the experiences of marginalized CPs. This literature suggests marginalized CPs face adverse experiences within counselor education related to their personal identities, which negatively impact their professional identities and PID processes through the TTM. Although researchers have commonly examined marginalized CPs' adverse experiences in counselor education, there has not been an inquiry into how these experiences impact personal attributes or identity. Specifically, there is a gap in understanding how marginalized personal identity is impacted during the integration of personal attributes and professional training within PID. This gap presents questions regarding (1) how adverse experiences related to personal identity influence identity negotiation and engagement in the transformational tasks of PID, and (2) what happens to personal identity as each transformational task is or is not successfully completed? Answering these questions could add to the current body of professional identity and PID literature, with specific implications for encouraging authentic expressions of self during PID. In Chapter Three,

I present methodology for a study regarding marginalized CEs experiences negotiating personal identity during PID.

## **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

Reports of adverse experiences related to marginalized personal identities have been well documented throughout counseling literature. Implications for how such adverse experiences impact professional identity development (PID) are emerging as well. However, few researchers have examined how personal identity negotiation, a common ramification of adverse experiences, impacts PID and personal identity as a whole. The purpose of the following study was to examine the lived experiences of marginalized counselor educators (CEs) as they negotiated personal identity during PID, with consideration for impacts of adverse experiences, environmental contexts, and intersecting identities.

I begin this chapter stating my research questions. I provide a brief summary of qualitative methodology and the epistemological framework needed to answer my questions. Then, I discuss narrative inquiry as a specific methodology that compliments my epistemological foundation. I also include attention to my theoretical lens, the TTM of PID, and its use within narrative inquiry. Finally, I describe my utilization of narrative methodology for examining the lived experiences of marginalized CEs as they negotiate personal identity during PID including participants, recruitment, data collection procedures, and data analysis. I end the chapter with focused attention on rigor, ethical considerations, and my subjectivity as a researcher.

### **Research Questions**

The overarching question grounding my research inquiry is: What are the lived experiences of marginalized CEs as they negotiate their personal identities during PID? Considering my theoretical lens and context of inquiry, the following research questions guided my study: (1) How do personal attributes play a role in CEs' experiences negotiating identity during the PID process? (2) How are CEs' personal attributes impacted by engagement in the

PID process? (3) How do CEs express their personal identities in their professional settings? My questions are centered on understanding the essence of individuals' construction and adaptation of identity in a specific context—a focus that naturally aligns with qualitative research design and constructivist ways of knowing. In the following section, I will review qualitative methodology and its congruence with my inquiry and discuss constructivism as an appropriate epistemological stance to answer my research questions.

### **Qualitative Methodology**

Qualitative methodology offers insight into distinct phenomena and human experience by examining individuals' unique perspectives and how they make meaning of experiences situated in time and environmental context (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013). Qualitative methodology is “interpretive, experiential, situational, and personalistic” (Stake, 2001, p. 15). Researchers examine human experience from multiple points of view by gathering thick and rich description of events and experiences. Qualitative research relies on human perception and observation of events to make meaning, creating a naturalistic form of inquiry. Qualitative research is inductive; knowledge is created from a focus on particular objects, activities, or expressions of behavior that are unique to time and place. Qualitative research is personal, looks to the emic point of view of participants, and recognizes the researcher as a primary means of data collection and analysis. Thus, researcher self-awareness and reflexivity are vital in qualitative research (Stake, 2001).

Each of these components supports the naturalistic and subjective truth I sought to uncover about marginalized CEs' experiences negotiating personal identity during PID. My research questions are designed to elicit an inductive form of knowledge and meanings that are specific to time, place, behaviors, and individual expressions of identity, which indicates

qualitative research is a fitting methodology framework. Many methodological types of inquiry can be used to uncover meanings of phenomena. To determine which methodology is most suitable for the inquiry at hand, researchers consider their epistemologies, or ways of knowing, to guide their choices (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011).

Qualitative methodologies are grounded by a set of beliefs, philosophical assumptions, or epistemologies (Lincoln et al., 2011). An epistemology offers a perspective to the ways in which humans come to know and understand lived experiences (Freeman, deMarrais, Preissle, Roulston, & St. Pierre, 2007). As a researcher, I recognize the essence of marginalized CEs' experiences is created from individual worldviews that are influenced by diverse interactions with people and surrounding environments. This point of view aligns with a constructivist epistemology that asserts knowledge is transactional (Lincoln et al., 2011), and thus reality is co-constructed. This epistemological foundation led me to narrative inquiry as a specific methodology. In my quest to discover the whole of marginalized CEs' lived experiences negotiating personal identity during PID, narrative inquiry allowed me to explore various adverse experiences, historical contexts, and intersecting identities that play a part in marginalized CEs' narratives. In the next section, I will provide an overview of narrative inquiry and common methods of conducting narrative research to support my focused inquiry.

### **Narrative Inquiry**

Narrative researchers seek to understand phenomena and lived experiences through stories (Riessman, 2008). Stories exist in many forms including but not limited to texts, images, sounds, and spoken words. Stories are culturally bound, influenced by history and people, and provide subjective truths of human experience in the context of time and place (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Stories may be event-focused, experience-oriented, or centered on co-

construction between individuals (Andrews, Squire, & Tamboukou, 2008). Stories allow researchers to examine the wholeness of individual life experience; storytelling is a natural human method to compile the people, actions, contexts, and temporality within lived experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Narrative researchers can take multiple approaches to organize stories to capture such wholeness.

There are two types of narrative inquiry: paradigmatic and narrative (Polkinghorne, 1995). Paradigmatic-type focuses on gathering stories and creating taxonomies and categories of common elements within the stories. Narrative-type focuses on gathering insight about events or lived experiences and creating explanatory stories about their happenings (Polkinghorne, 1995). Regardless of type or form, narrative inquiry allows researchers to examine content, structure, chronology, or forms of lived experience through the telling and retelling of life story (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). In sum, narrative research includes the practice of storytelling, the narrative data itself, and the narrative analysis (Riessman, 2008).

Because narrative inquiry relies on stories for knowledge and meaning, and stories are culturally and socially influenced, narrative research is a co-constructed process between researcher and participants (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Riessman, 2008). The researcher's presence is influential to the way participants' stories are told and retold. Assumptions about language, social norms, means of communication, and views of self within a story impact how a story is told, heard, and interpreted (Riessman, 2008). The researcher subsequently plays an active role in the telling and retelling of story as meanings are negotiated between participants and researcher (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Overall, narrative inquiry can be conducted in numerous ways, as there are endless methods of collecting stories, interpreting their meanings, and retelling them (Andrews et al.,



2008). However, social researchers have common methodological processes in narrative research designs. To offer rationale for my methodology and procedures, I will provide an overview of qualitative research approaches used within narrative inquiry with specific focus on epistemology, theory, sampling, data collection and analysis, reporting, and rigor.

### **Epistemology and Theoretical Grounding**

Narrative methodology is rooted in constructivism (Riessman, 2008). Constructivists assert that knowledge and understanding are subjective and dependent upon human perception (Lincoln et al., 2011). Perceptions form through everyday human activities, or interactions between humans and their worlds, where individuals construct meaning in personal, cultural, and historical contexts. Multiple realities exist because individuals construct their worldviews in unique ways (Lincoln et al., 2011). In narrative inquiry, knowledge is co-constructed in storied form as individuals engage with others and the world around them to make sense of lived experiences over time (Riessman, 2008).

Narrative inquiry, as with most qualitative methodologies, requires groundedness in theory (Creswell, 2013). Theory provides a foundation for the type of narrative inquiry selected and guides narrative methods (Andrews et al., 2008). Because multiple realities exist, and knowledge is dependent on human interpretation of experience, narrative researchers must rely on theory to narrow and situate their inquiry within place and time (Riessman, 2008). The nature of the present inquiry is experience-oriented, where personal narratives of experience include past and present, self and others, and environmental contexts in the retelling of life experience (Andrews et al., 2008).

## **Narrative Method**

Narrative inquiry is a method and a finished product in which the process of co-constructing meaning from a shared story results in a new story (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The process of co-construction in narrative research includes sampling and data collection from multiple perspectives and four major types of analysis. I will expand on each source and type below.

**Sampling.** Narrative researchers use various sampling techniques to correspond with the nature and type of inquiry. For experience-centered narratives, narrative researchers generally rely on purposeful, criterion-specific sampling to identify and recruit participants (LeCompte & Preissle, 2003; Andrews et al., 2008). Purposeful sampling allows for intentionality in selecting participants that will contribute rich data about the specific experience under investigation. It is also important to consider relevant contexts of the experience during exploration (Clandinin & Connelly, 2008). Narrative researchers use purposeful sampling to gather multiple sources of data that offer depth of insight into an experience or event. The number of participants in narrative studies ranges broadly. Some studies include only one participant and others include 40 participants (Baker & Edwards, 2012; Lyons & Roulstone, 2018). However, narrative researchers typically seek between 8-12 participants (Andrews et al., 2008).

**Data collection.** Narrative researchers commonly seek multiple types of information to gather depth of meaning from multiple perspectives in a story of experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Common methods include individual and group interviews, field observations, and examining visual texts and media (Andrews et al., 2008). Researchers often conduct semi-structured interviews to allow participants to reflect on their unique experiences and perspectives within some bounds of the research inquiry; researchers also have flexibility in their roles to co-

construct story and meaning depending on participants' responses (Riessman, 2008). Because co-construction is fundamental to narrative research, some researchers conduct second interviews to explore "contradictions, silences, hesitations, strong or unusual patterns of emotion" (Andrews et al., 2008, p. 44) from the first interview and provide participants with an opportunity to offer new insight or corrections to the stories of their experiences.

Other researchers may elicit texts or media from participants (e.g., diaries, journals, or letters) as a secondary form of data collection (Andrews et al., 2008). In addition to interviews, written transcripts play an important role in the narrative research process. Riessman (2008) noted transcripts "straddle a border between speech and writing" (p. 29). Different meanings can be made from written text compared to oral narratives. Narrative researchers and participants commonly review transcripts together to add in gaps, offer corrections, and set the stage for analysis to make meaning (Riessman, 2008).

**Analysis.** There are four major types of narrative analysis: thematic, structural, dialogic/performative, and visual (Riessman, 2008). Thematic analysis emphasizes what is said, not how it is told or the order in which it is told. Researchers identify components of co-constructed stories, compose meanings of individual units, then create themes of experience throughout stories (Riessman, 2008; Braun & Clarke, 2006). Structural analysis emphasizes the way a story is told, including the order of telling. Various narrative methodologists have offered methods to explore structure. The Labovian method (1972) focuses on language functions, clauses, and phrasing. Methods inspired by Gee (1991) focus on analysis of speech, often through poetic form, and developing new discourse. The co-construction type of narrative research is commonly accompanied by structural analysis (Riessman, 2008). Dialogic/performative analysis examines "how talk among speakers is interactively

(dialogically) produced and performed as a narrative” (Riessman, 2008, p. 105).

Dialogic/performative analysis interrogates the “who” within a story, and examines why the story was told; the focus is more on environmental contexts in which the story was told rather than content of the story. Visual analysis is a participatory method of research used to interpret meaning from images, texts, performance art, and other visual media. Researchers may implement visual media as an additional data source to elicit expressions of human experience that can be analyzed for its content and structure (Riessman, 2008).

Throughout each type of analysis, data are transcribed into written text, and coding is used to derive meaning from participants’ stories (Andrews et al., 2008). Various types of coding are used to correspond with specific analyses. For example, in vivo, open, or descriptive coding are used for thematic analysis, and structural or procedural coding are used for structural analysis (Saldaña, 2016). Researchers can examine codes for common themes, repeating structures, salient meanings, or interactional processes that offer summaries of findings and lead to data reporting.

### **Data Reporting**

Narrative research is commonly reported in new storied form (Andrews et al., 2008), and researcher and participants often create the new form together. Narrative reports may be shaped composites of participants’ stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), poems (Gee, 1991), groups of clauses (Labov, 1972), or letters (McIntosh, Barter, & Tregidga, 2014). Researchers aim to reflect participants’ voices in the retelling of stories, but researchers recognize meanings are co-constructed (Riessman, 2008). Narrative researchers strive to consider personal experiences, cultural environments, and historical contexts of all parties throughout the research process, including the data report.

## **Rigor in Narrative Inquiry**

Rigor, or trustworthiness, in qualitative research is achieved when methodological decisions are rooted in methodological integrity (Levitt, Motulsky, Wertz, Morrow, & Ponterotto, 2017). Trustworthiness has been described as the degree to which researchers and audiences believe that a research inquiry has accurately captured the phenomena of inquiry (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Methodological integrity is “the methodological basis of that confidence” (Levitt et al., 2017, p. 9). Researchers establish integrity “when the research designs and procedures support the research goals and respect the researcher’s approaches to the inquiry, and [the inquiry is] tailored for fundamental characteristics of the subject matter and the investigators” (p. 9-10). Two processes, fidelity and integrity, support methodological integrity. Researchers consider characteristics of the research inquiry and participants, such as researcher and participant identities or statuses, sources of data, and communication methods.

Researchers consider fidelity and utility throughout the duration of the research study. Fidelity to the subject matter “is the process by which researchers develop and maintain allegiance to the phenomenon under study as it is conceived within their tradition of inquiry” (p. 2). Utility in achieving research goals “is the process by which researchers select procedures to generate insightful findings that usefully answer their research questions” (p. 2). Because methodological integrity is a foundational principle of trustworthiness rather than a set of concrete procedures, researchers establish fidelity and utility uniquely depending on the specific research inquiry.

In narrative inquiry, fidelity to the subject matter includes commitment to the co-constructive foundation of narrative research. Member checking is a common method used to ensure fidelity. Researchers can share transcripts and their interpretations of meaning as a

member checking technique. This can serve as a second opportunity for informed consent, as participants give voice to what should and should not be included in the final report (Riessman, 2008). Triangulation methods, including peer debriefing and gathering multiple sources of data, also are used to maintain fidelity and co-construction (Andrews et al., 2008).

Another component of fidelity in narrative inquiry is ensuring methodological decisions are grounded in theory and directly relate to the purpose of the inquiry. Memoing and journaling are used in narrative research to document researchers' actions and their purposes for actions throughout the research process (Andrews et al., 2008; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

In terms of utility, research design and procedures must reflect the unique, contextual experiences of participant storytellers. However, research goals include consideration for applicability and meaningfulness of the study for its audience and individuals beyond the scope of the study. Thus, narrative researchers promote utility by situating the inquiry within historical and cultural contexts so that depth of experience is conveyed with consideration for diverse points of view. Researchers also provide clear description of the nature of the inquiry and relevant contexts, both of which influence the co-constructed meanings of participants' stories (Andrews et al., 2008).

Researcher reflexivity is also used throughout narrative research as a method to promote integrity and maintain the co-constructive nature of narrative inquiry (Riessman, 2008). Narrative researchers commonly include subjectivity statements within their reports to position themselves in the research, including assumptions, biases, and personal reactions to the topic of inquiry (Preissle, 2008). Consistent journaling and memoing are used to document researchers' personal experiences throughout the research process, which provides rigor and quality to the

research (Tracy, 2010).

## **Summary**

Narrative inquiry is a co-constructed process of identifying and interpreting lived experiences through telling and retelling story (Riessman, 2008). Narrative inquiry is an individualized, co-constructed, and inductive form of qualitative methodology. The research inquiry and all its specific contexts dictate the methods and procedures used to conduct narrative research. Considering my particular inquiry, narrative methodology offers a flexible framework to explore diverse experiences with consideration of multiple sources of environmental influence. Furthermore, the process of PID within the TTM requires CEs to engage with other professionals and gather experience in various settings (Gibson et al., 2015). Thus, a methodological framework that explores the whole of experience through a similar co-constructed process is appropriate. Overall, narrative methodology allowed me to lean into marginalized CEs' experiences in a distinct context, search for shared meanings, and co-construct a retelling of their stories that gave voice to our perceived reality of negotiating personal identity during PID as a marginalized CE. My methodology to lean in, search, and co-construct is detailed in the next section.

## **Methodology**

From a narrative point of view, identity is how one constructs an understanding of self through lived experience, which is recorded through life story (telling and retelling of experience or events) in the midst of historical contexts, time, and place (Habermas & Köber, 2015). Furthermore, "personal identity itself is constructed in the creation and sharing of the life story" (Cohler & Hammock, 2006, p. 153). Thus, experience-oriented narrative inquiry is a fitting

methodological framework to explore experiences negotiating personal identity in the context of counselor education.

I used the TTM of PID as a theoretical lens to situate this inquiry (Dollarhide et al., 2013; Gibson et al., 2015). The TTM has been adapted for specific professional roles, and each role includes unique transformational tasks (Gibson et al., 2010; Gibson et al., 2015). However, the process of completing the transformational tasks appears the same across professional role distinctions. I considered the transformational tasks marginalized CEs encounter as they grow from CIT to counselor to CEIT and eventually CE as contextual factors during the research process. However, the emphasis for my inquiry focused on participants' experiences negotiating personal identity to engage in the process of PID rather than completing specific tasks. With all considerations above in mind, I will discuss procedures used to implement a narrative inquiry study in the next section.

### **Procedures**

In this section, I will review procedures used in this study. I will describe sampling and recruitment of participants, data collection, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

#### **Participant Sampling**

In Chapter Two, I provided an overview of adverse experiences racial and ethnic minorities, women, and LGBTQ+ identifying CPs face due to their marginalized personal identities. Marginalized CEs in particular play a significant role in navigating these experiences. This literature indicated significant shared experiences among the three identity groups. Narrative inquiry values multiple perspectives in the quest to discover depth of lived experience. Thus, using a diverse sample of marginalized CEs allowed me to uncover common experiences of negotiating personal identity across participants. A diverse sample specifically allowed me to



co-construct a rich, detailed composite narrative that may shed light onto marginalizing experiences in general.

I used criterion-based network selection to attain a purposeful, criterion-specific group (LeCompte & Preissle, 2003). Consistent with the narrative inquiry frame, I used purposeful sampling to identify CEs who had experienced marginalization because of their personal identities. For my study, I included participants who identify as racial or ethnic minorities, women, and/or LGBTQ+. Participants only needed to identify with one group to be included in this study.

Although adverse experiences impact all marginalized CPs, a review of relevant literature indicated marginalized CEs are central figures in the experiences of all CPs and their PID processes. Because PID begins in training, I sought CEs who have recently completed their training so that they could reflect on their development from CEIT to CE (Dollarhide et al., 2013; Gibson et al., 2015). Specifically, I sought participants who earned doctoral degrees in counselor education and supervision within the past three years and are currently employed as CEs in CACREP-accredited programs.

Qualitative researchers historically vary in their perceptions of the number of participants needed to reach saturation (Baker & Edwards, 2012). Saturation is a “process in which the researcher continues to sample relevant cases until no new theoretical insights are being gleaned from the data,” and categorization of data can take place (Baker & Edwards, 2012, p. 18). Number of participants needed largely depends on the nature of one’s inquiry, resources, and external expectations from groups such as dissertation committees or editorial boards for scholarly journals (Baker & Edwards, 2012). Multiple published qualitative studies in counselor education included sample sizes of 8-12 participants (Henfield et al., 2011; Henfield et al., 2013;

Nelson, 2003; Shillingford et al., 2013). This is complementary to narrative inquiry norms for sampling. Narrative inquiry researchers typically seek smaller sample sizes with specific criteria for participation, because the nature of data collected is very detailed. Stories are examined for personal, cultural, and historical contexts (Andrews et al., 2008). With these considerations in mind, I sought a sample of 8-12 participants.

### **Participants**

Ultimately, I acquired a sample of eight participants. Fifteen individuals responded to the screening and demographic form, but only eight individuals were full-time faculty in CACREP-accredited programs, identified as a racial/ethnic minority, woman, and/or LGBTQ+ person, and received their doctoral degrees between 2015-2018. To protect participants' confidentiality, I have chosen to report aggregate participant demographics in table 3.1.

