



# Florida Association For Multi-Cultural Counseling and Development (FAMCD)

A Division of Florida Counselors Association

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## FAMCD NEWSLETTER

### Letter From the President

Dear FAMCD Members,

I hope this letter finds you and your loved ones well. Quite a lot has happened in the months following the release of our division's fall newsletter. Various natural disasters have afflicted a number of countries and communities, including many within the state of Florida. There have been numerous mass shootings—some of which targeted specific minority groups because of race or religion. The LGBTQ+ population has been cast aside by a lack of inclusion in the 2020 Census and through a potential creation of a legal definition of gender, which would ultimately exclude transgender and non-binary identifying persons. And for the past few months, thousands of individuals and families collectively known as the “migrant caravan” have embarked on a treacherous journey with hopes of seeking safety by fleeing unstable governments and violence within their home countries in Central America.

It can feel incredibly overwhelming when we, as helping professionals, work tirelessly to help our clients overcome unspeakable difficulties that they are facing in their lives. It can seem exhausting when we provide services and advocate for marginalized populations around the clock only to continuously battle against discriminative pieces of legislation, natural disasters, and other such unexpected circumstances that are out of our reach and control. Day in and day out of this repetitive fighting and our advocacy efforts may lead many clinicians to find themselves on the road to burnout.

Time and time again, we hear about self-care as the golden standard that clinicians speak so highly of, yet rarely engage in. Given the emotionally taxing situations that our clients are presenting with and the steadily increasing caseloads, I challenge our membership to engage in a minimum of one activity for yourself with the goal of catering to your own personal needs. Our wellbeing must be placed at the forefront because only when our clinicians are at their best can we be most effective and efficient in making societal changes to improve the lives and conditions of those who have been underserved for too long.

This January, we will be uniting as a division and hosting an open house for FAMCD membership to engage with our FAMCD Executive Board and Minority Concerns Chairpersons. We want to ensure that our membership is working together to address the needs of those less served. Clinicians will always have our work cut out for us in terms of advocating for marginalized populations and speaking up for those who have been silenced. Again, we just ask that you take some time to focus on yourselves in the upcoming weeks before we, collectively as a division, regroup, unite, and continue to fight the good fight with more force, power, and dedication than ever before. So many individuals and populations are counting on us, and together, we can ensure that we are fighting for their needs.

As many of us take time to reflect during this holiday season, I recognize how much our clinicians give of themselves on a daily basis and extend my sincerest appreciation to all of you for the meaningful and life-changing work that you do. Nobel Peace Prize winner and humanitarian Albert Schweitzer shared, “At times, our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us.” I am honored to work alongside members of such a wonderful division who continue to rekindle the sparks of others.

May you all have a blessed holiday season and a beautiful end of the year, as it is well deserved. And may this New Year be filled with enough sparks to illuminate the world and bring light to those whose lights have temporarily been extinguished. I know that with your continued involvement and service, together, we will do exactly that.

Sincerely,  
Daniel Balva, M.S., NCC, CRC  
FAMCD President, 2018-2019

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# “DULCE VIOLENCIA” OR “CANDY VIOLENCE”

BY: MARCELO ELALUF

When you are a child, you are born with all the innocence and security of the world. You live every day as if "who will say" doesn't exist, and you do not care how you eat, how you dance, or how you dress. Until one day, people start to question you about how you are, how you walk, or how you think, and you end up doubting yourself, until you reach the point where all of the strength and security that you started with diminishes.

That for me is bullying; judging people when we don't know them and believing to be superior to others when we are all the same.

We all love sweets, but what happens if one day, sweets are not accepted among themselves; their beautiful forms, colors, or flavors do not fit into this innocent world. For me, sweets are like children; no child is born with bullying inside. It is a learned behavior.

These photos are meant to show that we cannot accept being treated as anything less than one is by others who are equal. The world does not believe you to be a person who should feel less than anyone else; that your dreams of what you want to achieve should never be taken away. Because there is nothing more valuable than being yourself and that in our lives, you can be all that you want to be.

Bullying is an abuse of misperceived power. Respect for others is true peace. More family, more empathy, more friends, and more love. #StopViolence

Marcelo Elaluf is a creative audiovisual and multimedia audiovisual communicator with a specialty in art direction and public creativity in Peru.

[This interview was originally conducted in Spanish and was transcribed for the purpose of this newsletter publication.

