

The Clinician

A Newsletter of the Virginia Clinical Counselors Alliance Vol. 1, No. 1, July 2003

New VCA Clinical Counselors Division

Inside this issue:

New VCA Division	1
Clinical-School Team	1
VCCA Survey	2
VCCA Leaders	2
Counselors Needed	3
VCA Conference	4

Special points of interest:

- VCA - Clinical Counselors pledged professional unit
- VA School Counselors and VCCA to tackle child-adolescent mental health challenges
- VCCA Member Survey On-Line
- VCCA high profile at VCA Conference 2004, Roanoke, VA, Nov. 3-5

The legacy of the Virginia Counselors Association (VCA) is a heritage of unity and collaboration. Since its founding in 1930, the VCA has recognized that counselors in Virginia practice in varied settings, serve diverse populations, and specialize in various counseling tools, techniques, and methods. Valuing unity, the VCA has historically built bridges of cooperation and collaboration across various professional counseling specializations. Preserving that legacy, VCA approved a new division at its June, 2004 Board of Directors meeting. The new division, called the Virginia Clinical Counselors Alliance (VCCA), seeks to "to advance the specialization of clinical counseling and to promote public confidence in the counseling profession". As a new VCA division, the VCCA seeks to work collaboratively with other divisions of VCA to advance clinical mental health and other counseling specializations in Virginia.

VCA has a long history of leadership, supporting Virginia mental health and community counseling. Three of its most notable achievements have been successfully advocating and lobbying for the creation of Virginia counselor licensure in 1975, mandated insurance reimbursement for Licensed Professional Counselors in 1987, and the 1993 revision of the Code of Virginia to reflect the contemporary practice clinical counseling in Virginia.

The pictures to the left show VCA leaders and Virginia clinical counselors at bill signings with Governors L. Douglas Wilder and Gerald L. Balilies (Anderson, 2002).



Continued on Page 2

CLINICAL AND SCHOOL COUNSELOR *Supporting Each Other's Work*

In Virginia, school counselors and clinical or mental health counselors shared an alliance in support of Virginia's children, adolescents, and their families. Clinical counselors are colleagues - professional partners - helping school counselors achieve success in their educational work settings. Together they collaborate to promote student development across cognitive, psychosocial, interpersonal, career, and other developmental domains (Paisley & Hubbard, 1994). School Counselors and clinical counselors share a common professional identity reflected in their common affiliation with the Virginia Counselors Association.

Continued on Page 3

VCCA Transition Leadership Team

In June 2004, a Transition Leadership Team of the Virginia Clinical Counselor Alliance proposed to the Virginia Counseling Association (VCA) Board of Directors the recognition and approval of a new VCA division. During its June 2004 meeting, the VCA Board of Directors approved creation of a new VCA Division called the **Virginia Clinical Alliance** or **VCCA**.

Dr. Janet Dingman, LPC
Dr. Bob Dingman, LPC
Dr. Harriet Glossoff, LPC
Dr. Sandra Lopez-Baez, LPC
Dr. Kathleen May, LPC
Dr. Renee Staton, LPC
Dr. Adele Walker-Blue, LPC
Dr. Donald Anderson, LPC, Chair

VCCA focuses on clinical, mental health, and community counseling in the Commonwealth. The mission of the Virginia Clinical Counselors Alliance is to advance the specialization of clinical counseling and to promote public confidence in the counseling profession.

In partnership with the VCA, the VCCA has committed its organizational resources to advance the specialization of clinical counseling in the Commonwealth of Virginia. In an August, 2004 letter to VCA members, Dr. Donald Anderson, Chair of the Transition Leadership Team stated:

The Virginia Clinical Counselors Alliance officers include the following VCA members now serving as the VCCA Transition Leadership Team:

We intend, as VCA's newest division, to extend our [VCA's] legacy of unity and collaboration into the future.

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Dr. Donald Anderson

New VCCA Continued from page 1

The new VCCA division currently has nearly 100 charter members. The association is aggressively planning for the future of the association, seeking to cultivate its collaboration relationship with VCA and its various divisions. The VCA tradition of professional unity continues into the 21 Century with the VCCA as a key division partner. VCCA is a division committed to the VCA legacy of unity and of advancing the counseling profession in Virginia.

REFERENCES

Anderson, D. (2002). Appealing to the Virginia Association of Clinical Counselors: Stay centered on the common work of counseling and affiliating with the VCA. *The Virginia Counselor*, 46, 1, 13-16.

VCCA Survey

The new Virginia Clinical Counselors Alliance is about the past and a new future of Virginia clinical mental health counseling. From the past, we claim our commitment to professional unity – the unity of counseling professionals across work settings and specializations. For our future we embrace new ideas and new people for a better profession.

and together, we intend to respond to your needs. To that end, we've developed an Internet based membership survey located at:

www.vca-vcca.org



In order to plan for the future, we invite clinical counselors across the state to join with us and to come home to the Virginia Clinical Counselors Alliance and the VCA. We want to hear from you, to understand your needs ,

Please join VCA and VCCA today. Complete the survey, telling us about your needs for professional development. During the coming year, expect VCCA to be responsive to the information you and your colleagues will share. Join us and complete the survey

Mental Health Clients: Young and Female

Demand for quality mental health care across the nation is high. Nearly 17.5 million adult Americans or 8.3 percent of that population have experienced serious mental disorders in 2002.