**Table 3.1 Participant Demographics**

<b>Race</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	<b>Age</b>
Asian American (1)	*Mexican/Native	Female (7)	Heterosexual (5)	$\bar{x} = 32.25$
African American (2)	American (1)	Male (1)	Pansexual (1)	M = 31.5
Black (1)			Queer (1)	Min = 29
Multiracial (1)			Bisexual (1)	Max = 38
White (2)				
*Other (1)				

\*Corresponding demographics noted for clarity

## **Recruitment**

Recruitment in narrative inquiry includes seeking participants who can offer depth of insight to a particular experience or event (Riessman, 2008). For this inquiry, I intentionally recruited participants with consideration for vulnerability of marginalized status and my power and privilege in my role as a researcher. I crafted a recruitment email (see Appendix A) to provide clear intentions and purposes of this research study. I sought participants via email through three counseling professional listservs: (1) CESNET, which is targeted at counselor education faculty and students; (2) DIVERSEGRAD-L, a multicultural/cross-cultural and diversity issues in counseling listserv for counselors, counselor educators, and other helping professionals in the U.S. and Canada; and (3) ALGBTIC-L, an information exchange for professionals interested in LGBTQ+ issues. I also recruited participants by emailing program chairs of CACREP-accredited programs across the U.S. (see Appendix B). I also used snowball sampling methods as individuals responded to the research participation request (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013).

Within the request for participants, I provided a link to a GoogleForm survey (see Appendix C) to screen potential participants, gather demographic information, and request that they provide their email addresses. The survey included questions to verify professional role as a CE, number of years past degree completion, and identification with at least one of the designated marginalized groups listed above. After screening potential participants through this survey, I aimed to select participants with even representation across the demographic criteria groups. I looked to select participants who ranged in age and region of employment to ensure diversity of the sample as well. I contacted each participant via email (see Appendix D) including an informed consent statement (see Appendix E) that outlines the purpose of the study

and requirements for participation. Participants were asked to sign the informed consent statement. After screening potential participants and collecting consent, I contacted each participant via email to establish a time to conduct the narrative interview (see Appendix F). In this email, I also included a preview of my theoretical framework and interview questions to help situate our conversation about their experiences (see Appendix G).

### **Data Collection**

The individual interview is the most common primary method used to gather data within the experience-centered approach to narrative inquiry (Andrews et al., 2008). The narrative interview is distinguished by a dialogically produced narrative that seeks to co-construct meaning through shared story (Riessman, 2008). Most experience-oriented narrative studies implement semi-structured interviews (Andrews et al., 2008). For the purposes of this study, I conducted semi-structured interviews via ZOOM, an end-to-end encrypted video conferencing software. Throughout the interviews, I used a semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix H) that included open-ended questions designed to allow participants to share experiences related to negotiating personal and professional identities (Riessman, 2008). I used probes to elicit depth of experience depending on participants' responses, with particular emphasis on experiences related to the research questions (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Roulston, 2010). Interviews were audio-recorded and lasted approximately 60-90 minutes; interviews were transcribed verbatim for data analysis (Davidson, 2009).

More than one method of data collection is preferred for narrative research studies to offer multiple perspectives (Riessman, 2008). For the purposes of this study, I asked participants to provide written text, a visual form of narrative data, in the form of a letter (McIntosh et al., 2014; Riessman, 2008). After the individual interview, I asked participants to reflect on the

experience of retelling their story of negotiating identity during PID. Then, I asked that they craft a written letter addressed to their younger selves that offered advice, instruction, or support for navigating the process of identity negotiation during PID. I prompted participants via email (see Appendix I) to send letters via UT Vault, a HIPAA and FERPA compliance communication system. Letters were combined with interview transcriptions for data analysis.

### **Data Analysis**

Before data analysis began, I reviewed transcripts with audio recordings for accuracy, corrected any mistakes, and removed any identifying information (e.g., name of program or advisor). Then, I sent transcripts to each participant via UT Vault (see Appendix J). Participants were asked to provide feedback and clarification of their shared experiences, including any desire to mask stories or details they do not want included in written reports (Riessman, 2008). Participants were given one week to provide feedback before I moved into analysis. I conducted narrative thematic analysis to identify patterns of meaning across participants' stories (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Riessman, 2008). I situated my analysis within a paradigmatic-type narrative framework to analyze participants' stories and create categories of common components across them (Polkinghorne, 1995). This allowed me to focus on the "what" in participants' stories and organize content of the experience-oriented narratives into units of meaning (Andrews et al., 2008).

To begin thematic narrative analysis, I first familiarized myself with the data by reading over each individual transcript without indicating codes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I memoed, or documented, initial reactions or ideas that informed initial coding in the next step. Step two is to generate initial codes. I used Dedoose, a qualitative research software designed to organize and analyze textual data, to organize, store, and code individual interviews. Saldaña (2016)

recommended two cycles of initial coding to examine lived experience with depth. In my first cycle of initial coding, I implemented narrative coding for each individual interview (Saldaña, 2016). Narrative coding includes examining transcripts line-by-line for keywords and concepts with consideration for multiple parts of a story such as people, places, and events (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Common elements across participant stories included description of an adverse event, individuals involved, location and climate, feelings associated with the event, and action steps to move forward. Using researcher triangulation, my auditor/peer debriefer completed this same process for three randomly selected transcripts. Overall, 503 narrative codes were applied to 1212 excerpts from participants' stories. At the conclusion of initial coding, we debriefed to discuss similarities and differences between selected transcripts and discuss relevant memos (Seale, 1999).

For the second cycle of coding, I revisited each transcript and implemented pattern coding to begin narrowing individual concepts into patterns or themes of meaning (Saldaña, 2016). My peer debriefer also conducted pattern coding individually for the previously selected transcripts. Pattern codes were derived to summarize corresponding groups of narrative codes. For example, excerpts that were given a narrative code such as "fear, misunderstood, or invalidated" were assigned a pattern code of "diminishment." Once the two cycles of independent coding were complete, my peer debriefer and I again discussed similarities and differences between patterns and discussed relevant memos.

After debriefing, I moved into the third step of thematic analysis by reviewing codes and identifying initial themes within each individual transcript (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Codes were condensed into summarized units of meaning that reflected the thematic whole of each participant's unique experience. For example, codes related to location and climate were

assigned an initial theme of “context.” Each transcript was assigned an average of seven initial themes.

At this point, I member checked again by sending transcripts with initial identified themes via UT Vault (see Appendix J); participants had an opportunity to express agreement or disagreement with the identified themes, and I was able to adjust language or topic focus if needed (Riessman, 2008). Participants were given one week to offer feedback before I moved into step four. Six of eight participants responded to the member check email. Five of six participants affirmed content and structure of their initial themes. Only one participant offered a slight language edit to one initial theme. Initial themes were maintained in the audit trail, but preserved from final reporting to preserve confidentiality.

After the second round of member checking, I moved into step four of thematic analysis by reviewing themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). First, I reviewed themes for coherence between the theme and the coded extracts in individual transcripts; I ensured the theme was supported by multiple homogenous codes and not better accounted for under a separate theme. Second, I reviewed themes for coherence across the entire data set; I ensured a theme was supported by coded extracts from multiple transcripts. I consolidated or eliminated themes in the search for coherence. In the fifth step, I named and defined themes based on relevance to the research questions and theoretical focus. My peer debriefer reviewed identified themes and definitions by checking for clarity and relevance to the research questions and theoretical focus. A summary code book including themes, key corresponding descriptive codes, and reference to excerpt examples is included in Appendix L.

Finally, the sixth step is to create a report of findings. In this step, I used themes to create a composite first person narrative of participants’ experiences negotiating identity during PID



(Riessman, 2008; Wertz, Nosek, McNiesh, & Marlow, 2011). A composite narrative is a retold story that includes components from multiple participants' perspectives and includes their words (Riessman, 2008). The first person perspective allows researchers to “blend the voices of the participants with those of the researcher, emphasizing the connectedness, the “we” among all participants, researchers, and listeners” (Wertz et al., 2011, p. 1). A composite first person narrative appropriately reflects narrative inquiry as a method and a product, and it displayed the shared, co-constructed meanings of a process that connects this distinct group of marginalized CEs. The composite was shared with participants via email so that they could see how they were reflected in the combined story (see Appendix K).

### **Promoting Rigor and Trustworthiness**

I implemented procedures to promote methodological integrity throughout this study, including fidelity to the subject matter and utility in achieving goals (Levitt et al., 2017). Prior to conducting this study, I facilitated a pilot individual interview with a faculty member in my current program. I also completed the interview as a participant. Using the same interview guide, my peer debriefer conducted the interview with me. After the interview, I wrote a letter to my younger self as described above. I memoed about my experiences participating in the interview and constructing a letter. Experiencing the interview and letter writing as a participant allowed me to name my subjectivities and experiences negotiating personal identity, which contributed to my reflexive practice as a narrative researcher.

To maintain fidelity to the subject matter, I used researcher and data triangulation to ensure findings were accurate reflections of participants' stories. I implemented member checking at multiple points during this study to support the co-constructive nature of narrative inquiry and provide a method of adjusting credibility.

I also sought an auditor/peer debriefer to assist me throughout my research study. I selected a peer who has training to provide feedback regarding data collection, analysis, and subjectivity as a researcher. I selected a peer who carries different racial and sexual orientation identities than my own to expand my perspectives and challenge my subjectivities as I engaged with participants. My peer served as a debriefing partner for me after conducting individual interviews and served as a second coder for data analysis of transcripts, including identifying and clarifying emerging themes from participants' stories. My peer also recorded reflexive memos throughout data analysis.

Throughout analysis, I engaged in memoing; I documented my thoughts, feelings, and reactions to participants' stories. I noted emergences of my subjectivities and described triangulating methods used to ensure ethical co-construction of participants' stories were maintained (Riessman, 2008; Stake, 2001). Researcher reflexivity is vital to effective narrative inquiry research, and memoing allowed me to justify research decisions. Furthermore, I maintained an audit trail, which my peer debriefer reviewed before and after data analysis. To ensure utility, I focused my descriptions and interpretations of meaning based on the participants within my study. I also implemented a semi-structured interview guide that narrowed and situated my inquiry into appropriate historical contexts; analysis and written findings reflected the participants' stories and the specific inquiry with consideration for my theoretical focus.

### **Ethical Considerations**

I maintained ethical standards of research by gathering approval from my institution's Institutional Review Board prior to implementation of this research (see Appendix N). Throughout the study, I maintained confidentiality of participants through use of participant-selected pseudonyms and password-protected servers and documents. Sharing personal

narratives can evoke feelings of vulnerability in personal and professional contexts; therefore, I promoted safety of potential participants by clarifying all purposes and intents of this research, including publication, before they participated in the study. I also provided participants with an opportunity to redact certain stories or details through multiple points of member checking.

### **Researcher Subjectivity**

It is important to note my identity as a bisexual, Appalachian, White, cisgender woman, counselor educator-in-training, as I believe it influenced my engagement in this research. Because PID is understood as the unique integration of personal and professional attributes, I recognize that my own professional development colors my understanding of the process and its applications in my field. My personal, cultural identity is important to the way I view professional identity, construct it, inquire about it, and interpret its conceptual and applied development. As a result, my personal inputs and experiences, along with my professional viewpoints and experiences, were significant throughout this research effort (Preissle, 2008).

I have elected to share the personal, cultural identities above, because they are the most salient to my understanding of self in my current place in time. Some aspects of my identity have resulted in experiences of marginalization. Others have given me privilege and access. It is my personal belief that all humans are intersectional, existing with both privileged and marginalized identities that are perceived and expressed differently depending on surrounding environments. My intersectional way of being prohibits me from being placed in one category over another. I cannot be divided, and my experiences cannot be siloed. It is the interactions between marginalization and privilege that ultimately guide the formation and expression of my identity. Balancing these interactions led me to explore methods of negotiating self to accommodate

setting. My personal narrative is ill-defined and scattered across time. But, there is a method to my process that is relevant to the research inquiry at hand. I expand upon it next.

My experiences negotiating my personal identities during the formation of my professional identity are extremely nuanced and contextual. I do not know when or how I started, but I enter spaces cautiously. I survey my surroundings and people within them before I give my fullest self in language and interactions. I choose words carefully. I choose topics of discussion really carefully. I adhere to more rigid traditional gender norms in my appearance when I am in professional spaces. My cultural identity as a queer Appalachian woman can contradict itself at times. The Appalachian in me seeking to join in, not disturb the peace; but the queer woman who has been encouraged and validated seeks to speak up, use my voice for myself and others. I have learned how to do both but always keeping in mind that others may take my words with a grain of salt. I strategically yield certain tones in my voice to ensure I am reaching others in a way that conveys homogeneity between us. I do this so that they want to be around me and listen to my experiences despite differences between us. I speculate that they might think we could share experiences. Connecting with other professionals is a key part of my PID process. So, I negotiate my personal identities in these ways to ensure others see me as competent and capable, inform me of opportunities to grow, and support my development.

But in truth, my experiences are not like most others I have encountered in this profession. I carry marginalized identities and face discrimination in unique ways, often invisibly. But, I have so much privilege in my Whiteness and social class that I can navigate many spaces with ease. I sit with myself and ask, but how do you navigate with such ease, and at what cost? Where does my most genuine self exist? It lives somewhere in the midst of my professional being, but I cannot be fully myself and receive certain components needed for my

PID process. Thus, I give up some access to supports because they make me feel unseen. I have to put effort into finding resources and individuals that will support my growth as a professional and queer Appalachian woman. I am a vigilant, active agent in my growth and membership in this profession.

With all of this in mind, I carry two key assumptions about other marginalized counseling professionals, especially CEs, as they engage in identity negotiation: (1) they are vigilant, active agents in their development, and (2) they are keenly intuitive and observant of their surroundings, otherwise they may not be likely to persist. These assumptions, and the conscious self-awareness of my experiences highlighted above, make up only a small piece of my subjectivity as a researcher. A priority throughout this narrative inquiry was to continually reflect and document my reactions and methodological decisions. I cannot and did not remove myself from the co-constructed stories and meanings of shared experiences related to the research topic. However, I was transparent to the best of my ability and revealed ways I inserted my own views and experiences into the co-constructed research process.

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I provided an overview of qualitative methodology to support narrative inquiry as a specific methodology for this study. Narrative inquiry was a fitting framework to support the constructive means of discovery needed to examine the experiences of marginalized CEs as they negotiated personal identity during PID. I reviewed procedures used to answer my research questions about this topic. I concluded this chapter with recognition of my subjectivity as a researcher and its impacts to the current inquiry.

## **CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS**

In this chapter, I offer findings from eight participants' shared experiences negotiating marginalized identity during PID. A narrative thematic analysis of eight individual interviews and letters yielded five major themes: a) the intersectional Self, b) context, c) intersectional navigation, d) impacts on the Self, and e) the confluence. I use the term Self as a proper noun throughout this chapter to personify the lower-case, inanimate descriptive term 'self'. Because participants are living beings, Self is used to reflect such life.

I begin the chapter with a composite first person narrative as a method of retelling participants' shared stories and introducing thematic findings. Then, I expand upon the five major themes derived from participants' experiences, including definitions, excerpt examples, and discussion of subthemes to support each major theme. As I present these findings, I intentionally move between using pseudonyms assigned to participants and anonymously referring to participants to protect their identities within the small field of counselor education.

### **Composite Narrative**

In this section, I provide a reflexive, composite narrative detailing participants' thematic experiences with the phenomenon of identity negotiation during PID. Composite narratives written from a first person voice use "I" or "we" pronouns to retell story with texture and display the author's interpretation and connectedness to the research (Wertz et al., 2011). I will use the pronoun "we" to describe shared experience with and shared impact of the phenomenon of identity negotiation during PID. My purpose for this language choice is to speak with my participants. I aim to convey my interpretations of participants' experiences, their understandings and expressions of Self, and my unity with these CEs. Despite many intersectional differences, we share a common professional identity and vision for a more inclusive profession. My words

are written in plain text, direct quotes from participants are italicized, and themes are bolded. Pronouns and verbs within participant quotes have been partially edited to reflect a collective first-person voice.

### **This is Us: Surviving, Evolving, Ready for Revolution**

We are unique, distinct, yet united. Our stories vary—the people within them, the contexts around them, the voices and meanings throughout them. But, we share at least two factors that elicit similar challenges and similar processes of growth. We are counselor educators, and we carry some marginalized identity. We also share a common goal: authentic integration and expression of our intersectional selves in our professional environments. We strive for this but recognize there are limits, created in part by a [*profession*] *that was not meant for people in the margins*. Our authenticity is influenced by more than our professional climate. Our expressions of Self are dynamic, shifting over time and experiences in many **contexts**. Experience in one context seeps into another. **We are intersectional** and so are our lived experiences. So is our development. So are our needs for growth. *We experience privilege and face marginalization* simultaneously, because the composition of our identities is influenced by *histories of oppression* and structures of power. Our intersections cannot be unbound. Yet, we live in systems that do not often embrace our intersections nor reflect intersectional praxis.

When we are confronted with adversity that calls to question our expressions of Self, we work against our intersectionality and deconstruct. We question who and how we can be. We experience diminishment, *discouragement, fear, isolation, lack of voice, lack of power; we feel that we have to hide, are not enough; we are misunderstood*. We reach **a confluence**, like two streams of water merging, pooling, and searching for a new flow forward. A confluence of **impact on our experiences of Self** and a process of **intersectional navigation**, where

integration of personal and professional identity is challenged. We deconstruct our intersections to locate the identity that may be targeted as a source of conflict.

Then, we negotiate that identity component or expression to survive, to thrive, to model, to hopefully *change the system from within* by momentarily joining it. We negotiate based on how we believe *others perceive us*, what they *expect of us*, what we need to do to *remain professional*. We are active agents in navigating our contexts to have security and safety, with intent to develop and *express authentically over time*. But this strategic navigation process is not always readily available to us. There are moments when we subconsciously suppress aspects of Self because context tells us we may be at risk for adversity. We negotiate, navigate, experience impact without conscious awareness at times. It is tiring, *it is ongoing*, and *we are consistently reflexive*. The *emotional labor is exhausting*.

There are times when enough is enough. We are our authentic selves in spite of all. And, there are times when we enter contexts that give us *freedom to express authentically*. *We are encouraged, validated, understood*. We have encountered mentors and environments susceptible to an inclusive intersectional Self that fuels our authentic expression and integration of personal and professional Self. These experiences are deeply influential to our growth as we shift from context to context. They prepare us for the confluence, give us strength, remind us *we are worthy, we belong, we matter, we are a work in progress*, and *our dedication to growth is enough*.

The confluence is not universally present, but we inevitably drift into its pool. It presents itself uniquely depending upon its surrounding contexts, including but not limited to cultural climate, positions of power, individual beliefs, stereotypes, and specific acts of discrimination. So we have learned, and *we continue to stay alert*, ready to enter the confluence, embrace its



impact, navigate its murky waters, and move forward. Our authentic Self follows us through, even if it *remains hidden within*. Our goal is not to leave authenticity behind, but shelter it until the moment we feel power to let it breathe fully.

The problem is, in some ways we are still waiting to grasp that power. So much is out of our control in the context of higher education; *there is more risk without tenure*. And, some aspects of our authentic selves are consistently *at odds with expectations*. There is *pressure to present* in prescribed ways. Experience in one context seeps into another, an interwoven system. As we merge further into our professional identities, we recognize a *need to conform, not only to survive in the system but hopefully to change it from the inside out*. Then we *advocate for other marginalized* professionals around us or coming in behind us so that they do not have to experience the confluence in the same manner that we did. We advocate, *most vehemently for authenticity*. *This gives us hope*. It gives us reason to negotiate if necessary to survive, but it also gives us reason to *speak up, not censor our authentic expressions, to model for our students*. Our senses of Self are largely validated in the advocacy we are able to do for other marginalized professionals, clients, and communities.

Our sacrifice is worth it. Because in the end, *we keep going*. *Counselor education involves a journey that is beautiful, yet tragic and emotional*. And we choose it every day. We continue to grow, albeit in unique ways, our personal and professional identities evolving in a feedback loop. Our *dedication to growth* leads us towards authentic integration. We know that when our voices are not only heard, but *our message is internalized* within the core of our professional values and actions, our field will thrive. *We will thrive*. And so will those that we serve. *We are here, and we are ready*.

To the structures of and people in power that perpetuate a discourse insusceptible to intersectional beings and action, that continue to marginalize our identities and experiences, *fuckin' move out of the way so that we can do what actually needs to be done*. It is time to redirect the confluence, so our waters can flow freely, fully, authentically. *Negotiation will be ongoing*; we cannot stop the need to navigate once we enter the water. But, we can shift the contexts that elicit the confluence. Adapting them to shape a body of water that is more susceptible to diverse individuals and entities entering it. Easing the navigation process, where genuine integration is more readily possible. We can demonstrate and discuss *intersectionality in our curriculum, scholarship, and interpersonal relationships*. Create *accessible opportunities* for professional development. *Value contributions to the field beyond publication and presentations*. Continuously *engage in reflexive work, hold each other accountable* to it, and *promote reflexivity within our students*. *Increase diverse representation in leadership*.