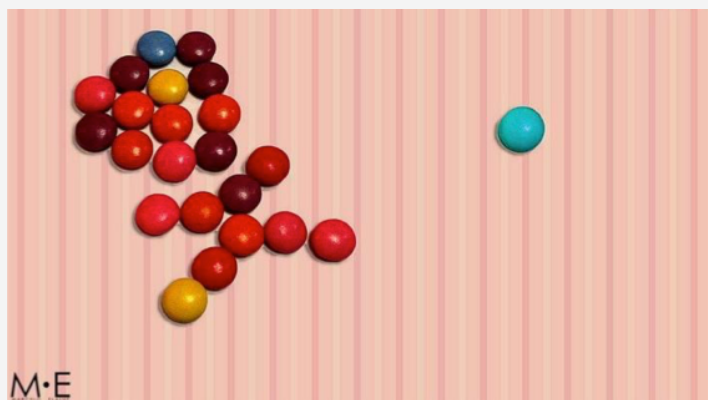
You can read more about “Dulce Violencia” or “Candy Violence” at <https://peru.com/estilo-de-vida/cultura/arte-y-dulce-lucha-contra-bullying-fotos-noticia-286014-915956>



“Imperfect. Few, some, all.”



“Exclusion”



“The danger is your silence.”



# GRIEF, HOLIDAYS AND THE SUPPORT YOU CAN OFFER

BY: DIANE "DEE DEE" RODRIGUEZ, MSCP, CAC  
WWW.LIVELIFECHANGED.COM  
WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/DIANEDRODRIGUEZLLC

It's the holidays. We can see it and feel it everywhere we go. There's no place to escape the sounds, the sights and the scents that immerse us in the knowing that the holidays have arrived and a new year is coming.

As a Hispanic woman who grew up surrounded by various cultures in South Florida and around many ethnicities and practices, I have witnessed the universal coming together of many celebrations. For me growing up in SoFL during the holidays, was participating in one huge block party of colors, music, food and the many rituals and traditions that embraced each and every one of them.

As a native born Hispanic American child, I grew up participating in the Western tradition of Christmas celebrations, with the added bonus of celebrating Christmas with my Hispanic lineage's traditions. That meant that when everyone was getting ready to take the Christmas trees down the day after Christmas, ours remained in place at least until Epiphany on January 6th. Why? Because that was when the twelve days of Christmas really ended.

Today I cherish those traditions and the memory making moments around them. I had the best of both worlds, gifts from Santa and the Three Wise Men from the Orient.

Still there was a season in my life that those very traditions and memories created and intense amount of suffering, spiritual questioning, along side psychological and psychoemotional pain.

Underneath all of that was the death of my only son Sergio, he was eleven years old. Even though I was no stranger to loss and grief, because of that season in my life I am mindful and highly attuned those in grief. As a grief therapist, this is the time of year business picks up.

When the world is celebrating, the grievers are suffering. It pains me that much of what they struggle with has to do with the grief avoidant culture that we all live in. We see loss daily, we experience it often and yet when it comes to grief as it pertains to significant losses society is most inclined to look the other way, unless it affects them personally. Then and only then is there a higher chance of not being able to avoid it. Still people try.

For most counselors this sentiment is especially true when loss and grief is around death and dying. Those who seek my guidance through coaching and consulting most often ask questions like the following:

Sometimes clients what to know my personal experience with loss as their therapist, what's your thoughts on personal disclosure?

What do I do when I'm experiencing transference and I'm triggered by my own loss?

How do I help and approach death anxiety and the fear of dying?

How do you help the griever when the relationship in the loss was strained and now that person is deceased?

And my all time favorite is - What's right, what's wrong in grief work and how will I know if I'm doing more harm than good?

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These are all valid questions and if your academic years were anything like mine then death, dying, bereavement and loss, as it relates to grieving was not covered. In my opinion at best it was glossed over in the human development class. I'll spare you my soapbox moments but I believe that the moment the words death, dead or dying enters a conversation the energy tends to shift into an impending doom and gloom. That is truly unfortunate. This can be such a soul deepening conversation for professionals in the field as well as the clients we serve.

In the mean time, when people say that I must be strong, that they could never do what I am doing or that what I do is so needed in this world my response is generally thank you, no and yes. Like many of you, I'm in this field for the love of helping people and using my life experiences to create a change in the world. I believe we are all strong, resilient actually. I also believe that anyone, heck everyone can do what I do even in a smaller level because yes grief education, advocacy and grief work is needed in this world.

I believe this so strongly that my vision and passion statements reflect that my mission is to create a culture where grief care is embraced empathetically and compassionately so that grief illiteracy and avoidance is replaced with compassionate connections that nourish a life in alignment with each individual's authentic self.

I work with complicated and pervasive grief in adults where trauma is usually an underlying factor and I love it! To share a little bit of what troubles the griever who seek my therapeutic guidance and in honor of the holidays I've compiled a list of twelve things I often hear as I support the grieving.

On the twelve days of Christmas a griever said to me...

On the first day of Christmas, a griever said to me I'm so lonely.

On the second day of Christmas, a griever said to me I don't understand, how did this happen to me?

On the third day of Christmas, a griever said to me no one understands me.

