Journal Publication Proposal and Reflection

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Abstract

Applying for research grants presents substantial challenges for doctoral learners and early-career counselor educators due to the interaction of structural and psychological barriers. Limited formal training in grant writing is a commonly cited obstacle, as many doctoral programs emphasize research design and analysis while providing minimal instruction on funding mechanisms, proposal development, or reviewer expectations (National Institute of Mental Health, n.d.; Seckel et al., 2024). In addition, the complexity of funding systems, including competitive timelines, extensive documentation, and unfamiliar submission platforms, often discourages engagement without adequate institutional support (Grants.gov, n.d.). These external barriers are often exacerbated by impostor syndrome, which has been shown to undermine scholarly self-efficacy and reduce participation in professional opportunities, such as grant applications (Wang & Li, 2023). This presentation examines barriers to grant engagement within counselor education and supervision and explores leadership and mentoring strategies that promote grant literacy, confidence, and ethical research development.

Conference Objectives and Learning Outcomes

The purpose of this presentation is to examine factors that disempower doctoral learners and early-career counselor educators from pursuing research funding and to identify leadership practices that support grant readiness. Research indicates that a lack of mentorship and consultation contributes to reduced grant engagement, particularly among scholars not embedded in research-intensive environments (Waisbren et al., 2008). Participants will gain an understanding of how limited training, complex funding systems, and impostor syndrome interact to influence scholarly decision-making. Upon completion of the session, attendees will be able to identify multiple structural and psychological barriers to grant writing, explain how impostor syndrome shapes avoidance and self-doubt in academic contexts, and apply practical strategies and resources to support grant development within counselor education and supervision settings (Leary, 2024).

Rationale and Relevance to the Conference

This proposal is relevant to professional counseling conferences because counselor educators are increasingly expected to secure external funding, mentor emerging scholars, and contribute to sustainable research initiatives. Federal agencies emphasize structured grant development processes that require familiarity with funding priorities, proposal components, and ethical research practices, yet these competencies are often underdeveloped among doctoral learners (National Institute of Mental Health, n.d.; Grants.gov, n.d.). Impostor syndrome further compounds these challenges by reinforcing internalized doubt and discouraging qualified scholars, particularly women and individuals from underrepresented groups, from pursuing funding opportunities (Waisbren et al., 2008; Wang & Li, 2023). Addressing these barriers aligns with ethical leadership responsibilities in counselor education, including advocacy, equity, and

professional development, and supports the broader goal of expanding access to research funding across diverse academic contexts.

Presentation Format and Rationale

A lecture format with guided discussion is most appropriate for this presentation, as it allows for structured dissemination of research-informed content while also creating space for reflection and shared dialogue. Lecture-based delivery supports clarity when explaining grant systems, funding resources, and empirical findings on impostor syndrome, while guided discussion facilitates the normalization of shared challenges and peer learning (Giordano et al., 2021). This format is particularly well-suited for professional counseling conferences that serve counselor educators, supervisors, and doctoral learners seeking both conceptual understanding and practical strategies for scholarly development. Integrating discussion enhances engagement and supports application across varied institutional roles and mentoring contexts.

Conclusion

Grant writing represents a critical yet often underdeveloped competency within counselor education, particularly for doctoral learners and early-career counselor educators navigating complex funding systems. Structural barriers, such as limited training, lack of mentorship, and unfamiliarity with funding mechanisms, when combined with impostor syndrome, can significantly impede engagement in grant-seeking activities (Wang & Li, 2023; Waisbren et al., 2008). This conference proposal highlights the importance of intentional leadership, mentorship, and skill development in supporting equitable access to research funding opportunities. By increasing grant literacy, normalizing impostor experiences, and fostering developmentally responsive mentoring environments, counselor educators can better prepare emerging scholars for sustainable research engagement. Addressing these barriers aligns with ethical leadership

responsibilities and strengthens counselor education programs' capacity to contribute

meaningfully to the profession's research base and service-delivery goals (Giordano et al., 2021;

National Institute of Mental Health, n.d.).

References

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