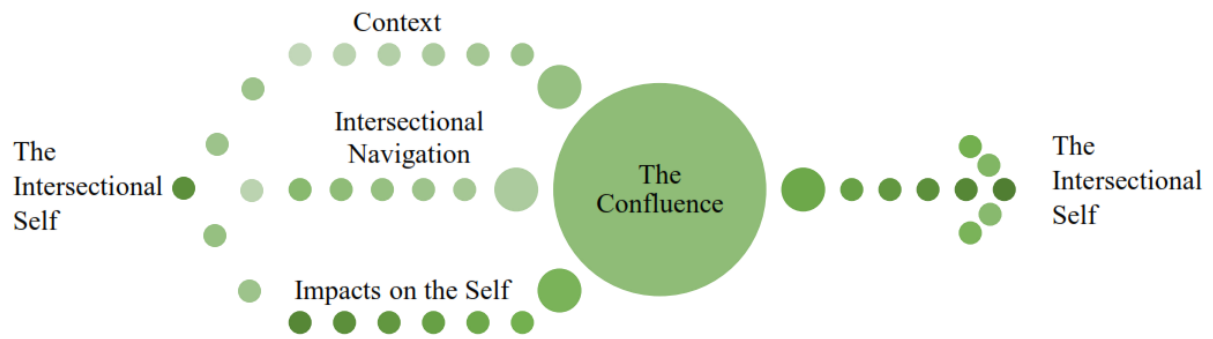
But, *we need more than a seat at the table*, we need room to embody inclusion, *we need power*. Power to integrate our personal and professional selves, engage in validating interpersonal relationships, and express our authentic, intersectional selves across contexts. We need power to *join together as a community*, with members of all backgrounds, to shift our professional culture. If the profession hopes to increase diversity, it needs to *take a step back and be more reflective because we never really learned intersectionality*. Take hold of the intersections of identities, expressions, and lived experiences that exist within it and *nurture them*. Do not question, do not seek to mold, do not hush. *Embrace, empower, evolve*.

### **Major Themes**

The composite narrative serves as an integrated retelling of participants' experiences from a collective, thematic point of view. Description of the five major themes was integrated

throughout the composite, but more detailed discussion of individual themes is necessary to clarify the intricacies within the collective stories and call to action that was the composite narrative. In this section, I discuss five major themes constructed to describe participants' experiences negotiating marginalized identity during PID: a) the intersectional Self, b) context, c) intersectional navigation, d) impacts on the Self, and e) the confluence. I offer definitions, excerpt examples, and explore subthemes to support each major theme.

As a visual introduction to major themes, Figure 4.1 illustrates participants' thematic experiences negotiating identity during PID. Beginning with *the intersectional Self* on the left side of the figure, participants described encounters with adversity that elicited questioning experience and environment. *Context*, the overarching theme at the top of the figure, influenced the ways in which participants engaged in *intersectional navigation* and experienced *impacts on the Self* as a result of adversity. As participants experienced the latter two themes simultaneously, they flowed into the *confluence*. Experiences merged, intersections of Self were impacted, decisions to express or suppress Self were made, and the intersectional Self reemerged. As new forms of adversity and contexts presented themselves, participants reengaged in this process—a cyclical form of navigation and growth.



**Figure 4.1** Thematic Experiences Negotiating Identity during PID

Although I present five distinct themes of participants' lived experiences, it is important to note all five themes are interrelated. Participants' identities and stories were intersectional. I distinguish each theme with definitions and distinct examples; however, the essence of the phenomenon of identity negotiation during PID is inherently intersectional and cannot be understood as existing or occurring in silo. I ordered themes in the following manner to offer clarity to this innate intersectionality. I begin with the intersectional Self as a means to introduce the audience to the components and expressions of Self participants shared throughout their stories. I discuss context next because it sets the stage for understanding processes of intersectional navigation and ways in which the intersectional Self is impacted by those processes. I end with the confluence as a theme that summarizes the intersectionality of participants' identities and lived experiences.

### **The Intersectional Self**

The intersectional Self describes participants' components and expressions of self. Development is ongoing, and the intersectional Self describes the process of striving towards integration and authenticity. Self embodied participants' personal and professional identity components and expressions. At times participants clearly distinguished personal and professional ways of being, but at other times, personal and professional were interwoven. Furthermore, participants highlighted multiple components, labels, and shifting processes within their personal and professional identities. As a result, I use the term "intersectional" to describe the vast intersections of identity that encompassed participants' experiences of Self. Two subthemes supported the identification and development of the intersectional Self: *authenticity* and *development*.

**Authenticity.** Authenticity entailed description and expression of Self in its authentic form. Participants shared aspects of their identities as personal demographic identifiers (e.g., woman, Black, Christian), professional roles (e.g., advocate, educator, mentor), and expressive traits (e.g., gentle, transparent, jokey). Although participants highlighted particular aspects of Self in distinct moments of their stories, they consistently circled back to how their various aspects of Self are interwoven. Lee noted “how important it is to name all of our identities, because we are not just one thing, but we are all of those things.” And, one participant’s story began with, “while I identify as multiracial, half black, half white, I would say my career is a lot of who I am. I would also say though that I’m an ally and an advocate.”

Authenticity encompassed participants’ agency to express more authentically in professional spaces. The ways in which identity components translated into expressions of Self varied across contexts. However, all participants voiced a desire to express authentically in their professional spaces, for themselves, colleagues, and students around them. Lee reflected,

To be authentic with my expression, to speak openly and transparently about who I am, my identities, my intersections in a way that can be affirming not only to me, that can not only be healing and liberating to me, but also really about what that means to other students.

Maria Elena spoke to a sense of congruence when expressing authentically. She stated, “I feel truly much better when I can be congruent to who I am. Rather than having to feel like I need to answer things a [majority] way, or a very scripted way.” Even within the process of negotiation, there was a desire to be one’s most authentic Self. Lee noted,

I think that's kind of what maybe my interpretation is of what negotiation, both on a personal and professional identity spectrum, is all about is really that we're trying to figure out how do we be authentic and congruent in who we are.

Participants' experiences of authenticity were situated between privilege and marginalization. Participants described their authentic expressions of Self with understanding that their unique interaction of privileged and marginalized identities continuously impacts how they identify and express Self. For example, one participant discussed how White identity impacted open expression of sexual minority identity.

I carry quite a bit of privilege being a White cis[gender] person with formal advanced education, and I have the ability to fit in these academic spaces. It doesn't require much risk-taking from me to be out honestly, because I do have quite a bit of privilege in other areas.

Joy similarly reflected on the intersection of privilege and marginalization.

I feel like I've been able to [express] myself in different spaces in ways that I know some of my other counterparts have not because of the way I was raised and certain things about how society views how I talk or the color of my skin. I understand there are different spaces that I'm able to be in because of those privileges, right? It's unearned. I didn't ask to be this color and I didn't ask to talk like this. This is just how I talk, but I recognize those privileges.

Another participant spoke to the intersection within a story about feeling misunderstood due to her racial identity: "I felt like I continuously was trying to have people see me. Don't understand me in your perspective what racial identity is, see me as who I am." But, she noted her privilege as a heterosexual woman impacted the experience when she said,

The part of my identity that's almost more salient to [my students] is me as an ally. And that's a really interesting thing of I think sometimes I feel like I have more privilege . . . and [can broach] topics about racial identity [more easily].

Overall, the intersection between privilege and marginalization continuously impacted participants' expressions of authenticity.

Participants seemed to feel and express more authentically over time. Experience and shifting contexts contributed to more authentic expressions of Self. For example, Mindy noted, I came [to my current institution] kind of with the mindset of like, we'll see. And you're either going to take me for who I am or you're going to tell me to go. . . . And so what was really interesting is I think I've been more authentic to who I am in some ways here. So even though sometimes in the classroom I do sort of pull back and I get nervous and I still feel marginalized at times on my campus. I think I'm a little more fearless [now].

Maria Elena similarly spoke to increased authenticity over time.

I find myself, like my first year of teaching I was feeling out the system. I was being really quiet. 'I'm just an observer'. This year I'm becoming more bold and more, I guess, in alignment with my true personality. Because I'm feeling safer and I'm feeling more supported by my colleagues and administration. . . . My guess is that each year I'm just going to maybe get full switch [on] that. Like unapologetically, 'This is who I am. This is how I teach. This is my way of being. You're just going to have to accept that.'

April also reflected on expressing Self more authentically with students over time. "I'm more willing this semester to engage in those conversations [about my worldviews] in a way that's probably more reflective of both my personal and professional values than I was."



In sum, participants' descriptions and authentic expressions of Self were intersectional and dependent upon context and power. Intersectionality of identity included various labels and roles which were expressed uniquely as participants' experiences of privilege and marginalization varied. As all participants shared their experiences becoming more authentic, a subtheme of developing the intersectional Self emerged.

**Development.** Integral to the composition and expression of the intersectional Self was its process of continual growth. The intersectional Self was consistently in motion for all participants. Christelle stated, "I find that my expression [of identity] is constantly evolving. It's something that is changing with time." As Tara reflected on her "multicultural, social justice advocacy type of foundation" of her identities, she reflected, "I think that's a huge piece of who I am, and not only who I am but also who I continue to work to be, and growing in those particular areas." With a similar tone for consistent growth, Joanna stated in her letter to Self, "you are a work in progress, and your dedication to growth is enough." For most participants, the continual growth process was further distinguished as one with constant striving towards authenticity. Christelle reflected "I am learning more on how to have a healthier balance as far as not compromising my principles and my integrity." April reflected on her growth process, "I need to be able to be as genuine as I want to be. I think there's still a negotiation that goes on, but I'm challenging myself now."

Learning, particularly through interpersonal interactions, also seemed to play role in developing intrapersonal understandings of Self. For example, Tara discussed an interaction with a student that "sparked some reflection" about gender identity. She reflected, "I do think as I become more knowledgeable of different terms and different ways to identify, I think that changes my personal identity in terms of breaking it down even more. It doesn't completely

change it but it can definitely add to it.” Mindy had a similar learning experience with a colleague that led to increased knowledge about equality for transgender individuals. She reflected on a more fluid understanding of identity after this interaction. “I realized kind of similarities [between social constructions of gender and race] binaries and how people can define you, but that's not always fair and how it might always shift.” Joanna summarized this point well; “knowledge is a big part of my own journey towards self-awareness.”

A key component within each participant’s expression and development of Self over time was power. Perceived and actual power in position influenced when participants felt they could more readily integrate their authentic personal identities and expressions into their professional roles. One participant stated, “as I gain more professional power, I can be more out.” Lee also noted the impact of gained power over time.

That's kind of what I'm thinking about as I continue to move forward is that hopefully one day that when I do receive promotion and tenure, that I can do something to hopefully change the system and to speak more loudly and to be more outspoken and maybe to not feel threatened or pressured by [a] sense of censorship.

At times, authentic expression of Self was limited to certain contexts due to power. For example, Maria Elena shared, “it's easier for me to . . . . bring my full self into this profession . . . . with students. I don't know if maybe that's because I have, like I said, the perceived power.” Thus, in order to develop authentic expression across contexts, Maria Elena noted, “maybe the more power I gain, the more I feel like I can [be more authentic].”

Overall, participants’ experiences of intersectional Self developed via a feedback loop, where experiences in a personal domain influenced the professional domain and vice versa. Joanna stated,

it is a dynamic process, so sometimes I'll be in professional situations that will usher a personal awakening if you will. So, it is dynamic, but I do think often times . . . I'll be working through things in the personal space, and that will then impact who I am as a counselor, and educator, as someone who's involved in service.

Similarly, Lee described engaging in a professional role of advocacy. As a result of positive outcomes from advocacy, “on the personal identity negotiation and personal identity expression, I feel like I don't necessarily need to censor, particularly the description and expression of those [personal] identities.”

Although each participant shared unique descriptions of Self and content and timing of its development, the process of expressing the intersectional Self was consistent across all participants. For all participants, authentic form and expression of the intersectional Self was dependent upon context. As a result, the intersectional Self, though a distinct theme, overlays with the next theme of context. Understanding the contexts in which participants lived their experiences speaks to the nuanced decision-making around expressions of Self. I expand upon these contexts next.

## **Context**

Context included environmental contexts, individuals, and the interaction between the two that were influential to expressions of self, PID, and decisions surrounding negotiation. While context is inherently interwoven into all other themes, it is also a unique phenomenon to which participants gave distinct voice throughout their stories. Context was described as physical space and time, cultural climate, and participants' perceptions of opinions or expectations of individuals within a particular environment. At times, there was specific attention to an interaction between physical space and the individuals that inhabit it. When students, colleagues,

or administrators conveyed normed expressions and behaviors within particular spaces that were not transferable to other spaces or relationships, experiences were confined to those unique interactions. Overall, context served as an overarching determinant to what and how identity negotiation was experienced and how participants navigated the experience. *Climate* emerged as a subtheme that distinguished participants' perceptions of norms and expectations within this major theme. I describe context generally before transitioning into a specific discussion on *climate*.

Participants primarily shared experiences within two physical environments: higher education and doctoral programs. The higher education context detailed physical environments (e.g., classroom, faculty offices, and campus community) and individuals that influenced and/or reinforced the hierarchical structure of higher education (e.g., department heads, full professors, administrators). The doctoral program context included similar physical spaces (e.g., classrooms); however, participants' roles in that environment created different points of view and experiences of the hierarchical nature of higher education. Within the higher education context, participants' credentials and experiences in leadership evoked a greater sense of power that they did not have in their doctoral programs; however, this context elicited feelings of caution around authentic expression for participants when considering their statuses as untenured faculty. Administrators and seasoned, tenured faculty were perceived as holding more power and influence, creating a power differential that then influenced participants' expressions of Self.

Within the doctoral program context, faculty members at all levels and supervisors were more often the sources of power differentials, not administrators within higher education. Participants generally reported the doctoral program context as more limiting to their abilities to express authentically. This was due in part to participants' reliance on faculty members and

supervisors to successfully complete their doctoral degrees. Tara reflected, “your doctoral committee has pretty much your academic life in their hand. They're able to make decisions in regards of you moving forward or not moving forward.” These variances in power differentials influenced participants’ experiences with adversity and subsequently their identity negotiation processes.

Most participants noted more stark adverse experiences that provoked identity negotiation in their doctoral programs. Maria Elena reported,

I felt like [negotiation] happened in my doctoral program a lot, because I was the only person of color in my entire cohort, and all of my professors were white as well. Every single class I took, I was in a room full of white people. It was really difficult trying to balance, "Well I want to speak to my experience, but I also am not going to carry the weight to teach every person in this room, including the instructor". That's difficult.

When discussing an experience of negotiation, I asked Lee, “do you feel like parts of your personal expression are inhibited in [current] contexts? Or do you feel like you negotiate only to a point, so that you stay true to your values in some way?” Lee responded, “I would say it's more the latter. I'm really glad you made that distinction because I think for me, it's more the latter. I would say if I had to come back to my doctoral program, it would've been more the former.”

This reflection from Lee also speaks to participants’ descriptions of their current work environments in higher education as more supportive and accepting, at least in some capacity, compared to their experiences in doctoral programs.

Contributing factors such as validating relationships, department climate, and flexibility in work schedule played a role in feeling more supported in participants’ current work environments. One participant stated, “what makes those two different stages of my life so

different was in the doctoral program, comparatively with where I am now as a faculty, it has really helped me to know that I'm in a place where I am celebrated for my identities.” However, power seemed to play a central role in feelings of support, comfort to express authentically, and facing adversity.

Power, the capacity to have impact on self and others (Brown, 2010), included perceived and actual freedom to say, express, and behave. Power is intersectional, as power in one context may not exist in another. All eight participants reflected feeling more power in their roles as faculty members compared to their time as doctoral students. Mindy noted, “I have more autonomy in my position now.” Tara reflected developing new forms of self-advocacy as a counselor educator, where as “a doctoral candidate, which there's some power differentials there as well, [she] felt like there wasn't a whole lot of room to advocate for [herself] in some of those moments.” These senses of internalized power were influenced by the ways in which society views individuals with advanced degrees and hold professorial positions. Maria Elena stated, “I do have the perceived power in the room” when describing her experience with students in the classroom. Joy noted, “people respond to me differently now that I have my doctorate. . . . when someone steps into my classroom, they expect me to know everything.”

Although participants reported more feelings of support, acceptance, and power in their current work environments compared to their doctoral programs, their current work environments were not completely supportive and accepting. The higher education context regularly elicited marginalizing experiences that led to identity negotiation. Power again was central to experience, but it showed a new face. As faculty members, participants reflected on navigating the power or hierarchy within the structure of higher education in addition to power

structures within the more focused counselor education program context. For example, Mindy noted she is limited in her identity and role as an advocate due to institutional policies.

I work in a state institution and we are not allowed . . . to advocate as employees of our institution. . . . I can't indicate where I work. And so I feel like as a private citizen it's really hard to explain why I feel really concerned about this [issue of free speech].

Expectations for tenure also played a role in participants' reflections on the impact of power on their experiences of negotiation. April stated,

I'm a junior faculty member. I have to watch my back. . . . I will probably never call out my dean about the way he talks over me all the time. . . . I won't because he has too much power and it's too much of a risk and I just can't.

Joy noted,

I feel like in [higher education], there's a lot more of the repression that you're having to do just because there's a certain prestige and a certain way I think that we see that counselor or faculty are supposed to be.

Maria Elena reflected, "You see women of color who talk about having to write things that they're not really interested in. But then once they get tenure, that they can write about the real stuff."

Finally, participants elaborated on the power individuals within higher education hold and its influence on their freedom to say, express, and behave in this context. For example, April shared,

there have been multiple occasions where . . . we have a meeting and [my dean] yields to or asks questions of the men in the room and then glazes over or doesn't answer questions asked by women in the room. One time, I asked a question in a department meeting about

a pretty important thing to do with budgets. And I kind of got this roundabout, well I don't know. He likes to answer questions with questions when I ask him anything. So I didn't really get an answer.

To adapt to this ongoing experience, April noted her male colleague helped her at least get a clear response. She shared her male colleague “asked a different version of the same question that [she] asked and he got a much more direct and effortful answer.” When I asked April how this experience impacted her identity and expression in the counselor education context, she stated, “I think sometimes I separate being a counselor educator and being a faculty member, depending on who I'm interacting with.” With individuals who held more power in the higher education context (e.g., deans and department head), April more readily negotiated identity, as she lacked power in those interpersonal contexts. These various examples highlight the intersections of power, in that participants carry and lack power simultaneously, and external context can dictate the degree of power participants hold to express themselves authentically.

These contexts, and the power interwoven throughout them, create a foundation for cultural climate. The structures of higher education influenced how participants described relationships with other counselor educators and the praxis within their programs. The beliefs, values, and behaviors normed and expected throughout higher education climate filter into the counselor education climate, because individuals give life to those contexts. I expand more upon this subtheme of *climate* next.

**Climate.** Climate entailed participants' perceptions of environment or individuals that conveyed particular norms and expectations for, or judgments about, identities and behaviors. The interaction between physical spaces and individuals within the definition of *context* above is situated here. Tara spoke to this interaction when discussing the stressed relationship with her



dissertation co-chairs and during doctoral study. She reflected “I feel like that the whole structure, the culture around this particular process [of completing a doctoral degree] doesn't allow for [self-advocacy or openness to share] . . . how you're feeling or how certain things were perceived by you.” Maria Elena also spoke to this interaction. She reflected,

I think something that's difficult for me in the broader context is to bring my full self into this profession. . . , because I think in the broader context I'm a part of a system that is very oppressive. Higher education is very oppressive and it wasn't set up for somebody like me to succeed. There's kind of, there's more fear, right? Of, ‘who can I trust in this system? How does this system work?’ Being kind of newer to academia as well. There's just a lot there to unpack.

Another participant who identified as a woman of color shared an experience where she was asked to sit on a panel after only two months in her faculty position. The experience conveyed a professional climate that “celebrate[s] diversity [by putting people of color] on things but [doesn't] always really give them a voice.” She reflected,

And afterwards they kind of said thank you to me. There was never follow up. It was never an invitation to be involved in leadership. There was never continued discussion. So they basically invited me to come to their panel and never acknowledged me again.

And it really upset me because I didn't have to do that. I don't know, I just felt very used.

This example highlights that elements of climate could emerge from the unique interaction between physical space (e.g., conferences, presentation platforms) and the behaviors of individuals (e.g., tokenization) within them.