On the fourth day of Christmas, a griever said to me I'm just so angry.

On the fifth day of Christmas, a griever said to me I'm losing my spirituality.

On the sixth day of Christmas, a griever said to me I'm hurting badly why can't they see.

On the seventh day of Christmas, a griever said to me I don't even like me.

On the eighth day of Christmas, a griever said to me I wonder what happened to empathy.

On the ninth day of Christmas, a griever said to me this loss has destroyed my identity.

On the tenth day of Christmas, a griever said to me how do I get over grief?

On the eleventh day of Christmas, a griever said to me this is just so hard for me.

On the twelfth day of Christmas, a griever said to me I'm so lonely, I don't understand, how did this happen to me? No one understands me. I'm just so angry. I'm losing my spirituality. I'm hurting badly why can't they see. I don't even like me. I wonder what happened to empathy. This loss has destroyed my identity. How do I get over grief? This is just so hard for me. I wonder if there's any hope for me.

All these usually end up with a universal question, will life ever be normal again. The short answer is yes and not as you knew it. I refrain from using the term from the new normal. What clients need to know is that grief is universal and that meaningful living can be discovered despite their grieving. How we mourn (show our grief outwardly into the world) may not be universal but loss is loss and supporting it can be.

Here is how you can help a client live life changed after grief.

1. Please don't offer to help if you aren't going or able to follow up. Be impeccable with your offer, I understand that it's uncomfortable to watch someone suffer. Not everyone is equipped to hold the space of sorrow for someone else; it's hard enough to hold it for us. Sometimes listening to the same questions and death story is too much reality to handle. Just know your limits and do what you can but only if you can. There is no shame in seeking peer support, supervision or referring someone out for pervasive and complicated symptoms. It is important that you have done your own grief work at some level. In general, normal and natural grief reactions are being attended to in your everyday client work.

2. Pause before you speak. If you don't know what to say, it's okay to just say that. Often we speak out of discomfort and end up saying all the wrong things, or worse nothing at all. When we are scared and feeling vulnerable, we don't always think straight. It's helpful to remember that during grief a person is hypersensitive, hyperemotional and even hypervigilant. When you pause ask yourself - will what I say be helpful for them? If you aren't sure you can do one of two things. One, don't say anything at all, the sacred silence is therapeutic or you can say I don't know what to say. You can also ask them - would it be helpful if... or what would be helpful in this moment? This is especially important in moments of transference. Having scripted language helps you take a pause, take a breath, get grounded and place the attention back to the client.

3. Be honest, authentic, genuine. Brene Brown a famous author says, share what's vulnerable not what's intimate. Phrases like I'm at a loss for words or how I can help; are ways to verbalize your own vulnerabilities. Adding anything else after that runs the risk of you giving unsolicited advice, invalidating the person or worse comparing losses. I am of the belief that sharing with a little bit of personal disclosure about my own grief work is okay as long as it is not taking away from the client's work. Everyone who has asked me about my lost I have found that they are just seeking a way to connect and be validated in understanding.

4. Ask permission. Would it be okay if - ex. I checked in with you at the end of the week, month, quarter? If yes, plan accordingly. If no, respect the decision and perhaps try again at another time. I find it helpful to keep track of my client's deathaversaries, birthdays or special occasions that they disclose in session. In doing so it allows me to check in around those difficult days or use the information to check in during sessions.

5. Give permission. If you ever don't want to ... - ex. please just stop me or let me know, a simple I can't right now is good enough for me and I won't be offended at all we can come back to it later in the session or in our work together. This is another time that I use my grief experience as an example. My clients know that "some days I am okay to talk about my son and other days not so much" I use this language to model for them and it helps strengthen the therapeutic relationship. When language fails them, I have also just honored the raised hand as a stop signal.

My intention for this article is to share a snippet of the griever's perspective and to give some helpful tips in supporting the grieving while being mindful of hurting in the holidays.

May we be a blessing.



# DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS

BY: ALEXIS DUGGAN, NAMRC STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE, FIU VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION COUNSELING STUDENT

What Is Disability Employment Awareness Month?

Disability Employment Awareness Month is an initiative to applaud and recognize employees with disabilities for their accomplishments in the workforce. Each of these individuals help to keep the workforce diverse and active through sustaining our economy and providing equal opportunity for all persons with disabilities. In 1945, Congress enacted Public Law 176, which lasted for a week. The original name was National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week; however, the word physical was later dropped, and Congress eventually expanded the week to one month and changed the name to National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

What Can We Do to Bring Awareness?

We all play a part in Disability Awareness, not just employers. However, in the workplace, we can advocate for persons with disabilities through using Person-First Language. Person-First Language focuses on the person and not the disability. For example, instead of saying “John is confined to a wheelchair,” you could say that John uses a wheelchair.

