The time has come again for the bi-annual MHCBM Insider! Twice each year, we feature submissions from faculty, alumni, and current students. We hope that this update finds you well.

Spring is a time of rebirth and new beginnings, something that, as budding counselors, we hope to bring to the clients we will serve. As many of the first year students began their practicum and second year students prepare for graduation, we look towards what the future holds for us. This was the perfect time for us to have our Annual Alumni Event.

Over twenty alumni attended our event this year, bringing with them the knowledge and experience from the field that we are all so eager to soak up. We had an opportunity to hear from them about the process of finding employment, their efforts advocating for LMHCs, and the real world application of our classroom experience. This rare opportunity was attended by nearly every student in the program.

This Spring we are also proud to announce that all 6 2nd years who applied to Ph.D. and MD programs were successfully accepted. We are so proud of these students pursuing an even more advanced degree, and eager to see their contributions to the field.

It has been an exciting and successful year and we look forward to taking the next steps in our continued growth.

Thank you to the alumni and faculty who continue to enrich our studies and our profession.

Alumni, Please contact us with your stories!

Best wishes,
Your Student Representatives (2016-2017)
mhbmreps@bu.edu

We would like to offer our sincere gratitude to all of the faculty, core and adjunct, who have so patiently and lovingly helped us along on our respective paths. We have all grown a great deal since we first wandered into the program office, thirsty for coffee and guidance, and so much of that comes down to your willingness to go the extra mile on our behalf.

Thank you!

Your Student Representatives (2016-2017) - mhbmreps@bu.edu

The Boston University Mental Health Counseling and Behavioral Medicine Insider is always looking for contributing authors and photographers. Please reach out to us with any ideas for future articles, especially stories from beyond the halls of our great institution. All the best!

Want to submit an article?
In This Issue

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What else is new?

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The Director’s Chair

Remarks from Program Director Dr. Stephen Brady

I want to thank every student in the Mental Health Counseling and Behavioral Medicine Program for making this year a success! There is tendency to minimize the impact students have on the learning environment but the intellect, enthusiasm and emotional intelligence you bring to the Program is as important as the influence of faculty, coursework and clinical experiences in shaping the learning environment.

Some interesting facts about the MHCBM Program this year….

• Since starting in 2002 there have been more than 375 graduates of the Program.

• Six May graduates who applied to doctoral programs were accepted this year.

• Twenty-five alumni and 30+ current students attended the Alumni Event on March 23rd.

• Faculty and students presented at a number of prestigious conferences this past year including ACA, AMHCA and NARACES.

• A MHCBM core faculty (name to be announced at graduation) has won the GMS Educator of the Year award for 2017.

• During the current academic year we had 60 students enrolled in a diverse class that included over 27% ethnic minority students and 13% international students.

A few thoughts for our graduating students who will soon be serving as mental health counseling leaders…

Wise leaders skillfully balance the interest of all of the stakeholders, including their own interests, those of their followers, and the organization. They also recognize the need to align the interest of their group with those of other stakeholders. Wise leaders understand that what might appear to be a prudent course of action over the short term may not be so over the long-term (Sternberg, 2007).

At the end of the day our program is successful if we are able to inspire, train and help launch graduates as clinical mental health counselors. We endeavor to improve in this effort each and every year.

Regards,
Dr. Brady
Growth and Development in Training

It has been another great year being a part of this program. It was wonderful welcoming the first year, students and watching them grow and develop as new counselors. Our annual alumni event continues to amaze me. Observing and experiencing your success is amazing! My pride is overflowing! To the graduating class of 2017 I miss you all already! It has been amazing to watch you thrive in your training. You have demonstrated empathy, compassion, resiliency, and courage. You have collectively touched the lives of many and have learned about the beauty that transforms through the healing process. Congratulations on your success.

- Rachel Levy-Bell, Psy.D

I continue to be reinforced by the fact (not ‘theory’) that our students and alumni are at the forefront of integrated care. As stated by Dr. David Thatcher (16th Surgeon General of the United States), “There is no health without mental health.”

- Carryl P. Navalta, Ph.D

Congratulations 2017 graduates! A terrific year ahead for you - new jobs, new graduate programs, and new chapters. And here’s to a rich year ahead for Class of 2018. Wishing all of you and our alums a peaceful, healthy, and meaningful year.

- Jori A. Berger-Greenstein, Ph.D

Maya Angelou wrote, “We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty.” I am awestruck by the unique path of every student in this program; It has been an honor to bear witness to the growth, challenges, struggles, tears, and smiles of each student that I have worked with. For the second years, I am delighted and overwhelmed by your growth over the past two years. You are ready to take off! And, for the first year students, I am excited to see you continue to grow and develop into the inevitably amazing counselors you will become!