Participants' expressions were dictated by context, but it is climate within those contexts that gave participants a sense of safety or caution to express. Some participants reflected on

climates that promoted authentic expression. For example, Joanna noted, “I love [a professional organization] because it is a space that I do feel more seen.” Christelle shared her program climate is one where “[she has] to have the doors open,” which created a feeling of community among her colleagues. Conversely, some participants detailed climates that challenged their authentic expressions or created barriers for growth. For example, Lee described feeling isolated during his doctoral studies in part due to the climate of the program. He noted, “we were given this, I would say air of flexibility . . . this façade, that . . . this lack of structure in the doctoral program was intended to give us more flexibility with our programs of study.” Mindy discussed political climate as influential to her expressions with students.

We saw a rise in white nationalism and we were seeing all these things happening and we were hearing a lot of racist rhetoric. . . . And it was a really hard dance for me because when you are a woman of color teaching a class like multicultural, students fear you. They are afraid to be judged. They're afraid that you are going to think less of them. They are afraid you're waiting for those, "Aha, let me catch you being racist" moments.

In another example, April described the climate in her current work environment as challenging to her expressions of gender.

I have to wear more clothing. I have to cover up. I have to be careful about being too forthcoming about my personal life and my personal experiences. Because I don't know how those are going to be used. And I don't know how they're going to be perceived.

Each of these examples are quite different, which conveys the complexity climate created for participants’ unique experiences within their contexts.

Despite unique climate makeup, participants described a common factor: the ability for climate to permeate across contexts due to individuals within them. As individuals enter and

leave contexts, the climate could shift accordingly, but participants did not always perceive that to be true. This created some experiences where participants began questioning if contexts that were once safe to be authentic were now subject to caution, even if individuals who elicited adverse experiences were not present in that context. With April's example above, she experienced a consistent feeling or need to present in a particular way due to interactions with multiple individuals in her professional contexts. "The way that person interacts with female students gives this message of your value is based on the way that you look. . . . I usually get questions [from colleagues] about why [I am] so dressed up." This element of climate will resurface within the intersectional navigation theme as a part of participants' decision-making around identity negotiation.

As participants described climate and its complexity, all noted the importance of representation of diverse individuals to decrease experiences of negotiation. Participants consistently credited individuals as influential to the current composition of climate and holding potential to shift climate. Joy noted, "the face of counselor education needs to change. Our leadership needs to change." In order for this shift in leadership and climate to occur, Joy reflected professional values need to manifest in ways that support marginalized communities. Specifically, she gave the following example.

Our value is that we respect cultural diversity, backgrounds and things like that.

However, I don't think that we support that especially as it relates to leadership. Going to conferences or being able to be a leader, those are all things that that are a privilege to be able to go. And if you have to go to the conferences, you have to be seen in order for people to even think to vote for you to be a leader. But going to conferences and things like that, that is a privilege.

Lee also spoke to congruence between values and actions. He reflected, the reason

why so many historically marginalized communities have to participate and almost be relegated to this negotiation process is really because we don't have that cultural shift in our profession that says we have affirmed and we are more culturally responsive towards these communities. We say that we are, but we're not.

Lee also reflected on the importance of representation to improve climate. He stated, a “cultural shift is really about how we really thrive in relation to each other, with . . . representation and praxis.” He elaborated on praxis as promoting collective reflexivity, where

we invite a critical analysis . . . between members of our counseling profession. It's not just necessarily to reflect, right? To just kind of [say], here's a reflection. But really to cultivate an iterative process, one that we come back to, one that we have to be actively conscious about.

Maria Elena spoke to reflexivity as well. She described the process as “critical evaluation.” She stated,

the things that we're asking students to do is to look within and to reflect on all of these things. But what I find is that a lot of times we're not even doing it. . . . It requires being critical. Like what is counselor education doing to support people in the margin?

Joanna similarly reflected on a collective effort of representation and praxis towards a shift in climate.

Why are we not seeing a more diverse representation among counselors, counselor educators, and counseling leaders as we are the clients that we serve? Why do the demographics not match up? I want to see the counseling community take on more of that community oriented activism role.

Mindy summarized the climate shift simply. “Well, there needs to be more marginalized counselor educators . . . with an actual voice.”

Throughout their stories, participants consistently referenced contexts and credited them for the nuances of participants’ experiences. Participants’ perceptions of environments and people within them created a sense of cultural climate that dictated their decisions, expressions, and growth as professionals. The next theme, intersectional navigation, will describe the phenomenon of identity negotiation that is filtered through these contexts.

### **Intersectional Navigation**

Intersectional navigation describes a multifaceted process that included negotiation dependent upon context and processes of demonstrating inclusion. When prompted to share stories about a time when they negotiated personal identity in a professional context, participants shared rich, textured processes that extended beyond single instances of negotiating identity. They shared their verbal and nonverbal responses to an instance of adversity, their decision-making processes for how to respond to that adversity, its meaning for their identity and development, and how it impacted their continual growth and ability to model for other professionals and students. I understand this navigation as an intersectional process, one that considers multiple aspects of self, others, environments, and needs for growth. In sum, intersectional navigation describes an instance of identity negotiation plus demonstrations of inclusion via intersectionality in motion (e.g., adjusting relational dynamics, shifting understandings of Self, or increasing advocacy for marginalized groups). Three subthemes, *negotiation*, *intersectionality in motion*, and *relational influence*, emerged as salient components of this intersectional process.

**Negotiation.** Identity negotiation is a mechanism of suppressing forms and expressions of Self in certain contexts to obtain membership in a particular group (Cohen & Kassan, 2018). The forms and expressions of Self participants suppressed varied widely. However, they shared a common process of questioning their adverse experiences and deconstructing their identities in order to negotiate a particular form or expression. When they faced adversity, they questioned which identity was the root of their adverse experience. For example, Tara experienced difficulty with her dissertation co-chairs and struggled to make progress. When questioned about her lack of progress, she stated, “there were times where I thought, in regards to my lack of progress in some ways... I thought about my own identity as a female, and then also as an African American female, so race and gender identity, if that was a factor.” Similarly, Joy reflected on an experience of discrimination in her current work environment where a colleague with similar status was treated very differently. In an effort to make meaning of the experience and take action, she reflected,

What's really going on here? Like, really I guess more of having a candid conversation about like what's going on. I guess the racial stuff for me, when everything else makes sense, but something doesn't and I'm like well, I know it's not gender, it's not credentials and, but perhaps it could've been my age . . . because again, I think I'm the youngest. But my colleague, she's a year younger than me so.

Lee also questioned the source of adversity when his instructional design was censored by a senior colleague. He stated, “I was just like, would this have happened had I been an associate professor? Would this have happened if I had been, if I had different intersections in social identities attached to my personal identity?” April also questioned experience: “Is this really even happening? Like is this a real thing?” She reflected later that this process created a sense of

separation between her personal and professional identities. She noted, “as much as I value congruence and genuineness, there are pieces that just don't seem like they really fit in the way that educators are supposed to be, or the way that a counselor is supposed to be.” In general, the process of questioning and deconstructing was the medium for participants’ navigation processes as marginalized CEs.

As with context, power was a central factor to participants’ experiences negotiating identity. Participants’ active choices to express or behave in ways authentic or inauthentic to their senses of Self were inevitably influenced by the power they carried or did not carry. The intersection between privilege and marginalization was salient to their choices, as participants’ discernment regarding their power was often related to their unique intersectional Self.

In instances where participants felt power to express authentically, it was often due to experiencing privilege related to an aspect of their personal identity (e.g., Whiteness, maleness) or a professional role that gave them a sense of power over individuals in their environments (e.g., students in the classroom setting). One participant reflected “being a White cis[gender] person with formal advanced education . . . I have the ability to fit in these academic spaces. It doesn't require much risk taking from me to be out.” Another participant noted, “the reality that I'm a cis[gender] male, . . . there are many privileges that come with that.” When discussing her role as a faculty member, Joy stated, “I understand there are different spaces that I'm able to be in because of [the] privileges [that come with my credentials and position].” April reflected, “while there are a lot of moments where I feel like I can't use my voice, I definitely have a lot more power now as a faculty member than I had as a doctoral student . . . and can speak up.”

Conversely, as participants experienced a lack of power, they more actively engaged in identity negotiation. Mindy shared an experience where she “felt like [she] was having to hide

some of [her] beliefs” related to racial issues because of being surrounded by primarily White individuals who held more social power than she did. Maria Elena reflected a similar instance of negotiation, which also spoke to the ongoing nature of negotiation for marginalized individuals:

When you're teaching white privileged students . . . they know this game and this system way better than I do. I'm also a first generation college student. There's all sorts of things, all these unspoken rules that I don't have access to. I have to kind of code switch. I mean, exactly like your first question. I have to decide how I'm going to be in every context.

Participants engaged in unique decision-making processes to negotiate their identities with purpose. They reflected on instances of negotiation as a means to cope with adversity, survive the system, or maintain the professional ideal. Lee stated, “there's this reality that I'm also kinda navigating. I just do what I'm told, right? To survive in the academy.” April reflected negotiation was a way to cope with experiences of overt discrimination.

I guess that's how I cope is I just shift focus to the ways that I can make positive impact and put my energy there, which is probably not helping anyone actually because I'm just sweeping it under the rug and letting them get away with it. But that's just kind of where I am. That's just honest.

Christelle shared an experience with a student of the same racial background where she negotiated part of her cultural identity to maintain perceived professionalism. She said, “I found it kind of difficult when thinking about all these different systemic factors and the similarities, the parallels in the experience, and trying to maintain that professional identity.” All participants noted each of these purposes ultimately gave them the opportunity to advocate for others, particularly marginalized groups.



Participants' decisions to negotiate were often for the benefit of others around them. Lee reflected,

How do I transcend this [adverse] experience to make sure that this doesn't happen for others in the future? I feel that's the other piece of who I am, that when I think about these negotiation processes, that I think about others.

Mindy reflected her students were a significant influence. "I try to think of [students] in everything I do because they're why I'm here. They're why have this job. They are why I go to class." April shared she more regularly negotiated aspects of Self when adversity strikes her, but when adversity hits her students, she is less likely to negotiate and instead advocate on their behalf.

I don't know why it's easier for me to ... if something like this happened to my student, I would probably say something. But when it's me, I'll just take it. It doesn't feel like a battle worth picking if it's about me, but if it's about one of my students, it's worth it.

Another participant reflected on negotiating expression of identity to fit into the group and avoid adverse effects from bias.

I think that there are still times that I struggle with my bisexual identity being queer enough in professional settings. I'm on a sex and gender identity task group, a work group. I may be less willing to identify as bisexual in those communities, and just try, and pass as just queer. Try and pass as gayer than I am. It's so counterintuitive to my process, but if I'm being honest, I think in some cases, I still do feel a bit, I don't want to say hypervigilant, but I do anticipate some bias from my gay and lesbian colleagues that may or may not be true, but I've certainly experienced judgment from gay and lesbian folks in the past.

Joy reflected on an experience negotiating for student safety.

I can also think of times in the classroom where I've had to negotiate keeping a student safe although I didn't agree with what the student said. In one of my classes, we were talking about, I think we were talking about the Me Too Movement specifically or something along the lines of domestic violence. And I had one student in the class who spoke up and said that something along the lines of like, 'why would someone take so long to report?' And I immediately cringed because it makes me upset. . . . I thought what she said honestly was very ignorant, but to keep her safe from her peers attacking her and also for other people to also see that I don't always have to agree, . . . I held back.

In sum, these examples highlight an active, conscious decision-making process to negotiate identity. However, participants also engaged in negotiation or suppression without conscious awareness at times.

Mindy summarized subconscious suppression well. "I don't know if there was a point in my life where I actually did identity negotiation. I think I maybe was doing it. I don't think I knew I was doing it." One example of this subconscious suppression comes from Tara.

[My student] gave that particular critique specifically in how I presented a particular theory in my theory course, it definitely sparked some questions in regards to my own identity. And was I subconsciously negotiating that to tailor toward the way that we've always taught in this profession, that was tailored toward the primary audience in our profession, the majority of my students are white identified female.

Another participant discussed subconsciously suppressing sexual identity at the beginning of her doctoral program. "I know in retrospect that I am, and always have been bisexual, but there's a lot of internalized homophobia, bi-phobia, and sexism that had ushered me into just really

silencing that part of myself.” Three participants also spoke to subconscious negotiation of authentic expressions due to stereotypes associated with their identities. For example, Christelle described commonly questioning “how to assert [her] needs as a professional without being aggressive.” She stated, during one interaction, “I remember I was very careful what language I used [because she did not want to appear as an angry Black woman].”

Overall, participants engaged in strategic forms of negotiation and subconscious forms of suppression, both dependent upon contexts and climate. Navigation through instances of negotiation created movement in participants’ intrapersonal senses of Self and their external expressions and interpersonal interactions. I expand on this movement in the next subtheme, intersectionality in motion.

**Intersectionality in motion.** Intersectionality in motion represented processes of demonstrating inclusion in an intersectional environment, with awareness that particular aspects of Self may need particular nurturance to integrate into an authentic identity whole. Participants generally described inclusion as the ability for participants and other marginalized professionals to have space, voice, and power to express authentically. As participants faced adverse experiences related to their marginalized identities, they consistently adapted their identity negotiation processes to specific contexts and needs for growth towards authenticity. Lee reflected on this point as he described his experiences of negotiation shifting over time. “I think power is very much a theme and an organizing factor that's shifted over time. I think the other piece for me, another organizing factor for me is authenticity.”

Within their experiences of navigation broadly, most participants described active processes of demonstrating inclusion and highlighted needs for change for professionals to successfully engage in inclusion. Lee reflected this point when describing his role in leadership.

How do we allow and empower individuals who aren't represented here to really feel like they can run that table? Because it's not just about me. It's more so about these other voices who haven't been heard. And all we do is just give them a space at the table and just welcome them, but not really give them any power, then we have only just reinforced the system.

Joy described a process of reflexivity necessary to demonstrate inclusion.

I think that [counselor educators] need to really check their biases and their prejudices and be honest about them. They need to talk about it, . . . and work on themselves. I mean that's hard and that's vulnerable, [but we have] to practice what [we] preach.

Joy also noted “reflexivity takes vulnerability,” which is central to creating inclusive environments. Maria Elena spoke to this point with a story about demonstrating inclusion in her pedagogy. “In my classroom I'm doing contemplative practices. We're doing mindfulness. We're doing other things and being very vulnerable and going really deep, and not just scratching the surface.” Similarly, Joanna shared,

I do work, and strive to embody feminist pedagogical qualities, and interactions with students whether it's trying to intentionally to decenter power differentials between me and my students to make it a more dialogue driven, just a critical analytic classroom where not only is just knowledge in general up for scrutiny, but so is my presumed expertise.

As participants reflected on the intersectionality of inclusion–representation, confronting biases, engaging in reflexivity, and embracing vulnerability—they highlighted the intersectionality of Self. Participants noted that certain aspects of identity needed specific types of nurturance in order to experience inclusion. Tara, Joy, Christelle, and Mindy spoke to the

importance of having mentors who carried similar identities to them and could offer support, encouragement, and guidance on how to navigate challenges related to their shared identities. Participants also spoke to the need to have active conversations about inclusion throughout counselor education, not just within small subgroups of diverse individuals. Christelle noted, we need to have “discussions at the professional conferences about this amongst all the other presentations, so again, not gearing it towards a special group, but actually talking about this.” Mindy similarly reflected, “are we really having meaningful conversations? Are we really inviting people to talk? Or are they only talking to the same people?”

When some participants did not experience an intersectional type of nurturance, they struggled to know what aspect of Self to negotiate and to what degree. Joy noted, “I think maybe in time I'll learn which pieces I [have to] negotiate and which I [don't].” Lee spoke to this point noting a need for compromise at times. “There's a part of us that has to fold a little bit, compromise a little bit to be complicit in the system.” However, that compromise served a purpose. Lee continued, “what I mean by that particularly is that we sort of have to do a little bit of conforming, not only to survive in the system but hopefully to change it from within, to change it from the inside out.” This spoke to the potential for change towards inclusion and authenticity participants were striving for. In sum, this element of intersectionality in motion was recognizing a need for multiple professionals to be prepared and capable of providing various types of support, because the intersections of our professional identities are vast, and one individual “cannot be the only one who does something about this.”

Overall, participants noted the importance of relationships to their experiences navigating adversity, identity negotiation, and growth. Their abilities to move in between and express their various intersections of Self authentically were influenced by mentors, colleagues, supervisors,

and students. Just as with context, participants noted these individuals, particularly those with power, played a significant role in shaping the nature of interpersonal interactions and norms within our professional environments. *Relational influence*, the final subtheme, speaks to the relationships participants described as influential to their processes of navigation.

**Relational influence.** All participants highlighted the significant impact of modeling and mentorship on their experiences negotiating identity and abilities to develop Self. Participants described relational influences both positively and negatively. However, as it related to navigation, relational influences were described as negative in some capacity because they elicited a need to negotiate identity or inhibited growth. Positive relational influences gave way for participants to be authentic, thus a navigation process was unnecessary. I expand on positive relational influences in the next theme, as they are more directly related to the impact on authentic forms and expressions of Self. Within the current subtheme, negative relational influences mediated experiences of identity negotiation.

Similar to previous themes, power was central to relational influences. Individuals who held more power than participants, such as a dean (April) or dissertation chairs (Tara), often contributed to experiences of negotiation. Lee shared a story about an interaction with a clinic director during his doctoral study that marginalized an aspect of his identity and led him to negotiate that piece of Self. He stated,

I just completely froze. . . . Frozen almost to a point where I was numb and I just couldn't even figure out what to say but I knew that part of this too was this was a particular staff member who is very vindictive. Somebody who, if I had challenged this person, they would try to clap back at me with all this other stuff.

Joy summarized the significance of relational influences well. I asked her, “what goes into your decision-making process as you enter different spaces to decide what to negotiate and to what degree?” She responded,

I would definitely say who the audience is, like who I'm around. If it's people that I'm comfortable presenting, then or comfortable and I know in a sense of like personally or even professionally, I would also say being around like people who have like been in the field a long time as well. . . . I'm careful with what I say and my behaviors, how I say things, how I talk as well, and how significant the person is to me [matters] as well. If there's someone I'm just not really, you don't really matter too much to me, then I may or may not care as much or suppress as much stuff, whereas, if it's someone that perhaps I want to make a good impression on, or I really want to build a good professional relationship that that also might determine some of my behaviors as well.

April also spoke to the significant impact of relationships in navigation. She shared,

I'm a little tempered in the way that I do things because I'm the new guy. . . . I don't have as much history and understanding [with colleagues]. . . . So there have been very few battles at this point that I've actually chosen [to fight] because I'm afraid.

Relational influences also inhibited growth after initial negotiation for some participants. Tara noted the interactions with her dissertation co-chairs

definitely affected the researcher part of my professional identity development. So me developing into my own as a researcher, and developing the confidence to be able to say like, hey I am a researcher and this is something that I can do with not only confidence, but also competence in that area. It was definitely something that suffered.

Mindy also spoke to this point with a different focus. As “the only person of color in [her doctoral] cohort,” she regularly engaged in relationships with White professionals, and racial identity was not a central focus in those interactions. She reflected her identity development as an educator of color was brought more into focus once she was a CE.

Then I got into a classroom with students of color who had never really had anyone who even vaguely looked like them or talked about some of the experiences they had. And I realized I really had to be something for them.

Lack of relational influence during her training, where racial identity was suppressed in some ways, created a delay in this aspect of her identity development.

In sum, relational influences were significantly impactful to all participants’ experiences in navigation. Participants’ active decisions or subconscious suppressions were generally made in response to direct interpersonal interactions or norms and behaviors modeled by individuals within their environments. As a result, relational influences served as the central variable to discern what aspect or expression of Self to negotiate and to what degree.

Throughout this theme, participants’ descriptions of and experiences in navigation were complex. An intersectional process, navigation included conscious and subconscious forms of negotiation mediated by context and relational influences within. Movement between these intersections highlighted a desire for inclusion. Participants spoke to needs for change to experience increased inclusivity of their intersecting components and expressions of Self. However, participants consistently shared experiences within contexts that did not support inclusion and elicited a need to negotiate Self. Considering these contexts, and the process of navigation within them, I expand next on how participants’ identities and experiences were impacted by the intersection of the two previous themes.