In using this language, we recognize that that the individual is not a product of their disability, and we eliminate disability-based descriptors as ways to “identify” individuals whom we are referring to.

How does this Affect You?

Inclusion is an important part in integrating individuals with disabilities in our environment. Through accommodating and advocating for people with disabilities, you are essentially breaking societal stigmas of how we view disability as a whole. This further helps to establish civil rights for the disability community that they often lack. When we as a community come together to improve life outcomes for individuals with disabilities, we help to strengthen our community as a whole.

How to Interact with People with Disabilities in The Workplace

Don't overthink it! People with disabilities want to feel normal and most importantly accepted. When in the workplace, make regular conversation with a person with a disability. Don't ask questions that may be offensive.

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# Resources

Also, don't assume that someone who has a disability is an expert and wants to solely talk about all things disability related. Feel free to give them space and independence. Just because someone accomplishes a task differently than you does not mean they need or want your help.

## Why Persons with Disabilities Should be Hired in the Workplace

People with disabilities are hardworking, timely, and effective once they are employed. Most individuals with disabilities work well when a routine is established. Employment helps in providing a schedule that helps these individuals to flourish. While some employers may be apprehensive in hiring people with disabilities they are soon made aware that with simple and little to no cost accommodations these individuals can complete the same tasks with the same outcome as someone without a disability.

The following links are available to the public to learn more about disability employment resources.

·National Disability Employment Awareness Month Resources: <https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/ndeam/resources.htm>

·Disability Employment Resources: <https://www.apa.org/pi/disability/resources/employment.aspx>

·People First Language: <https://www.thearc.org/who-we-are/media-center/people-first-language>

·Campaign for Disability Employment: <https://www.whatcanyoudocampaign.org/where-to-learn-more/>


·Job Accommodation Network: <https://askjan.org>



**My disability is one part of who I am.**

At work, it's what people can do that matters.

**National Disability Employment Awareness Month — Celebrating 70 Years!**

 OFFICE OF DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT POLICY  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
[dol.gov/odep](https://dol.gov/odep)



# WE NEED TO DO BETTER FOR OUR GAY MALE CLIENTS

BY: JUSTIN L. MAKI, PH.D., NCC

Research shows that gay men seek counseling more than the general population (Dziengel, 2015; Love, Smith, Lyall, Mullins, & Cohn, 2015). In fact, Dziengel (2015) found that as many as 42% of gay men and lesbians seek counseling services. While this percentage seems high, it is important to note that Savage, Harley, & Nowak (2005) found that nearly 50% of gay men reported being dissatisfied with their counseling experience and quit attending counseling after their first session. This is a statistic the counseling profession needs to address and improve.

Counseling programs need to spend more time training counselors to work with gay men (Bidell, 2014; Graham, Carney, & Kluck, 2012; Kocarek & Pelling, 2003). Jeffery and Tweed (2015), reported that most counselors have never received training in affirmative counseling for LGB individuals. This is alarming as Lyons, Pitts, & Grierson (2014) indicated that gay men not only experience more psychological distress than straight men, but also that perceived stigma and experiences of discrimination have been found to be factors associated with causing psychological distress. ram cognitive-behaviorally based treatment.

Education on the significance in training counselors to work with gay men is fundamental in providing quality care and limiting risk to their clients.

While some counseling programs offer specialized certificates and course offerings related to LGBTQ+ issues, that is not an expected outcome in resolving this dilemma. However, through providing psychoeducation and supervision during practicum and internship courses that abides by gay-affirmative practices, counselor educators and supervisors can help reduce the number of gay male clients that stop attending therapy due to their belief that their therapist does not understand or is harming them.

My dissertation titled, "A Quantitative Study of Within Group Discrimination of Gay Men" aimed at discovering perceptions of discrimination of gay men by other gay men. The findings of this study can better prepare counselors for examining the intersectional needs of their gay male clients. The study included the following six constructs of within-group discrimination: ageism, classism, culturalism, racism, sexism, and sizeism. This research intended to explore the within-group discrimination experiences of gay men and offer the counseling profession additional credibility and competence in understanding the lived experiences of their gay clients. Participants reported their experiences of within-group discrimination for each construct, with culturalism reported at the highest level and sexism reported at the lowest level for the entire sample of 2159 gay men.

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Preparing counselors to integrate and infuse multicultural considerations and training within counselor preparation programs and courses is a part of the 2016 CACREP standards (CACREP, 2016, Section 2 F.2.) Therefore, implementing a training approach that includes the intersectionality of multiple multicultural considerations into social cultural counseling courses, as well as all other counseling courses, can help counselors-in-training evaluate their clients more holistically. For example, the highest scored item in my dissertation study was “I have been told I need to gain or lose weight by another gay man/group of gay men.” A counselor educator could use this information in a diagnosis course by providing a case study surrounding body image issues for gay men and discussing body image dissatisfaction rates among gay men.