- Laurie Craigen, Ph.D

### RECIPE: Healthy “Self-Care” Chocolate Muffins

**Ingredients**
- 1/2 cup almond butter
- 1 ripe banana mashed
- 1 large egg
- 1/4 cup honey
- 1/4 cup cocoa powder
- 2 Tbsp ground flaxseed
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1 cup zucchini, shredded
- 1/4 cup chocolate chips

**Directions**
1. Preheat oven to 375F.
2. Spray/grease muffin pan.
3. Blend all ingredients (except for zucchini and chocolate chips) on high until batter is smooth.
4. Stir in zucchini and chocolate chips by hand.
5. Pour batter into pan.
6. Sprinkle with additional chocolate chips.
7. Bake for 20 min until toothpick comes out clean.
8. Cool for 10 min and enjoy thoroughly.

Image: Running With Spoons
WHERE WOULD THEY BE:
International Edition

A  Alex
B  Anusha
C  Zach
D  Grace
E  Jessie

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW OUR COHORT?

Can you match the international students above to their responses to the following question: “If you weren’t at Boston University, where would you be?” (answers on bottom of pg. 7)
You have to choose what you want to be. You have to choose your own path in life.
— Lailah Gifty Akita, Think Great: Be Great!

1. If I could have more passion and smartness in the direction of Electrical Engineering/Computer Engineering, I would have majored in EE in college back home and would be pursuing a master’s degree in this field at some school in the U.S. now.

2. If I wasn’t at BU I would be studying sociology at LSE in London and traveling around Europe.

3. I would probably apply to jobs related to Human Resources or User Experience in my home country. Farming/agriculture is also a field I’ve been interested in. So I may also choose to work fulltime/parttime in a farm later.

4. I would be working with an international non-profit organisation, travelling in Asian and European countries, working with disadvantaged communities and teaching English!

5. ‘I would be a tattoo artist working with a few other tattoo artists that inspire me and are fun to work with. I want to get a studio somewhere close to the sea/river or in the mountain.’
As incoming federal officials face the challenge of leading a politically splintered nation, it is crucial that a nonpartisan ally be found in professional counselors. The definition of counseling, published by the American Counseling Association, is “a professional relationship that empowers diverse individuals, families, and groups to accomplish mental health, wellness, education, and career goals.” By implementing interventions that are grounded in empiricism and theory, professional counselors guide their clients toward states of individualized optimal functioning. Thus, by enacting policies that align with the mission of counseling, the incoming administration can facilitate the health, productivity, and overall flourishing of the American people.

In sifting through a plethora of wellness-related statistics, depression and substance abuse surface as major mental health issues facing Americans. Symptoms such as hopelessness, loss of pleasure, and impaired concentration gravely limit the functioning of adolescents and adults as they navigate school, work, and personal relationships. These limitations are so pervasive that The World Health Organization has identified major depressive disorder as the leading cause of disability in the U.S. for ages 15 to 44. In the elderly population, chronic illness and increased social isolation lead to high rates of depression, frequently resulting
services. The current political climate draws attention to the plight of middle-aged Americans in rural communities, where rising mortality rates may be symptomatic of a society fractured along geographical lines.

In a time of political upheaval, counselors may play a pivotal role in safeguarding the wellness of a diverse American people. While our nation struggles to decide what makes America great, counselors empower individual Americans to create their own definitions of greatness, each in accordance with unique capabilities and ideologies.

In a country faced with such obstacles, hope lies in the empowerment message of professional counselors. Drawing on master's-level training and standardized care practices, counselors diagnose mental illness and provide treatment in the form of talk therapy and psychoeducation. Funding and health care legislation should aim to facilitate access to these services. Possible actions include funding the hire of school counselors, thus enhancing preventative education, and reimbursing counselors under Medicare, thus widening services to a surging senior population. Furthermore, the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act should be expanded to provide rural farmers and small-businesses under 50 employees with feasible access to mental health services.
From an early age I knew I wanted to work in the mental health field in some capacity. After graduating college I chose to work on an inpatient facility for children and adolescents as a mental health specialist, or in other words, a direct care worker responsible for running the unit around the clock. Before I began my work on the unit, I thought I knew what the term psychiatric crisis meant but in reality I had no idea. No amount of internships or classroom work could have prepared me for the work I would be doing over the next two years.

Over that time period, I worked with patients who had come directly from the emergency room due to a psychiatric crisis and most likely were experiencing the worst days of their lives. These crises involved suicide attempts, strong suicidal ideation, self injurious behavior, psychosis, and homicidal ideation. Many of the patients who arrived on the short term, stabilization unit were fearful, angry, or felt like a complete failure. I learned to be the person who will sit and listen, maintain eye contact, and accept and support him or her unconditionally.