## **Impacts on the Self**

Impacts on the Self included contexts and interpersonal relationships that impacted perceptions of self, responses to experiences of marginalization and/or negotiation, and development. The types of impact participants experienced widely ranged. Participants experienced emotional, cognitive, somatic, and spiritual responses in the midst of negotiating identity during PID. Interactions in discouraging or invalidating relationships, experiencing microaggressions, facing pressure to meet prescribed or perceived expectations, and carrying responsibility to advocate and model for other marginalized groups had negative impacts. Interactions in encouraging relationships, experiencing validation of one's expression of personal or professional identity, and receiving positive feedback from students via interactions or witnessing student success had positive impacts. In sum, all sources of impact colored participants' descriptions of Self and influenced their methods of negotiation and integration of identity. The sources of impact and experiences participants described were organized within two subthemes, *interpersonal factors* and *pressure and responsibility*.

**Interpersonal factors.** Interpersonal factors included participants' experiences in both validating and invalidating interactions with mentors, students, colleagues, and supervisors. Most participants noted experiences being mentored or bearing witness to modeling as significant sources of impact. Some interactions elicited adverse experiences that prompted identity negotiation, and other interactions supported participants' forms and expressions of authentic Self. Both types of experiences contributed to participants' perceptions of Self, abilities to develop Self, and navigation processes.

All participants spoke to adverse interpersonal experiences related to their personal identities that elicited feelings of diminishment. All participants described feeling one or more of

the following: invalidated, misunderstood, invisible, discouraged, used, fearful, isolated, incompetent, and unworthy. All participants also described lacking one or more of the following: voice, power, influence, safety, and security. These descriptive feelings led participants to believe one or more of their forms and expressions of Self were perceived to be lesser than. Participants noted this was due to individuals in their professional environments intentionally or unintentionally conveying those forms and expressions as inferior.

Participants shared many stories in which they spoke to the experience of diminishment. Mindy reflected,

I sometimes felt like I wasn't encouraged to be my authentic self. I was often made to feel kind of inferior in my doctoral program until I submitted my portfolio and then my portfolio was really strong and well received. To the point that I thought about, I wasn't going to be a counselor educator. So I thought I would finish and I wanted to go into student affairs, because I felt so invalidated.

Similarly in the doctoral program context, Tara shared,

There were instances where at the beginning of the [dissertation] process, starting to talk about jobs and all of that, I didn't feel supported in ways that I felt like I should have been [by my dissertation chairs]. And also I had, just to be honest, I had other friends in the program who were receiving support [from them], one who identified as a white male, so that also brought up some conversations about like, 'hey why is this person getting pretty strong mentorship and I'm not?'

As Tara moved through her dissertation and sought mentorship from her methodologist, she noted,

I did definitely feel supported by my methodologist, but I do think that by the time I got to her, and this might sound a little harsh, but just for lack of better words, but I think there was already a level of damage there in regards to like my own confidence as a researcher.

Also in the doctoral program context, Lee told a story where he shared an idea for research with a White male faculty member, and that faculty member took credit for the idea and moved forward with the research project without including Lee. He reflected, “I felt like in disbelief. In disbelief. Maybe I misunderstood. . . [I’m] always thinking for me that I was, maybe there was something I did wrong in this whole experience.” Lee also shared he reached out to trusted colleagues to process the experience. He noted,

It's not that any faculty was outwardly or explicitly discriminatory, but there were faculty who were quite implicitly harmful towards women and students of color. I was already negotiating that, I was navigating that. Then, I had to figure out how do I also emerge out of this experience unscathed. . . . I felt like the best thing for me to do . . . was really to say I just need to walk away . . . because of course, I'm thinking about my status in the program. . . . But at the same time, I’m also thinking about my future. When I'm thinking about that professional identity and how I want to consolidate what it means to be a leader and mentor, that I will never do that . . . to another colleague or student.

Moving into their positions as faculty members, participants experienced similar moments of impact. Joy shared,

There was recently an incident with leaders in one of the leadership organizations I worked with where it felt like a racial, white privilege thing. In that moment when it happened, I was angry so much so I was shaking.

The experience prompted some negotiation of identity expression, but the impact led ultimately to advocacy. She reflected,

You should be able to be who you want to be and not be judged. I was able to tie that into my professional leadership position to say yeah, we can't allow this to happen. This is not okay and then felt once I did it, I felt, I wasn't sure how people were going to respond, I'll say that. But I was prepared to say I'm stepping down from my position.

In another experience within the counselor education context, Joy and a White female colleague received similar complaints about their performance in the classroom, which led to discriminatory interactions with her boss. She reflected,

How I was treated versus how [my colleague] was treated as a white female was very different. I had to meet with my boss every week, I had to bring my lectures plans, my boss had to come to my class, I had to basically I guess prove that I was competent enough to teach and have that faculty position. . . . I felt like I couldn't respond how I wanted to respond because how I was, I was frustrated, I was angry, I felt unsupported, I felt defeated at some parts of it and I felt almost like an outsider because it felt like not everyone was in it.

Maria Elena reflected a similar outsider experience within the higher education context.

I mean throughout my educational experiences I feel, I have always felt undervalued because my experience is probably different than a lot of people in the room. Especially the higher education you have, the less and less people seem to look like me in the room. A lot of times my voice is dismissed. Just completely dismissed because there's such a disconnect. When you're talking to a room full of people who don't get it, they're not

going to understand my experience, nor care even. If they haven't had that experience or something similar.

Despite significant diminishing experiences, participants also shared many instances of affirming, supportive interactions.

The presence of supportive individuals in participants' lives was unparalleled. Participants shared feeling encouraged, validated, understood, and worthy; they described feeling that they belonged, mattered, and were enough. Mindy noted, "I think you can never underestimate the importance of somebody saying something positive about you and somebody seeing the self worth within you." Tara similarly reflected the importance of positive encouragement in her dissertation process experience. She shared her methodologist "was very much encouraging and saying, 'You definitely are strong in this area. You definitely are strong in your writing skills,' which is something that I was criticized on frequently."

Another participant described mentors "who believed in [her]" and their impact on her identity and professional development. She stated,

I had two mentors in my PhD program. One who was an LGBTQ researcher who was an out gay man, and was very and still to this day, very involved in LGBTQ counseling, and ALGBTIC. Another mentor that wasn't specifically in queer studies or anything like that, but was very much an ally to the field, and very much supportive of my research interests. Having mentoring relationships with these two folks, to me, it provided the kindling that I needed to pursue [my research in LGBTQ+ issues].

This participant also reflected on the impact mentors had in increasing her self-awareness, which contributed to the development and integration of her identity. She shared,

I think in order to be a true feminist professional, or feminist educator, or feminist counselor, we have to be willing to look at, and very critically examine our role in the perpetuation of various types of oppression. I think I was only really able to do that once I confronted maybe some of my own oppressed identities that I didn't really have a lot of awareness into. So, it's like this parallel process of empathy building for myself, and empathy building for other folks. Yeah. I think also just gaining not just privilege, but power in the world. Power of self-love, and of confidence, and feeling like I am a valid voice at the table, that's been huge. . . . If I hadn't had the connections that I had . . . I likely wouldn't have gone through that process in the way that I did. It probably would have taken longer for me to develop that self-love, self-awareness. It would have taken longer for me to become the outspoken advocate and activist that I am today.

Mindy similarly reflected on the role of validating mentorship in nurturing her growth.

My advisor was married to someone [who shares my racial identity]. We had these really thoughtful conversations. I ended up writing my dissertation about multiracial issues. I had this relationship with her that was so unique, like she was the only person who I probably would have had this with. . . . I grew up in my identity development [with her].

Even when validating types of mentorship were not readily available, most participants reflected on the significance of receiving validation and encouragement from others to affirm their perception of Self and growth as professionals.

Support from colleagues was also significant for a few participants. Mindy reflected,

Nobody prepared me to be like, hey, you might be the only faculty member of color at your university and what is that going to look like for you? And how are you going to negotiate that? And if I hadn't had a supportive colleague, I don't think I would have

made it. I tell my colleague all the time, I say [colleague], if it weren't for you I probably would have left, because I think it would've just cried a lot alone because I would've just felt so alone in my feelings.

A colleague similarly validated April's experiences and supported her. She stated,

My male colleague here luckily is a pretty aware person of the world. He sees when these things happen and he is very kind and gracious in checking in with me after the meeting is over to make sure I'm okay.

Many participants purposefully interacted with their students for more positive outcomes. At times, participants' expressions of authenticity stemmed from a desire to model or advocate for students. Joy reflected a shift in her expression of Self because of a desire to model authenticity for students. "I've seen a shift in myself as it relates to my professional identity once I've become a counselor educator and I have a role in educating other counselors on how to be counselors. I need to role model [dispositions] and those techniques as well." Lee spoke to decisions not to suppress Self with students when he said,

To be authentic with my expression, to speak openly and transparently about who I am, my identities, my intersections in a way that can be affirming and can, not only be healing and liberating to me, but also really about what that means to other students.

One queer-identifying participant spoke to this point with a powerful example of expressing authenticity in the classroom for the purposes of modeling inclusion and ethical practice in counseling.

If you really feel that [counseling LGBTQ+ clients is] an issue for you and that you need to refer out, then I want you to say that to me right now in this space. I want you to say that to me because I want you to know what it feels like to feel the gravity of that

statement. To know how harming and damning that can be for communities that have been historically marginalized.

Some participants reported that authentic forms and expressions of Self were affirmed through interactions with students. Lee stated, “it surprises me every single day when a student comes up to me and says not only you matter but also, you remind me that I matter in this department.” Mindy initially negotiated aspects of her identity as a feminist, but, after engaging with students more openly about feminism, she reflected, “that class was really accepting and they were really kind on those ideas [of feminism], and I think that really helped me a year later to have some of the conversations I didn't have that first time.”

Overall, interpersonal factors were salient for all participants. In addition to the specific examples of interactions and intrapersonal responses within this subtheme, participants also expressed feelings of pressure and responsibility that sometimes stemmed from interpersonal engagements. At other times, these feelings were internalized in ways participants often attributed to higher education context, counselor education climate, and broader sociocultural factors relevant to their lived experiences as marginalized individuals. I expand on these experiences within the *pressure and responsibility* subtheme next.

**Pressure and responsibility.** Participants experienced external pressure and a sense of responsibility in varying ways. Participants noted pressures and responsibilities stemmed from others’ direct statements or behaviors and via perceived norms.

External pressures were sometimes the result of tokenism. For example, one participant shared an experience of tokenism when she was asked to sit on a conference panel as the only person of color. A member of the audience asked her “about [her experience] negotiating [her] identity as a person of color and how [to] do it.” She reflected feeling pressure in that moment to



convey her experiences honestly but also to not speak poorly of her institution. “How do you not make your institution not look bad. How do you sound grateful but also be real?” In another example of tokenism, Lee shared a story of a faculty member co-opting his idea for an intersectional cultural research project and not including Lee in the project. He stated, “it's almost like somebody prizing on my cultural capital without really giving me a space at the table for it.” From this experience, he noted a sense of pressure to respond to the situation strategically. “I'm thinking about my status in the program and what do I do about this when everybody else is telling me to challenge this person.” Pressure to uphold professional identity and “emerge out of [the] experience unscathed,” shaped Lee’s response. “I just needed to walk away.” He also noted, “when I'm thinking about that professional identity and how I want to consolidate what it means to be a leader and mentor, I will never do that.” This example demonstrated tokenism elicited a type of pressure at times that led some participants to feel responsible for representing their identity group (e.g., as a “model minority”) or impact positive change for generations of marginalized professionals to come.

Participants shared various examples of external pressures that significantly impacted their perceptions of Self and professional engagement. One participant shared,

I am the only African identified person on this faculty. And then to add on to that I'm a double minority, being a female at this particular level. That still adds some pressure in regards to doing quality research getting publications, that type of thing.

Mindy discussed experiencing heightened pressure to succeed as the only person of color from her doctoral cohort. She noted,

I got my job offer, I was the first person in my program to get a job offer. I'm actually at one of the best institutions that someone from my program has gone to . . . . But I didn't

negotiate [salary] really because I was so afraid that if I negotiated I would let [my faculty] down. I took the job.

Christelle similarly reflected a need to maintain professional norms because of experiencing pressure to represent her program; “I’m not just representing myself but also representing a program.”

As participants experienced pressure to represent a larger group, a few participants described experiencing pressure to act as a “model minority” or representative for their specific identity group. One participant shared,

I don't want it to be stereotyped or restricted to this problematic, oh well, [participant is] a faculty of color. [Participant is] a queer faculty of color and starting problems and this is what we're going to get with every queer faculty of color. Or is this what we're going to get with every faculty of color? Or is this even what we're going to get from every minoritized faculty? I think that's what I'm cautious about is because I have a lot of power to shape that narrative. That's part of what I think in my own personal identity negotiation that I feel like there's that internal piece of me, but also there's that external piece of me... thinking of how others with minoritized identities will be perceived.

Although not as often explicitly stated across participant stories, participants expressed feeling eyes on them as the only, or one of few, marginalized persons in their professional environments. This was a significant type of pressure that led to feelings of responsibility to support other marginalized professionals. Lee shared, “I feel this responsibility, not only to my students but also to, for people who come after me, right?” Similarly, Mindy reflected responsibility to students,

When you have a student who looks at you and says, "I've never had anyone else who said some of these things or who looked like me or even who second guessed some of the things that I second guessed because they're a person of color," it just changed everything for me. Because I felt like I had this responsibility to be better.

Maria Elena shared,

My colleagues have privilege to not have this at the forefront all the time. For example, race. There is never a day that I am not going to have an experience where race is not at the forefront. Right? For me it's like, I think I've just accepted, I've always had to work 10 times harder and I'm always going to have to. But I also am very passionate about breaking down barriers and creating access to education for people who look like me.

Maria Elena noted her sense of responsibility to students was driven by her belief in Nelson Mandela's words,

I am not going to leave because I see how the system works. We need to continue deconstructing the system. Are they going to take someone like me even if I'm taking the blows or making the sacrifices? Because if I leave, then that's how many more students who are not going to continue their education? For me, I love the quote by Nelson Mandela. That education is our strongest weapon. I very much believe that. It's like, well I need to stay here. Even if it's only two or three students per cohort, those students need to see somebody like me, so they continue their education. That's another part of my identity. I feel like there's so many things that I do that I forget to say. But mentorship is huge for me. I mentor a ton of students of color. I very rarely turn down a student of color for mentorship.

The stories participants shared often led to this end feeling of responsibility to sacrifice, negotiate, and bear the impact to support other marginalized professionals and push the profession towards inclusivity.

In summary, participants experienced diverse types and sources of impact on Self. I share the following examples to highlight the diversity of how participants generally described the impact of identity negotiation, interpersonal factors, and pressure on their perceptions of Self.

Maria Elena shared,

I react very strongly to the word professional because in my mind, since I was tiny, that has always equated to white. I can't be white, so how am I going to adjust? Because growing up in [location], I had to assimilate quite a bit, and a lot of my culture was taken away from me. I'm still in this place where I'm . . . exploring my identity . . . like, 'No, screw that. I'm taking that back. I'm taking my power back.' How do I negotiate that, right?

At the end of her stories about negotiation, Mindy reflected on her perception of Self, "I will say this too. I don't know that I persisted. . . . I think like now I can see where I persisted, but I think in the moment I [didn't think that]." April discussed how the navigation process during her time as a counselor educator has impacted her personal identity.

I really kind of lost connection with the personal aspects of who I am and what I value and how I like to spend my time and self care things that I was really good at doing for a long time just kind of fell off the radar this last year. I was really unhappy, just as a person because I was losing pieces of who I was. So I needed that step back to reconnect with who I am and what I need and what my values are and how those things need to translate into my professional life instead of them being so fragmented maybe.

Joy closed her stories with a summarizing statement that conveyed impact on Self as an ever present experience, because negotiation is an ongoing experience. “Some things are always going to be negotiated. . . . I guess we're just always on our toes about when [negotiation] happens and if we're okay with it or not.”

Despite the diverse types and sources of impact participants faced, they all shared a common process element. After an inevitable experience of impact, participants either negotiated or expressed authentic Self. The final theme speaks to the confluence of this process and its meaning for the interactional Self.

### **The Confluence**

The confluence described a phenomenon of convergence that included impact on the Self and intersectional navigation. As context dictated questioning of experience or identity, participants experienced intrapersonal impacts and engaged in a navigation process simultaneously. Throughout previously noted themes, I have described participants’ experiences with excerpts that primarily demonstrated connection to that theme. However, participants shared stories that thematically and saliently represented an intersecting phenomenon where impact and navigation were interwoven at the core. There was not mutual exclusion between the two. When participants were faced with adverse experiences, this point of intersection elicited impact and provoked navigation, which then influenced the form and expression of the intersectional Self. Like two rivers meeting at a junction and flowing into one stream of water, experience and process poured into one intersectional Self.

All participants experienced the confluence, but only one named this phenomenon, Lee. My use of the term came from his summarizing words about deconstructing systemic oppression and engaging in relationships with professionals in power. He reflected,

It is really about individuals and communities in power who can do something, who can have a say. I think especially, I forgot to mention this earlier but I think part of what has always been a concern as part of this, [with] personal identity negotiation and professional identity negotiation and the confluence occurring between the two, is that there is so much emotional labor that is happening in that process. . . . I need other people to also help me with mitigating this emotional labor that I have to carry.

He spoke to the spaces between aspects of navigation and described the impact on Self as an action: labor. This represented a confluence of impact and navigation in response to adversity. From a meta-perspective, Lee's summary told me there is an inherent impact on Self, a consistent experience of emotional labor, as he engaged in an intersectional process of navigation. In his letter to Self, he added to his reflections on emotional labor. He spoke to his intersectional Self by detailing components of it and processes of nurturing its authenticity. He wrote,

When this journey becomes difficult, do not ever lose your integrity and authenticity.

Know that you are valuable, you are worthy, and you belong. Know that you matter.

Know that you make a difference, even when you cannot see it. Know that some of these burdens were not meant for you to bear. . . . I love you, keep going.

For other participants, there were not explicit excerpts that clearly aligned to description of this theme as Lee's did. Rather, when reviewing the whole of participants' stories, and the intersectionality of Self, context, experience, and impact throughout them, this theme emerged as a powerful summary of experience with the phenomenon of inquiry as a whole. In an effort to reflect this wholeness, I offer storied examples from each participant that demonstrate a common

thread between participants' stories of navigation and impact on the Self: an experience that is ongoing.

April noted the ongoing nature of negotiation.

I think [my expressions of personal identity are] an ongoing negotiation because I recently have gotten to this place where I kind of gained awareness, or stopped to reflect on just how much I temper the things that I do and the things that I say, the things that I wear to the office.

Christelle described a continuous process of questioning experience.

When any issues, [where professionals questioned my competence,] have arisen, it's more or less I'm wondering if my racial identity and my gender is influencing how to perceive my actions. So I'm constantly thinking about that. Am I being viewed as being incompetent based on my racial identification and then also my gender status? So that's something that I think navigates my direction and also my discussion. . . . Sometimes I wonder, are my passion projects being thought of as passion projects just because I'm a woman [of color]? Or is it because I want equality for others?

In her letter to Self, Joanna shared her ongoing process of discerning when and how to be authentic.

There will be many times that you feel compelled toward being silent about your identities, as well as situations that require that you disclose. The external push for you to share your invisible identities will be exhausting, but ultimately it is you who will decide what parts of you are shared with the world. And it's okay, whatever you choose. I know how important it is for you to advocate for the queer community, so trust your intuition around how and when you share. You will get some pushback from some people, and

while it's always disheartening, it is also strengthening your voice as an advocate for yourself.

Joy expressed still needing to learn how to negotiate across contexts with an experience that affirmed part of her identity that was invalidated in a different context.

What really stuck out to me is that they're giving me messages that what I'm doing, how I'm doing it, keep doing it. That let me know that perhaps my age and/or my race is appreciated in maybe that space, but maybe not in other spaces or it needs to be negotiated differently in other spaces that I haven't quite figured out. I think especially in academia.

Maria Elena reflected on the continual struggle to “bring [her] full self into the profession.”

Higher education is very oppressive and it wasn't set up for somebody like me to succeed. There's kind of, there's more fear, right? Of, ‘who can I trust in this system? How does this system work?’ Being kind of newer to academia as well. There's just a lot there to unpack. . . . There's definitely times still in faculty meetings where I'm just not sure if I can disagree or challenge, . . . because I don't want to be misunderstood.

Mindy reflected on continuing to face consequences from lack of self-advocacy that stemmed from a significant experience that had lasting impact on Self.