To assist counselors, counselor educators, supervisors, and counselors-in-training in providing culturally competent counseling, the Association for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues in Counseling (ALGBTIC) published competencies for working with lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, questioning, intersex, and ally individuals in 2012 (Harper et al., 2012). The competencies serve as a resource for helping members of the counseling profession train, practice, and advocate for their clients.





# INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION OF THE SCHOOL TO PRISON PIPELINE FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN GIRLS

BY: DR. TIFFANY STONER-HARRIS, PHD, LCPC, LMHC, NCC

African American girls are increasingly identified in literature that focuses on the school to prison pipeline. The Washington Post published an article “How black girls suffer when booted from school to juvenile detention centers” in May of 2016 that shed some light on an ever growing issue for African American girls in the U.S. public education school system. As an African American woman, a mother of three African American daughters, a licensed counselor, and a counselor educator training both school and clinical counselor, this topic has personal meaning for me on many levels. I continually strive to advocate and educate within the counseling profession and the educational arena on the relevance of understanding the strengths and challenges of girls from this particular racial and ethnic group. My research has encompassed a span of work including resilience among African American girls, using a trauma lens in responding to the needs of African American girls, to a focus on counselor development to work effectively with this special population and the long term outcomes that may present in adulthood.

There are many contributing factors to this phenomenon of the school to prison pipeline for African American girls, including the increased presence of School Resource Officers (SRO's), zero tolerance policies in school districts, and in some districts the use of metal detectors (Morris, 2016). While these are in fact causative factors, there are also additional structural and social factors that contribute to this concerning phenomenon.

The Civil Rights Data Collection (2013-2014) indicates that while African American girls represent 8% of the total student population, they represent 13% of the suspension rates with one or more out of school suspensions. Girls from other racial/ethnic groups did not experience this same disproportionately. African American girls are often receiving external messages that imply that they are not measuring up in some regard to societal standards (Morris, 2016; Flink, Beirens, Butte & Ratt, 2014). Baruth & Manning (2016) state “Negative stereotypes used to describe the African American culture and the adolescent lifespan period lower the self-esteem of these adolescents” (p.88). In effort to change this trend in data, it is imperative that educators are recognizing and responding to the disparities in data around the educational policies and procedures, including disciplinary practices, that impact African American girls in the U.S. public school setting.

The American School Counseling Association (ASCA) has clearly defined standards that assist with addressing these areas of concern through the use of developmental counseling curriculum and the inclusion of culturally inclusive approaches (ASCA, 2012). Baruth and Manning (2016) highlight the need to recognize the challenges that African American youth are faced with including issues around identity development, stereotypes of the culture and developmental period, delinquent and criminal behavior, and high school graduation rates.

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Using a trauma lens and being able to assess and respond to the needs of girls from this particular group is also necessary (Briere & Lanktree, 2012). Understanding trauma through both a behavioral and cultural lens will enhance the school counselor and other educators ability to respond in a trauma informed manner (Alvarez & Sloan, 2012; Michaels, 2010). It is imperative that school counselors are advocating for equity practices across the social/emotional, academic, and career spectrums of education as prescribed by ASCA (2012). With the use of collaborative working models in education becoming more of the expectation, school counselors have the opportunity to influence their educational peers and their work with African American girls.

Using a Black Identity Model (Cross, 1991) or a Racial and Cultural Identity Model (Atkinson, Morten, & Sue, 1998) to understand the stage of identity development an African American girl may experience, can be instrumental in learning more about her thoughts and perceptions on self as well as others. Understanding the daily manifestations in the lives of adolescent African American girls is important for purposes of acknowledging their lived experiences and understanding how they experience the world, regardless of whether or not educators or school counselors have the same experiences. The daily manifestations can include microaggressions, a lack of safe spaces, implicit biases, negative perceptions from others based on racial and ethnic background, perceptions of being older than chronological age, and receiving harsher consequences than similar age girls of other races (Morris, 2016; Kirwan Institute, 2014). This is relevant information for school counselors to have, as they determine how to best provide support and interventions to this particular population of girls.



School counselors need to thoroughly understand the racial disparities within their buildings and districts, in effort to efficiently and resourcefully work towards supporting the needs of all students. It is imperative to understand what the data says in terms of academic achievement, placement in advanced placement (AP)/honors classes, placement in special education classed, the use of IEP's and 504's, and the use of disciplinary actions in response to student behaviors (ASCA, 2012). In effort to understand the needs of the marginalized groups within the buildings and the district, the data must be disaggregated using methods and characteristics that will allow for the identification of adverse patterns, along with creating, implementing and monitoring equity policies.