My conversations with patients taught me how important and needed mental health clinicians are. I learned that school systems, friends, family, or society had failed these children in some capacity but the patients often viewed themselves as the failure. I became motivated to apply to a Mental Health Counseling program because I wanted to help children with mental health issues feel worthy and successful in life.
“First they came for the communists, and I did not speak out - because I was not a communist; Then they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out - because I was not a socialist; Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out - because I was not a trade unionist; Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out - because I was not a Jew; Then they came for me - and there was no one left to speak out for me.”
- Martin Niemoller.

This quote is very dear to my heart as I am a descendant of Holocaust survivors and refugees. My family came to the United States as refugees after the Holocaust. What if the US did not let my family into this country? I am standing witness to this country that I love so much, subjugating a group of people all because of their religion. I will not stay silent.

On Friday February 10, 2017, my classmate, Marzieh, and I took part in a Chain of Peace. The Chain of Peace was formed by 3 Jewish descendants of Holocaust survivors and refugees. It took place at the Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center. It was held during the biggest weekly prayer service. Over 150 people showed up to show their support for the Muslim community. It was not only to show support but to demonstrate that we have come to protect the mosque and that the Muslim community is safe in their house of worship. Each person stood around the gated mosque holding hands. As we stood outside the mosque, members of the Muslim community brought out dates for all of us standing out in the cold. We watched as the Muslim community walked out of the service with tears in their eyes and thanked each person for their support and love.

When Marzieh and I left the peace demonstration we proceeded to get into a Lyft car to take us back to school. In the car, the man could tell we were freezing and asked why. We told him we were a part of the peace demonstration. He was in awe and immediately said he was not charging us for our ride. This was because he just left the mosque attending the Friday service. This beautiful incident paid tribute to just how much of a community America is. As the Imam (leader) of the Mosque said to us at the end, we are all brothers and sisters that come together out of love.
How Cool Is That?
by Valerie Alston
Class of 2008

Hello my name is Valerie Alston, most people call me Val. My main passion in life is to help people be better at what they do. Whether it is helping them: be more productive at work, excel and perform under pressure, study, manage time, stress, and learning at school, or maintain effective communication and positive relationships in their home life, I enjoy teaching and coaching people how to use mental skills and tools to help them get more out of themselves and their lives. I have been working for the Army for about 9 years now. I was in WA state for 7 1/2 years and just recently moved to Germany to work with soldiers there. I love getting to work and train with soldiers and their families because they are a very interesting bunch of people and let’s be honest they have the best stories! I love giving back to a population that gives so much of themselves. And if I’m being totally honest I love getting to see and do things that most civilians will never experience in their lifetime. I mean, come on... watching a gun crew emplace, load and fire a 777 (giant modern cannon.) How cool is that?! 

Where Are They Now?
by Renee Stanley
Class of 2016

After spending some time traveling on the east coast after graduation, I returned to my home land in the California Bay Area, moved in with my boyfriend, and continued to travel and job hunt. I am currently a clinical counselor at a dual diagnosis residential treatment center for men and women with both a mental health diagnosis and a substance use diagnosis. I have been working here since December and am absolutely loving it. A lot of the work I do is similar to what I did at my internship in Boston, including group counseling, individual counseling, some case management and family counseling, and participating in monthly chart audits. At times it is very hard to balance work life with personal self care but I am learning something new everyday. Before I started working here, I was helping out part time with a child and adolescent social skills group through the use of equine assisted psychotherapy, which is my dream job. I have maintained my connection with the primary therapist and hope to work with her more in the summer time. All in all, I love the work I do and am so glad I went through the BU program. I’m hoping to visit the east coast again soon!
I first became interested in suicide prevention when I was in high school, and upon arriving in Boston for my first semester of college, I found a local chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention where I was able to become more involved. Throughout my undergraduate career, I was able to speak with other students who were open to discussing suicide, especially those who worked towards reducing the stigma of suicide and mental illness like me. Along the way, I was trained to lead safeTALK gatekeeper trainings, which took me all around New England to teach others how to spot warning signs of suicide in others. I met other college students, community members, health professionals, and survivors of suicide (either someone who has lost a loved one to suicide or who has attempted)- incredible people with diverse experiences that were a reminder of how crucial it is to talk openly about suicide risk. I saw the strengths and limitations of the curricular requirements for my own profession as a graduate student in mental health counseling. I am fortunate enough to be presenting on the need for a unified and comprehensive approach to suicide assessment and intervention across clinical disciplines, which I will presenting at the American Association of Suicidology’s 50th Annual Conference in Phoenix, AZ.