[During my doctoral program] I couldn't figure out who I was politically. I was kind of figuring out who I was racially. I couldn't figure out, like why was I doing this field. I almost felt like I didn't have anything valuable to add. . . . And I can't help but think that like some of the inferiority that was kind of nurtured by me and some other like less kind faculty members impacted [my not negotiating for a higher salary]. . . . And now, for where I'm at professionally, it really hurt me and continues to impact my life.



Tara reflected on the ongoing impact from her adverse experience with her dissertation co-chairs.

I found myself being a little bit more strategic in the way I approached my relationship with my co-chairs and also how that would affect my process getting to dissertation. And that was something that I talked to several people about, different mentors, different people who had experience in doctoral programs or around doctoral programs and I was just trying to get done. . . . That challenging experience . . . definitely affected the researcher part of my professional identity development. . . . I still struggle to this day with my own confidence in research. I definitely think there is certain experience of imposter syndrome when it comes to that. And I find that to be challenging sometimes as something that I have to actively fight against and overcome.

Finally, Lee spoke to the ongoing need to negotiate when he described an experience where a White colleague was celebrated for something Lee was censored. “I think it's, again, it's one of those invisible implicit mechanisms that continues to just happen. Yeah, I think that's kinda one experience I would use to capture how I have to negotiate personal and professional identity development.”

In sum, all participants spoke to the ongoing nature of negotiation as they developed their identities. “As our professional identities continuously develop, so do our needs to negotiate different aspects of self.” Moreover, participants consistently noted how intrapersonal impact resulted in negotiation or was the result of negotiation. This demonstrated the confluence was not just present across stories; it is a lived experience that participants will continue to “embrace” with hope to “empower” and “evolve” towards authenticity.

## Conclusion

Participants shared rich, textured stories about their experiences negotiating marginalized identity during PID. They faced a number of adverse experiences dependent upon context, climate, and power, which led to an intersectional navigation process. The navigation process included negotiation, an intersectionality-in-motion response, and impact from relational factors. Participants consciously and subconsciously suppressed forms and expressions of an intersectional Self. They described the ongoing nature of identity negotiation and its impacts on their forms and expressions of Self. Interpersonal relationships, structures of power, and systemic oppression all contributed to participants' unique experiences and decision-making processes as they negotiated identity. In sum, identity negotiation was not a siloed phenomenon. It was one part of an intersectional lived experience, a confluence, of navigating contexts, experiencing impact, and ultimately developing and expressing Self through negotiation, authenticity, and advocacy.

I began this chapter with a composite first person narrative as a method to retell story and introduce results from a narrative thematic analysis of eight counselor educators' experiences negotiating marginalized identity during PID. Then, I provided an overview of the results through five major themes: a) the intersectional Self, b) context, c) intersectional navigation, d) impacts on the Self, and e) the confluence. I included definitions, excerpt examples, and subthemes to support each major theme. In the next chapter, I will discuss final findings, limitations of this study, and implications for practice and future research.

## **CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION**

In this chapter, I discuss the final findings of this study as they relate to my research questions, previous studies on PID, and marginalized counseling professionals' experiences of adversity in counselor education. Then, I identify and describe the limitations of this study. Finally, I discuss implications for research and practice in counselor education.

### **Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to understand the experiences of marginalized CEs as they negotiated their personal identities during PID. A substantial body of literature has explored the composition and development of professional identity across counseling professionals (Woo et al., 2014). Further, numerous researchers have reported how marginalized CPs experience adversity related to their personal identities in professional settings (Bryan, 2018; Haskins et al., 2013; Healey & Hays, 2012; Henfield et al., 2013; Pollock & Meek, 2016; Shillingford et al., 2013; Speciale et al., 2015). In these reports, marginalized CPs negotiate aspects of personal identity to accommodate adversity and engage in PID (Henfield et al., 2013). Yet, no existing research has explored the phenomenon of identity negotiation during PID among CPs. The current study sought to contribute to this gap in literature with a focused examination on marginalized CEs' experiences with the phenomenon of inquiry.

Throughout this study, I used a developmental lens to inquire about and analyze participants' experiences negotiating marginalized identity during PID. Specifically, the Transformational Task Model (TTM) provided a foundational perspective to view participants' experiences and growth processes. As a process model that accounts for shifting contexts and growth over time and experience (Gibson et al., 2010), the TTM gave way for a collective narrative to be co-constructed and retold with flexibility to uniquely shifting contexts, time, and

interpersonal relationships. The TTM also provided a lens to narrow my focus on a similar pathway or process of identity negotiation during development. This allowed me to frame the discussion of findings and monitor my own subjectivities by grounding my co-constructions in theory. Finally, it provided a foundation for my peer debriefer to evaluate consistency throughout the data and my approach to co-constructing meaning of these data. In sum, I used the TTM in conjunction with constructivist, narrative methodology to create a framework to lean into marginalized CEs' experiences in a distinct context, search for shared meanings, and co-construct a retelling of their stories negotiating personal identity during the interactional process of PID.

In this section, I will discuss how key findings from this study answer the primary research questions and relate to existing literature regarding PID and marginalized CPs' experiences of adversity in counselor education. I have organized discussion of thematic findings based on the three research questions that guided this study:

1. How do personal attributes play a role in CEs' experiences negotiating identity during the PID process?
2. How are CEs' personal attributes impacted by engagement in the PID process?
3. How do CEs express their personal identities in their professional settings?

### **Research Question 1: Personal Attributes and Negotiating Identity During PID**

The major themes that address this research question are *the intersectional Self* and *intersectional navigation*. It is important to note, however, that *context* is key to unraveling how the former two themes offer answers. Participants' understandings of Self and their discernment of whether or not to engage in navigation (i.e., does Self need to be negotiated and intersectionality in praxis implemented?) were dependent upon *context*. Environmental factors

and engagement with professionals in those environments conveyed norms and expectations that created a sense of climate that was either susceptible or insusceptible to authentic expression of Self. In instances of insusceptibility, participants suppressed personal attributes to some degree. This finding complements previous research studies that explored marginalized CPs' experiences in counselor education (Bryan, 2018; Bryant et al., 2005; Haskins et al., 2013; Henfield et al., 2013; Hill et al., 2005; Speciale et al., 2015; Zeligman et al., 2015). Specifically, previous studies found contextual factors such as lack of representation of diverse individuals, lack of support from faculty, tokenization, and microaggressions contributed to personal feelings of isolation, disconnection, and invisibility—which prompted suppression of personal identities.

The composition of participants' personal attributes was not a salient determining factor in what type of negotiation occurred. Rather, marginalized identity generally (i.e., minoritized race, ethnicity, gender, and/or sexual orientation) was consistently subject to negotiation. Although participants with visible marginalized identities faced more overt types of adversity, participants of all backgrounds were able to reflect on multiple experiences of identity negotiation regardless of their unique, intersectional identities. Previous studies that explored marginalized individuals' adverse experiences in counselor education were conducted with focus on one marginalized identity (Bradley & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Bryan, 2018; Haskins et al., 2013; Henfield et al., 2013; Shillingford et al., 2013). Findings and implications were often presented to address the specific marginalized group of inquiry. Fewer studies have highlighted multiple marginalized statuses (Baker & Moore, 2015; Speciale et al., 2015; Zeligman et al., 2015), but findings and implications similarly are often specific to the group of inquiry rather than the contexts in which they live. Findings across these studies highlighted lived experiences such as feelings of isolation, invisibility, tokenism, and pressure regardless of identity. The

current study complements these findings in that lived experiences present themselves within specific contexts based on the intersection of privilege and marginalization the individual carries, which uniquely impacts identity negotiation and PID.

Rather than identity composition, the intersection of marginalization and privilege within participants' intersectional identities dictated what identity they negotiated, how they negotiated it, and to what degree they negotiated within various contexts. Privilege in some domains (i.e., White identity, status as faculty with a doctorate) gave participants increased senses of safety or security to express aspects of their identities that were marginalized. For example, a White participant noted feeling less risk to be "out," and another participant noted how her role as a faculty member gave her privilege to express aspects of her racial identity with little fear of retaliation. Speciale et al. (2015) similarly spoke to privileged pieces of identity intersecting with marginalization in their autoethnography. Specifically, one author experienced privilege as a femme-bisexual person to "pass" in certain spaces, while simultaneously feeling invalidation to not have queer identity overtly recognized. Marbley et al. (2011) suggested utilizing multiple aspects of personal identity in efforts to integrate professional identity in higher education. However, existing literature largely has yet to explicitly address the use of privileged identities to navigate marginalizing experiences. Findings from this study indicated the intersections of identities, of marginalization and privilege, elicited a mirroring intersectional navigation process.

Power was a central variable in this intersection. Participants' perceived and actual power influenced how comfortable they felt to express Self. Power also increased over time, as participants reflected gaining power with experience and status in their tenure-track faculty positions. In the intersection between marginalization and privilege, power mediated experiences of Self; power ultimately guided participants' authentic expressions or negotiations of Self as

their contexts contributed to or retracted from their internalized senses of power to be and express. This finding builds from previous studies that reported feelings of confidence or utilizing voice, which may be related to power though not explicitly linked, lead to more positive experiences in counselor education (Baker & Moore, 2015; Henfield et al., 2011). However, understanding power as a central medium to the nature of lived experiences with identity negotiation is an addition to the counselor education literature.

Despite varying personal attributes, all participants carried an inherent desire to be authentically themselves. In times when participants negotiated or subconsciously suppressed Self, there was agency in their processes with a hope to become more authentic as they continued to develop. At other times, participants shared stories where they were genuine without a need to negotiate Self. These stories gave way for *authenticity* to emerge as a subtheme within *the intersectional Self*. This component of the intersectional Self played a role in participants' abilities to avoid negotiation and develop Self with genuineness. This finding suggests authenticity, particularly the nurturance of authentic forms and expressions of Self, may be a remedy to identity negotiation and serve as a persistence factor in successfully developing genuine professional identities. This finding complements previous research on persistence in that authenticity and congruence nurture growth (Bruner, 2017; Hoskins & Goldberg, 2005).

Overall, findings indicated the answer to this research question is that personal attributes are not the active agent in experiences of negotiation. It is contexts, environments and people within them, and power woven throughout them, that marginalize certain compositions and expressions of personal attributes. This amalgam is the active agent in CEs' experiences negotiating marginalized identity.

## **Research Question 2: Impact of PID on Personal Attributes**

The major themes that answered this research question were *impact on the Self* and *the confluence*. Within *impact on the Self*, *interpersonal factors* and *pressure and responsibility* played significant roles in how each participant perceived and experienced their intersectional Self. The subthemes reflect the salience of context to participants' lived experiences with identity negotiation and the ways in which their personal attributes were either nurtured or marginalized during the PID process. As stated above, structures of power and powerful individuals influenced participants' authentic expressions or negotiations of Self. Interpersonal relationships contributed to participants' perceptions of power and the norms and expectations within their environments. These factors impacted their perceptions of Self and their engagement in the PID process as well.

*The confluence* theme, an intersection of navigation and impact dictated by context, also spoke to impact on participants' perceptions of Self and activity in PID. As participants faced adversity related to their personal identities during the PID process, the deconstruction of identity that took place within negotiation impacted how Self was perceived and subsequently expressed. When participants entered the confluence, the intersectional Self was parsed apart, and participants suppressed components of Self rather than integrating them into their professional identities. As a result, participants had to be active and strategic in working to integrate their personal attributes with their professional skills. This involved sometimes reaching outside of their immediate professional contexts for support, validation, or guidance to persist. This finding is consistent with previous literature that affirmed building a professional network of support, particularly with individuals who share one's personal background or identities, is helpful to persist (Marbley et al., 2011; Shillingford et al. 2013). This finding indicates that personal attributes are not impacted so much by engagement in the PID process generally; rather, the Self



is impacted by the process of navigation that results from adverse experiences related to one's personal identities. The intersectional navigation process may be a unique component of PID for this group of marginalized CEs.

The ongoing nature of identity negotiation reflected in *the confluence*, where participants questioned experiences and deconstructed identity across contexts, indicates *impact on the Self* is ongoing as well. Similar to previous studies (Bryan, 2018; Shillingford et al., 2013), participants noted that emotional labor that accompanies facing adverse experiences was ongoing.

Participants were consistently impacted in some capacity by their contexts, where relational influences provoked ongoing negotiation of forms or expressions of Self. On the other hand, personal attributes were sometimes validated, and genuine expression encouraged. Participants shared experiences in supportive interpersonal relationships that promoted authentic expression and allowed them to engage in PID tasks that led to the successful development of competence and confidence in particular roles. For example, Joanna shared supportive mentors affirmed her personal identities during her doctoral program, which increased her confidence as a researcher and scholar. Although they were not as salient in the stories participants told during semi-structured interviews, all participants reflected on positive, affirming, and validating interpersonal relationships in their letters to Self and indicated supportive mentorship as influential to their growth and persistence. This finding affirms the first process component of the TTM, external validation, is significant to jumpstarting PID via engagement in professional relationships and activities (Dollarhide et al., 2013; Gibson et al., 2010; Gibson et al., 2015; Moss et al., 2014). Moreover, recognition that CPs seek external validation via interpersonal relationships and modeling throughout the career lifespan (Brott & Myers, 1999; Calley & Hawley, 2008) compliments the finding that *impact on the Self* will be ongoing.

Participants' discussions of their intersectional Self indicated the intersectional navigation process more saliently impacted Self than engagement in PID generally. If adverse experiences prompt navigation, intersectional navigation may be an additional component to marginalized CEs' progression through the TTM. CEs may need distinct types of external validation or professional experiences to successfully engage in PID tasks and work towards self-validation. External validation and engagement precede individuals' abilities to self-validate their Self and skills (Gibson et al., 2010; Gibson et al., 2015). Thus, attention to these earlier process components is essential to addressing these needs. Previous studies have highlighted the importance of mentorship for successful PID (Borders et al., 2011; Protivnak & Foss, 2009; Storlie et al., 2015; Trede, Macklin, & Bridges, 2012), particularly among groups of marginalized CPs (Bradley & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Hill et al., 2005; Shillingford et al., 2013; Storlie, Parker-Wright, & Woo, 2015). Participants in this study reflected the significant role mentors played in their experiences as well. With this understanding, and recognition of the ongoing nature of navigation, impact on the Self, and PID, mentorship throughout the career lifespan is necessary (Brott & Myers, 1999; Calley & Hawley, 2008).

Overall, personal attributes were either nurtured towards authenticity or hindered towards suppression. Positive relational influences impacted participants' feelings of acceptance, value, and worthiness, which allowed them express authentically and integrate identities. However, the findings generally indicated that this group of CEs were frequently unable to integrate certain authentic, genuine attributes into their professional roles.

### **Research Question 3: Expression of Personal Identities in Professional Settings**

Participants expressed their personal identities across a spectrum that ranged from expression with caution and strategy to unabashed authenticity. The major themes that spoke to this spectrum and offered resolve to the question were *context* and *intersectional navigation*.

As participants shared their stories of negotiating identity in their professional settings, they started by discussing contexts and factors within them to set up what, how, and why they negotiated an aspect of identity. Context drove their stories. Professional context extended beyond immediate work environments in their CACREP-accredited training programs and included higher education, the current sociopolitical climate, doctoral program settings, and professional organizations such as ACA, ACES, and ALGBTIC. Expressions and negotiations of Self varied across these contexts as they encompassed different groups of people and varying norms and expectations. This finding indicates identity negotiation does not happen in one distinct professional setting, but many. Further, it shows that professional identity and expression are influenced by larger systems and climates beyond counselor education.

The process of *intersectional navigation* participants shared indicated that they expressed personal identities strategically in professional settings. As previously noted, there were times when navigation was unnecessary, and participants shared experiences of authentic expression and being. However, when adversity hit and navigation was needed, participants expressed filtered versions of their intersectional Self. Participants deconstructed identity, and they suppressed some aspects of Self while they strategically expressed others. Decision-making around what and how to express was dependent on the norms participants perceived were expected of them by individuals in power. This finding is similar to Baker and Moore's (2015) study findings where CIT participants perceived ambiguity around what aspect of their identity

contributed to a negative encounter with faculty members, and they sometimes masked their cultural identities as a result. However, deconstructing identity based on power and perceived norms is a new concept to existing counselor education literature.

Understanding that aspects of diverse identities are negotiated rather than expressed genuinely in professional settings indicates that qualities of diversity are not being integrated into our collective professional identity. Furthermore, the ongoing nature of negotiation suggests marginalized CEs are consistently questioning to what degree their authentic Self can be expressed across contexts. Considering relational influences spark engagement in navigation, one instance of negotiation brings to question if negotiation will be necessary again because we are consistently in contact with other professionals. And, it is professionals who cultivate and maintain professional norms and climate (Baker & Moore, 2015; Luke & Goodrich, 2010; Woo et al., 2014). Thus, as this group of CEs experienced adversity with other professionals, particularly professionals with power, they entered other professional contexts cautiously, ready to negotiate, because the micro experiences gave them insight into the larger climate. In sum, rather than integrating diverse aspects of Self, findings from this group of CEs show personal attributes may remain deconstructed, expressed strategically in silo, and an integrated expression of intersectionality across professional settings may be absent. Participants' experiences negotiating aspects of their identities or expressions counteracts the genuine integration of identities Gibson et al. (2010) claimed as instrumental to clarifying one's purposes, duties, professional roles, and scope of responsibility as a CP.

Finally, participants' expressions of their personal identities shifted over time. The subtheme of *development* within the major theme of *the intersectional Self* demonstrated this shift. However, *the confluence* provided insight into how participants' thematic experiences

impacted PID broadly. The confluence participants experienced was interactive, moving and distinct depending on contexts. Furthermore, participants' entry into the confluence was most often sparked by relational influences, which indicates participants may not have received external validation in the first phase of their PID processes. Participants' reflections in their letters to Self detailed feelings of increased confidence over time and included messages of self-encouragement to persist in light of experiencing lacks in support. This suggests that successful PID must be interactive and considerate of shifting interpersonal relationships to effectively address identity negotiation. This aligns with existing literature that affirms the ongoing developmental process of PID occurs intra- and interpersonally and needs for growth are present in both domains (Auxier et al., 2003; Brott & Myers, 1999; Gibson et al., 2010). Yet, participants reflected current professional methods to promote their diverse identities are often not interactive; they are not considerate of the confluence, the intersectionality of identity and experience. Instead, professional methods to address diversity are often constructed and implemented in singular instances by highlighting one component of identity (e.g., hosting a panel on racial diversity from Mindy's story). This is similar to research on adverse experiences of minoritized groups cited above that have historically highlighted one identity category. Participants noted holding siloed space for diverse and identities and voices is not enough. There is also a need to demonstrate intersectionality in the ways professionals think and behave as they model professional identity and nurture its growth among other professionals.

In summary, participants reflected on many adverse experiences in their professional settings, which parallels previous research discussed at length in Chapter 2 (Bradley & Holcomb-McCoy, 2005; Bryan, 2018; Haskins et al., 2013; Healey & Hays, 2012; Henfield et al., 2011; Henfield, et al., 2013; Pollock & Meek, 2016; Shillingford et al., 2013; Speciale et al., 2015).

This study extends existing literature by uncovering how adverse experiences influence identity negotiation and PID. Overall, the majority of participants' adverse experiences provoked a need to negotiate identity rather than integrate it and came from negative relational influences. Furthermore, those relational influences were with people who carried more power in some capacity (e.g., in their status, position, or leadership role) than participants. This component, context, is the principal factor undergirding all findings from this study. People in power were the fundamental source in perpetuating norms and expectations that marginalized this group of CEs. Experiences of marginalization signaled CEs to negotiate or suppress aspects or expressions of identity, and genuine expression of diverse personal attributes were hindered as a result. Before providing implications for research and practice based on these findings, I expand on limitations of this study.

### **Limitations**

In narrative inquiry, shared meanings of experiences can be applicable across settings, but details or contexts of each person's experience are unique (Riessman, 2008). My specific narrative inquiry was limited to understanding lived experiences of marginalized CEs who identified within at least one of three groups: women, racial or ethnic minorities, and LGBTQ+ people. Narrowing criteria of participant groups limits the experiences and findings related to identity negotiation to a specific context, which cannot be generally applied to all counselor educators. However, naturalistic generalizability, or transferability of findings or meanings, can be achieved in qualitative research (Tracy, 2010). Thus, experiential knowledge gathered from this specific group of participants can help frame future discussions and research regarding PID and identity negotiation during the process.