Reducing the chances of a school to prison pipeline for African American girls means responding to their needs through a culturally relevant lens, and eliminating barriers to equitable experiences in the U.S. public school setting through the analysis and adjustments to all aspects of the educational environment. For example, Gopalakrishnan (2011) emphasizes the significance of children's literature actively including a multicultural lens. This is consistent with the inclusion of materials, resources, information, and education that will enhance a student's identity development as presented in the Black Identity Model (Cross, 1991) or a Racial and Cultural Identity Model (Atkinson, Morten, & Sue, 1998). While Brown vs. Board of Education formally ended segregation in 1954, it clearly did not prevent practices from being implemented that negatively harm and impact student groups, such as African American girls. As we seek to eliminate the school to prison pipeline for this population, it is imperative that the education system seek to understand their needs, to be inclusive of culturally relevant curriculum, to eliminate biased practices and procedures, and to ensure that equitable policies are in place that protect the rights of all students.



## TURNING IT OVER...

BY: DR. S. KENT BUTLER, PH.D., LPC, NCC, NCSC

Inclusion may be, for all intents and purposes, every young person's desire when it comes to day-to-day interactions with the world. Being one in the number in many ways supports the development of one's sense of self as they discover themselves in relation to others. This no doubt is a phenomenon that stems from birth through every developmental stage. The world is supposed to be a safe space where we as children and adolescents begin to develop into global citizens. In actuality, as inquiring souls, we are really heading into the unknown. Sadly, one might find the navigation of life to be a daunting task; the undertaking is especially unnerving for young minds still finding their place in the world and pretty much stands as a historical truth for African American youth.

Mentoring. Mentorship may come in various shapes, methods, and sizes. As helping professionals the provision of mentoring services is a powerful resource; one counselors may utilize in their efforts to support African American youth. Viable mentoring programs have been found to nurture educational ambitions, develop and increase self-efficacy, and enhance the leadership qualities of mentees. Counselors are uniquely positioned to strategically establish and strengthen these mentoring connections.

Empowerment. To further enhance African American youth's self-esteem and feelings of belongingness, counselors should always empower and ensure that youth are positively held accountable and in full awareness of all ramifications surrounding the life decisions they make.

To this end, multiculturally competent counselors have an opportunity to work with African American youth who are often left hanging in the balance awaiting quality counseling services.

Stepping up to the plate, as culturally responsive practitioners who also serve as social justice advocates to African American youth, is certain to provide extraordinary pathways to success; thus empowering and effectively navigating our children through an always-evolving world that has historically come to fail them. Helping them ultimately to relieve a myriad of life stressors.

Prior to writing this piece I served as a panelist for an annual program put on by the Orlando Magic. The mentorship platform is designed to reach approximately 150 disadvantaged male youth and is entitled the Magic of Mentoring Minority Male Summit: MBK Orlando. During the "Magic of Mentoring" question and answer period, one of the young men, knowing my current role as university professor, asked me the often profound "what would I tell my younger self" question. I didn't hesitate and was quick to respond to his probe saying that I would tell myself that it was okay to be Black, and to love myself unconditionally no matter what. This is something that I truly believe in and is a sentiment I now try to embrace daily within my own life. As we continued the conversation they asked essentially how to do that, how do I tackle negativity when it comes my way? Right at that moment I made a physical gesture with the fingers of my right hand in an effort to portray the sweeping of something off of my left shoulder. I then went on to say I don't allow things to weigh on me. Turning it over, as it were.

Now, to be perfectly truthful, it has taken me a moment to get here, but I can honestly say that my present self is not willing to tolerate "Mess"! I don't have time for stress in my life. I have long been a laid back kind of guy. While it remains true that I am human and that sometimes when issues come up I might respond with a strong immediate or negative reaction, I expect better. Typically, and with some quickness, I try to put the issue into perspective – reframing it. Doing my best to not belabor the point.

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My mother often gave me that counsel long ago when I was growing up...especially when I would get into what seemed to be a no win argument with my older sister...way before the movie made it popular she would say..."let it go"...essentially saying you know how she is, why put yourself through this? In retrospect, I have little doubt that it is probably also the same counsel she gave to my sister. Hmmmm, I'll have to inquire about that. My Mom, a counselor, who knew?

Present day, when the moment calls for a bit more than an internal inspection/re-inspection and a counselor is not available, I reach out to my wife, one of my sisters, or one of my best friends to help bring me back to mellow. Floating something past them or just being able to get something off of my chest often leads to a certain clarity and/or a sounder perspective in which to operate from. They provide me with guidance and help to keep me grounded.

#### Truly "Turnt" Over

When making important decisions (especially in the workplace), some excellent questions I ask myself are:

- What is the positive that I can take from this situation?
- What do I actually need to say to (my colleague, friend, etc.)...?
- What is a rational way to come at this issue?
- Is it worth the stress? (To which my response is frequently a no...so I just walk away).