Over thirteen percent (13.2%) of Americans in the age range of 18 – 25 had the highest incidence of serious mental disorders. Older Americans representing 4.9 percent had the lowest incidence of serious

mental disorders. Typically, females (10.5 percent) as compared to males (4.9 percent) had a higher incidence of serious mental disorders.

Based on these data, clinical mental health counselors in the Commonwealth of Virginia can expect to typically provide mental health services to young adult females compared to males and older Americans.

Useful epidemiological data on mental illness can be found at :

<http://oas.samhsa.gov>

Reference

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2003). *Results from the 2002 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National Findings* (Office of Applied Studies, NHSDA Series H-22, DHHS Publication No. SMA 03-3836). Rockville, MD.

CLINICAL AND SCHOOL COUNSELOR

Continued from Page 1:

Through collaboration and referral, working together as professionals, school and clinical specialty counselors promote K-12 student development by converging counseling expertise in a response to child and adolescent mental health problems seen in in Virginia schools and communities.

Childhood and adolescent mental health problems contribute to developmental crises seen in Virginia homes, schools, and communities. Recent epidemiological research reveals the top five mental health challenges confronted by American youth are depression, conduct problems, suicide, fear and anxiety, and family problems. School problems are in a distant sixth place in the list of child and adolescent concerns as reported by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2003).

Ethical, legal, and treatment issues and challenges facing school counselors make consultation and collaboration between school and clinical counselors essential (American School Counselor Association, 2003, 1993;). Collaboration with mental health professionals is an ethical mandate and an articulated policy of the American Counseling Association and the American School Counseling Association. Clinical members of the Virginia Counselors Association and Virginia Clinical Counselors Alliance are aware of challenges, needs, and mandates faced by Virginia school counselors. The two groups of counseling professionals are available to share expertise in consultation and collaboration with school counselor in response to child and adolescent mental health challenges.

Continued on Page 4

VCA Convention & Clinical Counselors

Members of the Virginia counseling profession will come together November 3-5 for the 2004 State Conference of the Virginia Counselors Association. Counselors representing varying specializations and work settings will arrive in Roanoke for professional development and

collegiality and fun. The convention program promises to include more clinically relevant workshops than ever before and the new VCA Division, the Virginia Clinical



Counselors Alliance will be there celebrating its inaugural VCA convention with over 100 of its charter members. Be there in Roanoke to celebrate with us.

VCCA MISSION:
to advance the specialization of clinical counseling and to promote public confidence in the counseling profession.

CLINICAL AND SCHOOL COUNSELOR

Continued From Page 3:

Virginia Clinical Counselors Alliance members bring to a partnership with school counselors varying expertise, knowledge, skills, and abilities including models for collaboration with school counselors (Key, Bemak, Carpenter, & King-Sears, 1998; Keys, Bemak, & Lockhart, 1998). These and other similar models propose that school and community counselors address mental health needs of "at-risk" youth through comprehensive and integrated programs based on interdependent consultation across areas of specialty and work setting. Others have likewise proposed that mental health issues confronting youth in schools require school-community based consultation and collaboration (Dinkmeyer & Carlson, 2001; Dougherty, 2005). Resources and empirically supported strategies have been proposed to help school and clinical counselors meet the pressing challenge of mental health problems in schools, including intervention and referral strategies for dealing with anxiety and depression (Merrell, 2001; Rice & Leffert, 1997; Thompson, 1995; Geroski, Rodgers, Breen, 1997).

In Virginia, there is a longstanding relationship between school counseling and mental health counseling dating back to the origins of the Virginia Counseling association itself. The most comprehensive survey conducted of Licensed Professional Counselors in Virginia revealed a strong referral link between school counselors and mental health counselors (Anderson, 198x). School counselors see mental health consultation and referral as an important school counseling treatment strategy to combat mental health problems which interfere with child and adolescent development. The Virginia Clinical Counselors Alliance is committed to collaborating with Virginia School Counselors to assess and treat mental health concerns, which arrest the development of Virginia children and adolescent.

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Dr. Donald Anderson, Editor

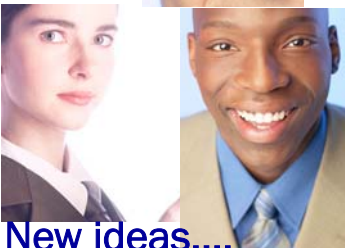
THE VIRGINIA CLINICAL COUNSELORS

P. O. Box 6994
Radford University
Radford, VA 24142

Phone: 540-831-6265
Fax: 540-831-6755
Email:
danderso@radford.edu

Learn more about us at:
www.clinicalcounselors.org

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