I limited the scope of my inquiry by focusing on experience-oriented narrative inquiry. My approach was situated in a paradigmatic-type of narrative inquiry that allowed me to co-construct and interpret thematic meaning from shared experiences of all participants. The nature of co-construction from this framework limited my analysis and report to a retelling of what is told rather than creating new explanations that sought to answer why participants experienced elements within stories.

It is important to note that the composite narrative output is reductionistic. As I sought to find commonalities between participants, thematic units of meaning across stories, some of the nuance to individual experience was lost. I attempted to give voice to nuance by drawing a thematic finding of *context*, as it heavily influenced the unique experiences of individual participants. Nevertheless, the composite narrative is a reduction, and it should be noted that not all participants experienced every instance of identity negotiation in the way it was described in the composite. From a general perspective, participants engaged in intersectional navigation in response to a particular adverse event or encounter. However, the individual experience could be much more specific or strategic depending on context and the intersections of identities each participant carried.

As a narrative qualitative researcher, I was the primary tool for data collection and analysis. Also, due to the co-constructive nature of narrative inquiry, I was a member of participants' stories. I strived to describe the essence of participants' experiences, but I could not fully remove myself and my perspectives from the co-constructive telling and retelling of stories. My identities may have influenced what and how participants shared their experiences with me. I maintained ethical integrity in co-construction by memoing, documenting my subjectivities, and engaging in peer debriefing and member checking.

Another limitation of this study was the small sample size. Despite support for smaller sample sizes throughout qualitative and narrative methodological literature (Riessman, 2008), small samples limit fittingness of this study in other contexts. I addressed this limitation by seeking a diverse participant pool, and I reported results of this study with attention to specific contexts of participants' stories. Diversity of race, ethnicity, age, and sexual orientation was prevalent among the final participant pool, but gender diversity was limited. Participants' identities differed from my own in various ways, which may have impacted which stories they shared and how they shared them.

Despite efforts to include a diverse sample, my methods were convenience-based. It was challenging to truly select individuals I knew could give voice to the phenomenon of inquiry. Participants varied in their developmental processes. Some participants had experienced identity negotiation in certain contexts, while others had not. To address these variances, I grounded my examination of participants' experiences in the cyclical process of PID outlined in the TTM. I also extended the data by including a secondary source in the letter to self. However, the convenience-based methods, theoretical scope, and limited engagement with participants narrowed my understanding of their experiences.

### **Implications**

Findings from this research study were distinct in content, but they shared a common descriptor: intersectional. Participants' experiences were shaped by contexts that influenced intersectional perceptions and expressions of Self, negotiations of marginalized identity, and processes of growth. Context was the undergirding mediator of their intersectional experiences. Concisely offering implications to address a vast, intersectional, complex factor such as context is near impossible. With shifting environments, and norms, expectations, and power dynamics



driven by individuals within them, strategies for individual persistence are not enough. Thus, the major implication from this study is not to offer singular strategies, but to suggest intersectional praxis as a response to intersectional experience. To ensure that authentic integration of diverse personal attributes with professional skills leads to an authentic professional identity, we have to enter the confluence with recognition that there are intersecting elements that contribute to its pool. We cannot address one source and expect systemic change. We must address all sources that shape and sustain the system. We must be intersectional in praxis to live authentically as intersectional CPs. In this section, I provide implications for professional practice and future research to this effect.

### **Professional Practice**

Within this study, participants discussed context and power as central to experiences of identity negotiation. Specifically, power within particular contexts or interpersonal relationships contributed to participants feeling a need to negotiate aspects or expressions of Self, and this persisted across environments (e.g., doctoral programs, professional conferences, and current work environments). This finding suggests individuals who carry significant power within professional contexts directly influence not the experience of identity negotiation and the ways in which professional identity develops. Similar to previous studies highlighted in the discussion above, participants reflected on marginalizing experiences with individuals in power that led to feelings of diminishment. This indicates a need for individuals in power within counselor education (e.g., program coordinators, tenured faculty, or leadership in professional organizations) and individuals with privileged identities (e.g., men, White and heterosexual individuals) to examine their roles and behaviors as they influence experiences of individuals from marginalized backgrounds.

Participants suggested an intersectional approach to engage in this examination that includes increased reflexivity around biases, increased diverse representation in leadership, and active discussions about systems of marginalization and privilege across professional settings. CEs may incorporate ongoing reflexive activities throughout their programs. This begins with CEs engaging in personal reflexivity around diversity and inclusion topics through media such as personal journaling or small-group discussions with each other. Naming and reflecting on one's personal biases and the sociocultural backgrounds that influence their composition is an important starting point. Then, CEs may be more readily able to lead by intentionally engaging in conversations with colleagues and students throughout courses, programmatic events, scholarship, and supervision or advising sessions about personal biases, sociocultural experiences, and ways in which intersecting identities are simultaneously privileged and marginalized. Further, these discussions must be grounded on the makeup of contexts and the intersectionality of those within that context. CEs can encourage their students to engage similarly by implementing reflexive activities in coursework and praxis that promote reflexivity around identity and inclusive ways of being, thinking, and doing.

The higher education context was present across participants stories. As they reflected on adverse experiences and identity negotiation, the higher education context either directly or indirectly influenced their experiences (e.g., experiences in doctoral programs focused on context of the program, but were situated within a higher education setting; experiences in professional organizations reflected hierarchical norms within higher education tenure statuses). Participants voiced the role higher education structures, norms, and expectations influenced their genuine expressions of Self. This indicates CPs must consider those factors within higher education as we consider similar factors in our subsystem of counselor education. As our professional identities

begin forming in training (Limberg et al., 2013), and contexts influence growth (Moss et al., 2014), consideration for the setting in which we begin growth is vital. Furthermore, this indicates increasing inclusivity in our microsystems will require attention to the macrosystem. Thus, for change to be wide-reaching and long-lasting, CPs must address the larger systemic structures that influence smaller contexts within.

Similar to the intersectional approach outlined above for the counselor education context, CEs may begin to address the larger systemic structure of higher education by first engaging in intersectional, reflexive conversations. The ways in which we speak and advocate create the mold for new pathways of action. Central to creating new paths is deconstructing power differentials that limit marginalized groups from using their voices authentically. CEs of privileged backgrounds must leverage their privilege for the rights of CPs who are oppressed (Speciale et al., 2015). This may include CEs currently in positions of leadership in higher education (e.g., department heads, program coordinators, or deans) adjusting the composition of leadership teams to include more individuals of marginalized backgrounds, bringing issues related to inequitable distributions of power to the table at departmental and college-level meetings, and promoting professional development opportunities around inclusivity for higher education leadership. CEs may also consider examining policies and practices within their programs, as they shape expectations and norms for CPs during training, and adjusting them to incorporate reflexivity and inclusivity in praxis. Adjustment in policy may help hold CEs accountable to consistent reflexivity and infusion of inclusion into training programs.

Participants' reflections on the significance of interpersonal relationships highlighted the importance of securing external validation and support throughout PID. These findings indicate supportive mentorship is needed to decrease identity negotiation and lead to successful PID.

Moreover, mentors must demonstrate intersectionality in the ways they offer support, model professional identity, and nurture PID among their mentees. Again, increased reflexivity is needed among CPs to determine needed shifts in professional climate, relationships, and practices that are intersectional and inclusive to expressions of intersecting diverse identities. Intentional steps to observe, reflect, and engage in vulnerable conversations with diverse individuals may improve this practice.

In sum, the major themes derived from participants' stories revealed a need for intersectional praxis and engagement during the ongoing, interactional process of PID. The intersectional Self described multiple personal and professional components of Self that were present and active in participants' professional settings. Their stories affirmed that professional identity is an integration of personal attributes and professional skills (Gibson et al., 2010; Nugent & Jones, 2009). This indicates a clear need for professional action to decrease identity negotiation among our CPs. Furthermore, to achieve the vision of diversifying the counseling field (Kaplan & Gladding, 2011), professional action is needed to ensure all CPs are genuinely integrating identity and expressing diversity in order for it to be infused into our collective identity and practices.

Such action cannot be achieved with one effort, and more than likely not two or three either. There is a need for systemic intervention across our practices of PID. In efforts to model and mentor, facilitate professional experiences, and encourage CPs to self-validate the integration of personal attributes and professional skills, participants suggested doing more than creating access. Access without support is not opportunity. Increasing representation of diverse individuals in our field continues to be a crucial need to ensure diverse support is available and tokenization and overextension is not as prevalent among marginalized CEs (Shillingford et al.

2013). Increased acceptance of diverse ways of being is also necessary to promote authentic integration of Self. Inclusion is not tolerance to hold space for diverse individuals or thoughts, rather integration and embodiment of the diverse voices that speak with power and take action to advocate for change. As PID is a process that extends across the career lifespan and requires continuous learning (Auxier et al., 2003; Brott & Myers, 1999; Luke & Goodrich, 2010), professional praxis needs to reflect that evolution and openness to continuous learning.

Among many suggestions from participants, one saliently stood out across participant stories to speak to this vision. For genuine integration of diverse personal attributes into the professional collective to occur with less hinderance, people in power either have to shift their ways of being or step out of the way. Similar to suggestions provided previously in this section, CEs in positions of power have responsibility to start conversations and lead by example. Depending on contexts, and the degree of power differentials within a given context, some CEs may need to step down from their positions of leadership to allow CEs of marginalized backgrounds to lead the charge, as increased representation is a salient implication from this study and previous studies cited above. CEs may discern if this is necessary by collaboratively evaluating their current context, including all individuals throughout that context, which may shed light onto specific needs for change. Redistributing power throughout a training program, department, or professional organization begins with open, vulnerable conversation between intersectional individuals from privileged and marginalized backgrounds.

### **Future Research**

Numerous questions can be addressed in future studies on this area of inquiry. First, this study may be replicated with other CP professional distinctions (i.e., CITs, counselors, or CEITs) and seasoned CEs. Future research may also consider expanding participant criteria for counselor

educators who are practitioners (i.e., individuals with doctoral degrees not working as faculty members in CACREP-accredited programs). As context was reported to be a major mediating factor to experience with the phenomenon, examining experiences of professionals that live and work in other contexts may extend findings from this study.

Considering participants discussed contexts outside of counselor education as influential to their experiences, namely the structure of higher education, future research may explore the impacts of higher education on counselor education as a unit. Specifically, examining CEs' perceptions of institutional structure, policies, and power as it relates to their professional identities may provide insight into how climate takes shape in counselor education and subsequently directs PID.

The process of navigation, and identity negotiation within it, clearly impacted participants' PID processes. Namely, negative relational influences that prompted navigation inhibited participants from receiving external validation regarding the component(s) of their identities that were questioned and negotiated in that process. This indicates future research is needed to explore how navigation among marginalized CEs, and potentially marginalized CPs broadly, plays a role in the TTM of PID. Participants in this study sought external validation, even if it was from individuals outside of their programs or immediate environments in counselor education. But, this indicates that their experiences of validation and processes of gathering experiences in their counselor educator roles may differ from original understandings of the TTM as it is applied specifically to the context of counselor education. Future research may direct examinations at clarifying the content of marginalized CPs' pathways of growth, which may shed light onto differences in the composition of professional identity between marginalized and privileged groups of CPs. Highlighting differences may provide further implications for

shifts necessary to unify CPs professional identities and practices (Kaplan & Gladding, 2011). Future research on the TTM may also examine how to attend to the intersectionality of identities and contexts that influence engagement in transformational tasks over time and experiences. A matrix to consider context may need to be situated around the model.

Future research could also examine CIT and CEIT perceptions of marginalized CEs' professional identities. Considering PID begins with seeking external validation through modeling and mentorship (Gibson et al., 2010), understanding how students' perceptions influence their integration of personal attributes and professionals skills may shed light onto clearer implications for CEs' practices of modeling and mentoring. Future research on mentoring is also needed, specifically related to developing intersectional mentoring behaviors that promotes authenticity. Quantitative investigations may explore CEs' current perceived levels of comfort or expertise with certain multicultural topics. Qualitative investigations may follow quantitative studies to explore the intricacies of CEs' unique intrapersonal experiences in their roles as mentors.

Finally, future research may examine marginalized CEs' methods of persistence to be authentic as they counter identity negotiation during PID. Similar to Bruner's (2017) study on persistence among traditionally marginalized CEITs, examining the composition and development of authenticity with greater detail would extend findings from this study. Exploring contexts that nurture authenticity rather than hinder it may be a starting point for these examinations.

### **Conclusion**

In this study, eight CEs of diverse backgrounds and identities shared lived experiences with the phenomenon of identity negotiation during PID, an emerging point of importance as our

field seeks to diversify. Increasing numbers of diverse professionals and diversifying practices is on our horizon. However, this study indicated we face a barrier to authentic diversification—an ongoing identity negotiation process that occurs in a confluence perpetuated by contexts. The good news is we have power to address the perpetuating factor. Because it is us, CPs, that mold and maintain our contexts.

As readers open themselves to the words I have co-constructed to retell these participants' stories, I hope they are moved in similar ways I was—to push against, tear down, join together, and rebuild. But, the ways in which we create change will take more than being moved to do so. It will take CPs in positions of power and privilege relinquishing power. CPs in power must step back to observe, encourage, and work with marginalized CPs as they step into positions of leadership. And, as marginalized CPs have freedom to implement their power, they may reconstruct a context for inclusivity that will move our profession forward. It will take consistent and vulnerable reflexivity that is uncomfortable and challenging. Reflexivity that will call out our biases and areas for growth. We must be supportive of each other to step into that vulnerability and model it for all CPs. It will take shifting our professional practices to reflect intersectional ways of being and thinking. Our points of view must broaden beyond siloed understandings of people and acts of behavior from a singular cultural point of view. Active discussions about the contexts that shape our intersectional experiences, ones that marginalize and privilege certain identities or ideals, must increase. It will take discomfort, sacrifice, dedication, and above all, collaboration.

This study has come to an end, but the call to action is remains in motion. To end this document with my own summarizing statement feels counterintuitive to the essence of



participants' ongoing experiences and growth processes. Therefore, I will stop for now with participants' composite declaration for transformation. *Embrace, empower, evolve.*

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## APPENDICES

Appendix A  
**Recruitment Email - Participants**

Hello! My name is Nancy Thacker, and I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. I invite you to participate in my narrative dissertation study entitled “Counselor Educators’ Experiences Negotiating Marginalized Identity during Professional Identity Development.” This study has been approved by the UT Institutional Review Board (#) under the advisement of Dr. Casey Barrio Minton.

The purpose of this study is to understand marginalized counselor educators’ lived experiences as they negotiate their personal identities during professional identity development. For the purposes of this study, I have limited my population focus to include counselor educators who are full-time employees in CACREP-accredited counseling programs and earned their doctoral degrees between 2015-2018. Furthermore, marginalized status is limited to individuals who have experienced marginalization due to personal identity as a (1) woman, (2) racial/ethnic minority, and/or (3) sexual/gender minority (LGBTQ+). Participants will be asked to complete a 60-90 minute individual interview via ZOOM, provide a brief written letter about their experiences post-interview, and participate in two rounds of membership checking. Participants will be compensated with a \$20 Amazon gift card for their time. If you would like to participate, please complete the one-minute screening and demographic survey and provide your email address here: <https://goo.gl/forms/2LlSn7SeTz2DMmwJ2>

If you qualify for this study, I will contact you via email to provide an informed consent statement and set up a time to interview at your convenience.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact me at [nthacke2@vols.utk.edu](mailto:nthacke2@vols.utk.edu). Thank you for your time and consideration!

Sincerely,

Nancy Thacker, MS, NCC  
Doctoral Candidate, Counselor Education  
University of Tennessee, Knoxville  
[nthacke2@vols.utk.edu](mailto:nthacke2@vols.utk.edu)

Appendix B  
**Recruitment Email - CACREP Program Chairs**

Hello! My name is Nancy Thacker, and I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. I am contacting you to solicit participants for my narrative dissertation study entitled “Counselor Educators’ Experiences Negotiating Marginalized Identity during Professional Identity Development.” This study has been approved by the UT Institutional Review Board (#) under the advisement of Dr. Casey Barrio Minton.

I would appreciate your assistance by forwarding the request for participation (included below) to counselor educators that may qualify for this study. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Nancy Thacker, MS, NCC  
Doctoral Candidate, Counselor Education  
University of Tennessee, Knoxville  
[nthacke2@vols.utk.edu](mailto:nthacke2@vols.utk.edu)

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Hello! My name is Nancy Thacker, and I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. I invite you to participate in my narrative dissertation study entitled “Counselor Educators’ Experiences Negotiating Marginalized Identity during Professional Identity Development.” This study has been approved by the UT Institutional Review Board (#) under the advisement of Dr. Casey Barrio Minton.

The purpose of this study is to understand marginalized counselor educators’ lived experiences as they negotiate their personal identities during professional identity development. For the purposes of this study, I have limited my population focus to include counselor educators who are full-time employees in CACREP-accredited counseling programs and earned their doctoral degrees between 2015-2018. Furthermore, marginalized status is limited to individuals who have experienced marginalization as a result of their personal identification with at least one of the following groups: women, racial and ethnic minorities, or LGBTQ+ individuals. Participants will be asked to complete a 60-90 minute individual interview via ZOOM, provide a brief written letter about their experiences post-interview, and participate in two rounds of membership checking. Participants will be compensated with a \$20 Amazon gift card for their time. If you would like to participate, please complete the one-minute screening and demographic survey and provide your email address here: <https://goo.gl/forms/2LlSn7SeTz2DMmwJ2>

If you qualify for this study, I will contact you via email to provide an informed consent statement and set up a time to interview at your convenience.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact me at [nthacke2@vols.utk.edu](mailto:nthacke2@vols.utk.edu). Thank you for your time and consideration!

Sincerely,

Nancy Thacker, MS, NCC  
Doctoral Candidate, Counselor Education  
University of Tennessee, Knoxville  
[nthacke2@vols.utk.edu](mailto:nthacke2@vols.utk.edu)

Appendix C  
**Screening and Demographic Survey**

**Demographics**

Age:

Gender Identity:

Race/Ethnicity:

Sexual Orientation:

Have you experienced marginalization as a result of your personal identity as a racial/ethnic minority, woman, or LGBTQ+ individual? Y/N

**Graduate Training:**

When did you earn your doctoral degree? Month, Year

Was your graduate program CACREP-accredited? Y/N

ACES Region of Graduate Program:

**Employment Information**

Are you currently employed as a full-time faculty member in a CACREP-accredited counseling program? Y/N

Employment status (e.g., tenure-track assistant professor, full-time clinical professor):

Counseling program status (e.g., Master's only, Master's and Doctoral):

ACES Region of Employment:

Please provide your email address. If you qualify for this study, the primary researcher, Nancy Thacker (nthacke2@vols.utk.edu), will contact you via email to collect your informed consent and set up a time to interview. Thank you!

Appendix D  
**Informed Consent Email**

Dear [potential participant],

Thank you for indicating interest in participating in this study! Attached is the informed consent to participate. Please review the consent, sign it, and return it to me at [nthacke2@vols.utk.edu](mailto:nthacke2@vols.utk.edu). If you have any questions or concerns about the requirements to participate included in the informed consent, please feel free to email me. Once I have received the informed consent with your signature, I will send you a follow-up email to schedule a time to interview and provide a preview of the interview process and questions.

Thank you,

Nancy Thacker, MS, NCC  
Doctoral Candidate, Counselor Education  
University of Tennessee, Knoxville  
[nthacke2@vols.utk.edu](mailto:nthacke2@vols.utk.edu)



Appendix E  
**INFORMED CONSENT**

**Counselor Educators' Experiences Negotiating Marginalized Identity during Professional Identity Development**

**INTRODUCTION**

Hello! My name is Nancy Thacker, and I am a Counselor Education doctoral candidate in the Department of Educational Psychology and Counseling at the University of Tennessee. You are invited to participate in a dissertation research study that explores the experiences of marginalized counselor educators (CEs) as they navigate personal identity negotiation during professional identity development (PID).

The purpose of this study is to examine the lived experiences of marginalized CEs through sharing of stories. I am interested in understanding how personal, marginalized identity impacts and is impacted by engagement in the PID process. A narrative methodological approach will be used to co-construct meaning of experiences negotiating personal identity during PID. Impacts of adverse experiences, environmental contexts, and intersecting identities will be considering in the collection and re-telling of participants' stories. For the purposes of this study, individuals who identify as women, racial/ethnic minorities, and/or LGBTQ+ and have experienced marginalization as a result of their personal identities will be included.