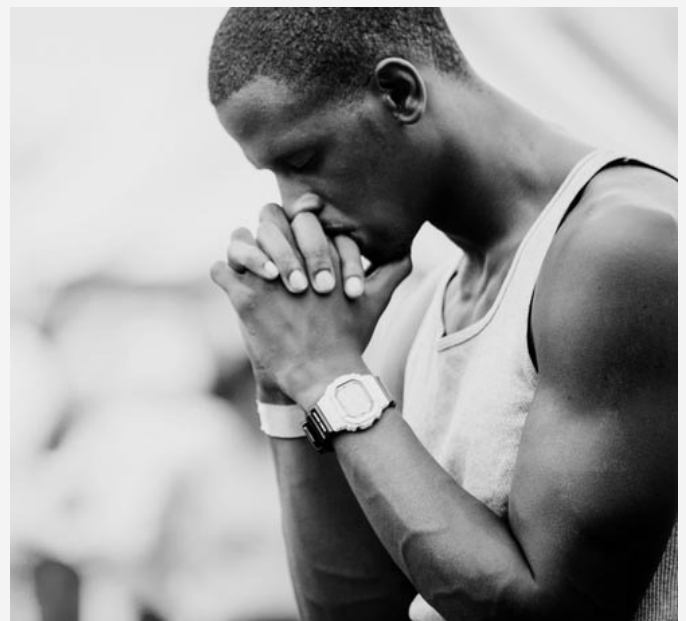
Moving forward, I own that which is mine and gladly hand the rest over to the various someone else's who provided them in the first place...I refuse to carry their baggage. Early in my life I used to sweat the small stuff, then I got wiser. I matured and realized that the only person I was hurting fretting over things was myself. Because of it my physical and mental health improved, mainly because I wasn't being burdened by the stress. I personally have seen what stress is capable of doing to people in my own life.

Case and point, my Father unfortunately suffered complications from a stroke that physically encumbered his entire being for over 20 years. I vowed that that could not be my pathway. In fact, the blueprint I have for my life is to live every day to the fullest. I am the one that matters and only I can preserve the sanctity of my space. Especially since when I give it over to someone else they tend to mishandle it.

Another de-stressor for me is music. Give me contemporary jazz, gospel, or R & B and I can almost immediately be returned to my comfort zone. Poignant songs...like a tune from back in the day or a tried and true gospel standard...often center me. In fact it happened as I was writing this piece, an oldie but goodie unconsciously played loudly in my head, reminding me in true fashion just what it is that I needed to do with any and all problems. It goes a little something like this...

"That problem that I had, I just couldn't seem to solve  
I tried and I tried, but I kept gettin' deeper involved  
So I turned it over to Jesus, and I stopped worryin' about it  
Turned it over to the Lord (He worked it out)!"

Too blessed to be stressed! We all need to be!  
Learn to turn it over...



# Minority Concerns Introductions

## 2018-2019 FAMCD Minority Concerns Chairpersons



Dr. Justin Maki, Ph.D., NCC  
LGBTQ+ Concerns Chairperson

Dr. Justin Maki is a recent graduate of Auburn University in Alabama, where he earned his Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision. He holds a master's degree in Mental Health Counseling with concentrations in eating disorders and alcohol and other drug abuse, as well as a bachelor's degree in Psychology and Spanish all from the University of Wisconsin-Stout.

Dr. Maki has worked in higher education as an academic advisor, career counselor, and instructor for the last seven years. His research interests include LGBTQ issues in counseling, emotional intelligence, and career-life balance. Dr. Maki has delivered over 17 presentations in recent years at national, regional, and state conferences primarily related to LGBTQ issues and is honored and happy to be serving as the Florida Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development's LGBTQ Concerns Chairperson.



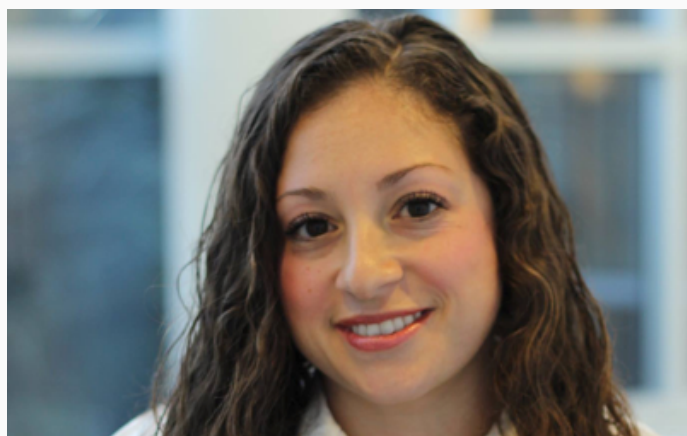
Loidaly Gonzalez, M.S., NCC  
Diversity within School Systems Chairperson

Loidaly Gonzalez is a professional school counselor who has worked in the elementary schools in South Florida. Prior to working as a school counselor, Loidaly was a teacher for grades 1-5. She is National Certified Counselor and holds her school counselor certificate with the state of Florida.