Now, many years later from when I first arrived in Boston, I am speaking with adolescents everyday and suicide risk and resiliency at my internship placement. This fall, I will be studying suicide, resiliency and trauma as a doctoral student in Counselor Education program at The Ohio State University. I am excited for this new opportunity to strengthen my own understanding or why people think of suicide, and I hope that I can contribute this understanding to prevent losing more lives to suicide.
What does it mean to be a graduate student at Boston University?
It means we work hard and we play hard.

The MHCBM program raised over $1600 at the BARCC walk (pictured top left),
money to be spent providing free, confidential support and services to survivors
of sexual violence.

Our first year students enjoying a night out at a school sponsored cruise on the
Boston Harbor (pictured top right). Practicing self care is paramount to long term
success.

Our first years got together to support the Women's March in Boston (pictured
bottom left).

Second year students went to Boston Marathon to show that our counselors are
#BostonStrong as well (pictured bottom right).
Second year students had fun learning from Dr. Brady in Human Sexuality (pictured top left) as well as in Dr. Craigen's Supervision class (pictured top left).

We welcomed back many alumni for a brief look into our future (pictured on bottom with Dr. Craigen.) The presentation included details about their current employment, how the skills they developed in our program impact their lives, and what we can do to guarantee our future success.

Alumni advice: “Always negotiate. Negotiate, negotiate, negotiate. Do not underestimate the value of a BU degree backing you in this field.”
**Termination Thoughts**

One of our 2nd Year students has provided us with some much needed tips for how to survive a year at BU MHCBM.

Approaching graduation has been a mixed bag. I wish I could say I was spending my final days here walking around school with a consistent, pleasant halo of “a new beginning is just around the corner!” feelings. It is like that sometimes! Just not always. The truth is, sometimes it just feels heavy. I’ve been spending a frustrating amount of time feeling tired, bored, irritable, and ready to be done. And I think that’s ok.

For me, the tricky thing about ending is that we are faced with the inevitability of distancing. We’re leaving the program. Many of us are going to different cities and states. Also different countries, right? (Maybe Canada? <3 JT) Dr. Brady likes to bring things back to Karen Horney’s basic types of relational movement (turning towards, turning away, turning against), and I think the idea applies well to the whole enterprise of endings. As the future draws ever closer, it becomes so much harder to be in the moment, to turn towards the present to make the most of where we are right now.

As counselors, we are constantly asking clients to come sit with us and talk through their feelings about termination. It’s part of the counseling process. All too often they bail on their last sessions, or, as Dr. Brady might say, they ghost on us. As we approach the next stages of our lives, we owe it to clients to face our ongoing parallel processes with dignity, pride, and grace. We owe it to them to feel sad and annoyed and to experience that weird ambivalence, being ready to leave and terrified of being gone. To turn towards that distancing feeling and own it in ourselves so that we can more fully relate, more accurately listen, and more truthfully attend.

Learning to leave is also part of the process of learning to live. There’s sadly no shortage of opportunities to practice facing endings. Life ends. People move. Friendships fade. And at the same time, every ending is also a beginning, an opportunity to turn towards life once again. (There’s maybe one exception, but that’s more of a point of supreme ambiguity than a fixed, known exception, and we can talk about that some other time.) (You know I mean it.) (#Yalom)

At times I feel thrilled about the future and all its possibilities, excited about the Boston spring and the incredible friends I’ve made here. At other times I find myself staving off deep feelings of sadness, my mind practically dragging me over to the lossier (yeah, I’m just going to go with that) side of change. As the summer approaches, my hope is to embrace those feelings as well. To lean into the pre-grief, uncertainty, grumpiness, and all the other discomforts of leaving, because I know on some level that that’s when we get to really engage with the love, connection, and meaning we are so afraid of letting go.

I think that maybe the first step is to finish this exercise in coping via intellectualization and go out and be with the incredible people I have had the privilege of meeting here, so I’m going to go do that now. To all of you who have made this such a wonderful two years, thanks for making it so hard to say goodbye!
STAY TUNED FOR MORE QUALITY CONTENT

If you are interested in making a submission to the next issue of the MHCBM Insider, please reach out to mhbmreps@bu.edu. We would love to hear from you about your experience with the Mental Health Counseling and Behavioral Medicine program and how it has impacted your life after graduation.
If you’re interested in Boston University, we’d love to show you more of it. Take just a minute to submit an Information Request Form online. We’ll send you our Viewbook and other helpful publications. And we’ll keep you informed with letters and emails that address your personal interests about BU. We’ll also alert you to receptions in your area, scholarship opportunities and programs that may appeal to you.

Admissions
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