**INFORMATION ABOUT PARTICIPANTS' INVOLVEMENT IN THE STUDY**

This study will consist of one, 60-90-minute, audio-recorded interview via ZOOM video conferencing software. During the interview, I will ask you to share personal stories about your experiences negotiating personal identity during PID. You will be asked to complete a demographic questionnaire prior to the interview. After the interview, you will be asked to provide a written narrative, in the form of a brief letter, that describes how your experiences related to the research topic could help younger counselors in their development. After the interview is completed and I receive your written letter, I will begin data analysis. I will email you at two different points during data analysis to ask that you review transcripts of the interview and preliminary findings to ensure I have accurately represented your contribution to the study.

**POTENTIAL RISKS**

Although there are limited risks associated with this interview, discussing experiences related to marginalization and identity development can elicit uncomfortable emotions. We can skip any questions or terminate the interview at any time if you wish to move or discontinue the interview at no penalty. There is a possibility confidentiality can be breached due to everyday use of the internet. Confidentiality may be breached due to the small size of the counseling profession as well. To mitigate the risk of being identified within written reports, I will use pseudonyms and offer you an opportunity to redact stories that could be identifying.

**BENEFITS**

Although there are no direct benefits to you for participating in this research study, information gathered will add to the body of professional counseling and counselor education research. Your participation may also benefit our understanding of ways to better support genuine expressions of counseling professionals' cultural identities as they develop professional identities.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

Your confidentiality is important and will be maintained through the use of a pseudonym in the research report. You will have an opportunity to review transcripts and identify any stories you do not want shared in the final research reports. Data will be stored on a password-protected computer until transcribed. Audio recordings will be destroyed after transcription and checking. Written records will be kept under password-protection for three years, then destroyed in May 2022. The data will only be made available to you as the participant and me as the researcher. Anonymous transcripts will be available to my research auditor, Kertesha Riley, and my dissertation chair, Dr. Casey Barrio Minton. You may give permission in writing to share your data with others if you so choose.

**COMPENSATION**

Participants will receive a \$20 Amazon gift card for their time and participation.

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

If you have any questions about this research study or you experience adverse effects as a result of participating in this study, please contact the researcher, Nancy Thacker at [nthacke2@vols.utk.edu](mailto:nthacke2@vols.utk.edu) or by phone at (276) 613-5151. Additionally, Dr. Casey Barrio Minton is the supervising professor for this study. Should you need to contact her for more information, she can be reached by email at [cbarrio@utk.edu](mailto:cbarrio@utk.edu) or by office phone at (865) 974-8382. If you have questions about your rights as a participant, please contact the University of Tennessee Office of Research Compliance Officer, Kristine Hershberger, at (865) 974-0437.

**PARTICIPATION**

Your participation is voluntary. You may choose to stop participating at any time and you will not be penalized or lose benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you choose to withdraw your participation, your data will be immediately returned to you or destroyed. I appreciate your consideration to participate in this study.

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**CONSENT**

I have read the letter of consent detailing the research study that explores the experiences of marginalized CEs as they navigate personal identity negotiation during professional identity development. I understand that if I choose to participate, my confidentiality will be maintained throughout the entire study, as well as any subsequent reports or publications of the study's

results. I will receive a \$20 Amazon gift card as compensation for my participation and understand that I may drop out of the study at any time without penalty. My signature indicates that I agree to participate in this research study as outlined in the informed consent.

---

Participant's name (printed)

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Participant's signature

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Date

---

Researcher's signature

---

Date

Appendix F  
**Scheduling Email**

Dear [participant],

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. Please visit the doodle poll to provide your availability to interview within the next two weeks here: [LINK](#)

I will follow up with you via email to confirm the day and time of our interview and provide information to connect virtually via ZOOM.

In addition, please review the attached document to prepare for our interview. The document includes an introduction to the study and preview of the interview questions.

Thank you,

Nancy Thacker, MS, NCC  
Doctoral Candidate, Counselor Education  
University of Tennessee, Knoxville  
[nthacke2@vols.utk.edu](mailto:nthacke2@vols.utk.edu)

## Appendix G

### Introduction to Study

Before participating in this study, I would like to share my understanding of Professional Identity Development (PID) and components within it. It will help us situate our conversation about your experiences. I understand professional identity as an integration of personal attributes and professional skills in a professional setting. We develop such identity through engagement in transformational tasks specific to our professional roles. We develop over time in a sequential process, which can be repeated when we face new roles and responsibilities in our professional careers.

The PID process begins by us looking to others to model effective practice and externally validate our abilities as we try out our professional skills. Over time, we engage in professional experiences that give us a sense of knowledge and confidence. Then, we are finally able to self-validate as our personhood and professional skillset successfully merge. We feel confident in our abilities and genuine in our ways of being with clients or students.

Of the many personal attributes we carry, our cultural identities are especially significant to the ways we learn and develop into counseling professionals. I have learned that counseling professionals who identify as women, racial and ethnic minorities, or LGBTQ+ experience adverse events in professional settings related to their personal identities. In an effort to combat such adverse experiences, marginalized counseling professionals commonly negotiate aspects of their personal identities in professional contexts so that they can access needed support and gather experiences to successfully integrate into the profession. Personal identity negotiation can take place in countless ways. This is why I have reached out to you today. I am hopeful that by hearing your stories and experiences with this phenomenon, we can begin to understand how to better support genuine expressions of cultural identities as counseling professionals integrate their personal attributes with professional skills to develop a professional identity.

With this framework, I hope we can discuss three main topics during our time together:

1. Your experiences negotiating personal identity in a professional context.
2. Challenges you may have faced to integrate your personal identity into your professional context.
3. How the experiences you identify impact your unique expressions of personal identity in and out of professional contexts, and how they impact unique expressions of professional identity.

I will ask probing questions related to these topics that give attention to shifts over time and environmental contexts, including the intersectionality of identity.

## Appendix H

### Interview Guide

**Introductory Script:** Hello, my name is Nancy Thacker, and I will be interviewing you today. Thank you for taking time to participate in this study. I anticipate spending between an hour to an hour and a half together today. I want to remind you that our time together will be audio recorded and transcribed verbatim as a part of this research study. Are there any questions or concerns about recording or any other parts of the informed consent you received? Please know that you are free to withdraw from this interview or the study at any time without penalty. Also, if you have any questions as we proceed, please feel free to ask me. If you are ready, I will begin our recording now.

### Interview Questions

**Warm up questions:** How would you describe your personal identity; professional identity as a counselor educator at this point in time? What brought you to this field?

1. Can you tell me about an experience when you engaged in personal identity negotiation in a professional context?
  - a. What contextual factors were at play?
  - b. In what ways did this experience impact your engagement in the PID process?
  - c. In what ways was your personal identity impacted by this experience?
2. Can you tell me about another experience when you engaged in personal identity negotiation in a professional context?
  - a. What contextual factors were at play?
  - b. In what ways did this experience impact your engagement in the PID process?
  - c. In what ways was your personal identity impacted by this experience?
3. Can you tell me about a time when you were challenged to integrate your personal identity into your professional context?
  - a. What challenges did you face?
  - b. What contextual factors were at play?
  - c. How did you negotiate your identities?
  - d. How did this experience influence your identities?
4. Can you tell me about another time when you were challenged to integrate your personal identity into your professional context?
  - a. What challenges did you face?
  - b. What contextual factors were at play?

- c. How did you negotiate your identities?
  - d. How did this experience influence your identities?
5. Summary of shared stories, highlight setting/context of stories.
- a. If stories are from across points in time: As you look back on these stories, can we explore how your experiences have shifted across time and context?
  - b. If stories are from one point in time: how are these experiences similar or different during your time as a [CIT, counselor, CEIT, or CE]?
6. How have these experiences impacted your unique expressions of personal identity?
- a. In non-professional settings?
  - b. In professional settings?
  - c. Over time
7. How have these experiences impacted your unique expressions of professional identity?
- a. With colleagues
  - b. With students
  - c. Over time

**Closing Script:** Thank you again for agreeing to participate in this study and sharing your stories with me. As an extension of our conversation today, I would like to ask you to write a letter addressed to your younger self that offers advice, instruction, or support for navigating the process of personal identity negotiation during PID. Take some time to reflect on our conversation, and please email me your letter via UT Vault in the next week. I will provide instructions via email to access UT Vault after this interview. There are no requirements for length or structure. Do you have any questions about the letter? Unless you have any final thoughts, I will turn off the recording device now.

To protect your confidentiality, I will use a pseudonym in all research documents and reports. What would you like your pseudonym to be?

Appendix I  
**Participant Email - Request for Letter**

Dear [participant],

Thank you again for participating in my study. This is a reminder to please provide your personal letter related to our interview. Here are instructions to access the UT Vault system:

1. Go to the UT Vault website: <https://vault.utk.edu/>
2. Enter the email address you would like to use and choose **Register**.
3. You will receive an email with a link to activate your Vault account.
4. Create a password for Vault by entering and verifying the new password. Choose **Set Password**. You will then be prompted to log into Vault.
5. Send message address to [nthacke2@vols.utk.edu](mailto:nthacke2@vols.utk.edu)

If you have any questions or concerns about the letter or UT Vault, please let me know.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Nancy Thacker, MS, NCC  
Doctoral Candidate, Counselor Education  
University of Tennessee, Knoxville  
[nthacke2@vols.utk.edu](mailto:nthacke2@vols.utk.edu)



Appendix J  
**Member Check Email**

Dear [participant],

Thank you again for participating in my study. I have attached the [transcript, initial identified themes] from our interview to this email. Please review the document and let me know if any corrections or amendments to your stories are needed within the next week. If you would like any words or stories removed, please let me know. If I do not hear from you within one week, I will assume you do not wish to provide feedback, and I will move forward in my study.

Sincerely,

Nancy Thacker, MS, NCC  
Doctoral Candidate, Counselor Education  
University of Tennessee, Knoxville  
[nthacke2@vols.utk.edu](mailto:nthacke2@vols.utk.edu)

Appendix K  
**Participant Email - Composite Narrative**

Dear [participant],

Thank you again for participating in my study. I have attached my findings in the form of a composite narrative. Please feel free to review the document at your convenience. It is my hope that you find your voice and experiences reflected in the composite. I deeply appreciate your contribution to this study and the counseling field.

Sincerely,

Nancy Thacker, MS, NCC  
Doctoral Candidate, Counselor Education  
University of Tennessee, Knoxville  
[nthacke2@vols.utk.edu](mailto:nthacke2@vols.utk.edu)

Appendix L  
**Summary Code Book**

<b>Major Theme</b>	<b>Subthemes</b>	<b>Key Pattern Codes</b>	<b>Key Narrative Codes</b>	<b>Excerpt Examples in Chapter 4</b>
Context	Climate	negotiation in context, doc program context, higher education context, academy structure, power influence across space	counselor education climate, higher education climate, safe space, rejection, non-inclusive space, power differentials, impact of power, ongoing questioning of safety	pp. 135-143
Impacts on the Self	Interpersonal Factors	diminishment, validation, mentorship, power	positive mentor experience, negative mentor experience, belonging, lack of voice, misunderstood, fear, encouragement	pp. 155-167
	Pressure and Responsibility	model minority pressure, responsibility	tokenism, burdened, exhaustion, need to represent, student care, emotional labor	
Intersectional Navigation	Negotiation	strategic decision-making, suppression, power	negotiation to survive, negotiation of expression, rationalizing discrimination, subconscious suppression, questioning identities	pp. 144-154
	Intersectionality in Motion	needs for change, professional responsibility, intentionality	advocacy, honoring diversity, increase reflexivity, shift in power, demonstration of inclusivity	
	Relational Influence	power in relationship, hindering relational influence	adverse experience, negative impact, discrimination, isolation, audience dictates negotiation, decision-making	

**Summary Code Book Continued**

<b>Major Theme</b>	<b>Subthemes</b>	<b>Key Pattern Codes</b>	<b>Key Narrative Codes</b>	<b>Excerpt Examples in Chapter 4</b>
The Confluence	None. *This theme applied when impact and navigation were interwoven at the core.	deconstruction, influence on identity, ongoing navigation	deconstructing identity, questioning experience, disempowered, emotional labor, advocacy, growth through adversity	pp. 168-171
The Intersectional Self	Authenticity	identity components, authentic expression	integrated identity, identity differentiation, intersections of identity, genuine expression, privilege, congruence	pp. 128-133
	Development	feedback loop, intersectional development	shift in identity, integration of identities, identity development process, learning through engagement, ongoing growth	

# Appendix M

## Rev.com NDA

### CLIENT NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT

This CLIENT NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT, effective as of the date last set forth below (this "Agreement"), between the undersigned actual or potential client ("Client") and **Rev.com, Inc.** ("Rev.com") is made to confirm the understanding and agreement of the parties hereto with respect to certain proprietary information being provided to Rev.com for the purpose of performing translation, transcription and other document related services (the "Rev.com Services"). In consideration for the mutual agreements contained herein and the other provisions of this Agreement, the parties hereto agree as follows:

#### 1. Scope of Confidential Information

1.1. "Confidential Information" means, subject to the exceptions set forth in Section 1.2 hereof, any documents, video files or other related media or text supplied by Client to Rev.com for the purpose of performing the Rev.com Services.

1.2. Confidential Information does not include information that: (i) was available to Rev.com prior to disclosure of such information by Client and free of any confidentiality obligation in favor of Client known to Rev.com at the time of disclosure; (ii) is made available to Rev.com from a third party not known by Rev.com at the time of such availability to be subject to a confidentiality obligation in favor of Client; (iii) is made available to third parties by Client without restriction on the disclosure of such information; (iv) is or becomes available to the public other than as a result of disclosure by Rev.com prohibited by this Agreement; or (v) is developed independently by Rev.com or Rev.com's directors, officers, members, partners, employees, consultants, contractors, agents, representatives or affiliated entities (collectively, "Associated Persons").

#### 2. Use and Disclosure of Confidential Information

2.1. Rev.com will keep secret and will not disclose to anyone any of the Confidential Information, other than furnishing the Confidential Information to Associated Persons; provided that such Associated Persons are bound by agreements respecting confidential information. Rev.com will not use any of the Confidential Information for any purpose other than performing the Rev.com Services on Client's behalf. Rev.com will use reasonable care and adequate measures to protect the security of the Confidential Information and to attempt to prevent any Confidential Information from being disclosed or otherwise made available to unauthorized persons or used in violation of the foregoing.

2.2. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary herein, Rev.com is free to make, and this Agreement does not restrict, disclosure of any Confidential Information in a judicial, legislative or administrative investigation or proceeding or to a government or other regulatory agency; provided that, if permitted by law, Rev.com provides to Client prior notice of the

intended disclosure and permits Client to intervene therein to protect its interests in the Confidential Information, and cooperate and assist Client in seeking to obtain such protection.

#### 3. Certain Rights and Limitations

3.1. All Confidential Information will remain the property of Client.

3.2. This Agreement imposes no obligations on either party to purchase, sell, license, transfer or otherwise transact in any products, services or technology.

#### 4. Termination

4.1. Upon Client's written request, Rev.com agrees to use good faith efforts to return promptly to Client any Confidential Information that is in writing and in the possession of Rev.com and to certify the return or destruction of all Confidential Information; provided that Rev.com may retain a summary description of Confidential Information for archival purposes.

4.2. The rights and obligations of the parties hereto contained in Sections 2 (Use and Disclosure of Confidential Information) (subject to Section 2.1), 3 (Certain Rights and Limitations), 4 (Termination), and 5 (Miscellaneous) will survive the return of any tangible embodiments of Confidential Information and any termination of this Agreement.

#### 5. Miscellaneous

5.1. Client and Rev.com are independent contractors and will so represent themselves in all regards. Nothing in this Agreement will be construed to make either party the agent or legal representative of the other or to make the parties partners or joint venturers, and neither party may bind the other in any way. This Agreement will be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of California governing such agreements, without regard to conflicts-of-law principles. The sole and exclusive jurisdiction and venue for any litigation arising out of this Agreement shall be an appropriate federal or state court located in the State of California, and the parties agree not to raise, and waive, any objections or defenses based upon venue or forum non

conveniens. This Agreement (together with any agreement for the Rev.com Services) contains the complete and exclusive agreement of the parties with respect to the subject matter hereof and supersedes all prior agreements and understandings with respect thereto, whether written or oral, express or implied. If any provision of this Agreement is held invalid, illegal or unenforceable by a court of competent jurisdiction, such will not affect any other provision of this Agreement, which will remain in full force and effect. No amendment or alteration of the terms of this

Agreement will be effective unless made in writing and executed by both parties hereto. A failure or delay in exercising any right in respect to this Agreement will not be presumed to operate as a waiver, and a single or partial exercise of any right will not be presumed to preclude any subsequent or further exercise of that right or the exercise of any other right. Any modification or waiver of any provision of this Agreement will not be effective unless made in writing. Any such waiver will be effective only in the specific instance and for the purpose given.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, the parties have caused this Agreement to be executed below by their duly authorized signatories.

**CLIENT**

**REV.COM, INC.**

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

By: \_\_\_\_\_

By: 

Name:

Name: Cheryl Brown

Title:

Title: Account Manager

Date:

Date: June 4, 2018

Address for notices to Client:

Address for notices to Rev.com, Inc.:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

222 Kearny St.  
STE 800  
San Francisco, CA 94108

Appendix N  
**IRB Outcome Letter**



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**TENNESSEE**  
KNOXVILLE

October 30, 2018

Nancy Elaine Thacker,  
UTK - Coll of Education, Hlth, & Human - Educational Psychology & Counseling

Re: UTK IRB-18-04751-XP  
Study Title: Counselor Educators' Experiences Negotiating Marginalized Identity during Professional Identity Development

Dear Nancy Elaine Thacker:

The UTK Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed your application for the above referenced project. It determined that your application is eligible for expedited review under 45 CFR 46.110(b)(1), categories (6) and (7). The IRB has reviewed these materials and determined that they do comply with proper consideration for the rights and welfare of human subjects and the regulatory requirements for the protection of human subjects.

Therefore, this letter constitutes full approval by the IRB of your application (version 1.1) as submitted, including:

Appendix E\_Informed Consent - Version 1.1  
Appendix H\_Interview Guide - Version 1.0  
Appendix L\_Rev.com NDA - Version 1.0  
Appendix K\_Participant Email - Composite Narrative - Version 1.0  
Appendix J\_Member Check Email - Version 1.0  
Appendix I\_Participant Email - Request for letter - Version 1.0  
Appendix G\_Introduction to Study - Version 1.0  
Appendix F\_Scheduling Email - Version 1.0  
Appendix D\_Informed Consent Email - Version 1.0  
Appendix B\_Recruitment Email - CACREP program chairs - Version 1.0  
Appendix A\_Recruitment Email - Participants - Version 1.0  
Appendix C\_Screening and Demographic Survey - Version 1.0

The above listed documents have been dated and stamped IRB approved. Approval of this study will be valid from 10/30/2018 to 10/29/2019.

In the event that subjects are to be recruited using solicitation materials, such as brochures, posters, web-based advertisements, etc., these materials must receive prior approval of the IRB. Any revisions in the approved application must also be submitted to and approved by the IRB prior to implementation. In addition, you are

Institutional Review Board | Office of Research & Engagement  
1534 White Avenue Knoxville, TN 37996-1529  
865-974-7697 865-974-7400 fax irb.utk.edu

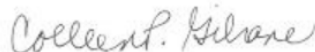
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responsible for reporting any unanticipated serious adverse events or other problems involving risks to subjects or others in the manner required by the local IRB policy.

Finally, re-approval of your project is required by the IRB in accord with the conditions specified above. You may not continue the research study beyond the time or other limits specified unless you obtain prior written approval of the IRB.

Sincerely,



Colleen P. Gilrane, Ph.D.  
Chair

Institutional Review Board | Office of Research & Engagement  
1534 White Avenue Knoxville, TN 37996-1529  
865-974-7697 865-974-7400 fax irb.utk.edu

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## VITA

Nancy Thacker was born in Oxford, North Carolina on December 24, 1992 and raised in Max Meadows, Virginia. She is the daughter of John and Patricia Thacker. Nancy received a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology with a minor in Religion in May 2014 from Western Carolina University and a Master of Science degree in Counseling with a concentration in Clinical Mental Health Counseling in May of 2016 from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Her primary professional experience includes providing counseling services to college and elementary-aged students. She also has experience teaching and supervising at both the masters and undergraduate level. She has co-authored multiple journal articles and presented at local, state, regional, and national conferences. Nancy will graduate with a Ph.D. in Counselor Education and begin serving as an Assistant Professor of Clinical Mental Health Counseling at Auburn University in August 2019.