Currently, Loidaly is a doctoral student at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville where she teaches, supervises, and conducts research for the counseling department. Her research interests include mental health in schools and play therapy in schools. Loidaly currently serves as FAMCD's Diversity within School Systems Concerns Chairperson.

# Minority Concerns Introductions

## 2018-2019 FAMCD Minority Concerns Chairpersons



Laura Rendon Finnell, M.S., LMHC, NCC,  
Latinx Concerns Chairperson

Laura is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor in the state of Florida and has additional coursework, training, and experience in School-based Counseling and Play Therapy. She also holds the board certified credentials of National Certified Counselor and Certified Clinical Mental Health Counselor.

Laura is first-generation born in the United States, whose family is from Colombia. As a compassionate, bilingual counselor with a success record in helping individuals and families, she has served the diverse Latinx population in Central Florida for almost 10 years. She is most passionate about working with children and engaging their caregivers, as well as provide education and mentorship to Spanish-speaking counselors-in-training. It is her desire to develop bilingual counseling and play therapy competencies in Spanish that are culturally responsive and developmentally appropriate, and to promote education and research related to these concerns.



Alexis Duggan  
Disability Concerns Chairperson

Alexis Duggan is a soon to be fifth year Special Education teacher. A year ago, she moved to Miami, Florida to pursue a Master's Degree in Vocational Rehabilitation at Florida International University. It is Alexis' goal to help adults and adolescents with disabilities gain independent living resources and reach their career aspirations. It is her passion to serve individuals with disabilities and assist them in living their best life.

Alexis believes that the disability population is often overlooked and left out of mainstream society, which is why she chose to be an advocate for individuals with disabilities. Alexis notes that students with disabilities deserve to be treated with respect and provided with the appropriate resources. She is currently a student member of ARCA, NAMRC (Current Student Representative), ACA, NRA, and NCRE. Over the past year, she has had the opportunity to travel across the country to participate in several different conferences that focus on improving the lives of people with disabilities through student research. While being a full time graduate student and teacher of students with Autism is time consuming, Alexis enjoys every moment of it!

# Minority Concerns Introductions

## 2018-2019 FAMCD Minority Concerns Chairpersons



Tanisha Pelham, M.S.

African American Concerns Chairperson

Tanisha Pelham is a first year Counseling Psychology doctoral student at the University of Georgia. Prior to attending the University of Georgia, she received her Bachelor's of Science and Master's of Science degrees, in Psychology and Community Psychology respectively from Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University.

Tanisha served as a coordinator of the Tallahassee Community Healing Days Coalition for five years in effort to raise awareness of disparities in areas of education, health, emotional emancipation and economics in underserved communities.

Tanisha's primary areas of clinical and research interest are working with marginalized and underserved populations, specifically African American children and adults.

Amanda DiLorenzo, M.Ed.

Caribbean Concerns Chairperson

Amanda DiLorenzo is a doctoral student at the University of Central Florida. She completed her Master of Education and Education Specialist degrees in Marriage and Family Therapy at the University of Florida. Amanda is a Registered Marriage and Family Therapist Intern and a Registered Mental Health Counseling Intern in Florida.

Amanda has experience in career counseling, crisis counseling, and couples and family therapy. Her research interests include disaster mental health, sustainable development and counseling, and self-compassion work. Additionally, Amanda works with Dr. Solomon to facilitate educational workshops in self-compassion for educators in Seminole County.

Amanda's passion has been her work in Cap Haitian, Haiti through P4H Global. She has been working with this nonprofit for approximately eight years in varying capacities including facilitating educational seminars and conferences. In 2016, Amanda and Dr. Jaqueline Swank facilitated a helping skills seminar for community leaders in Cap Haitian, which was requested after a series of summer storms and flooding.

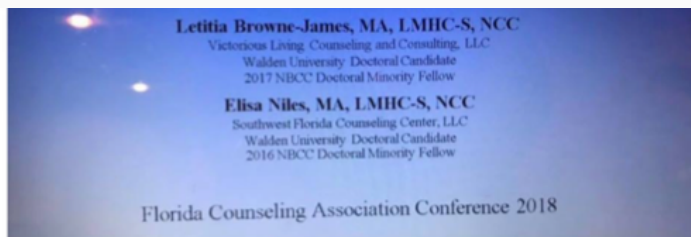
Not Pictured: Joanne Ongsitco, M.Ed., Ed.S., LMHC, NCC, CCTP  
Asian American Concerns Chairperson



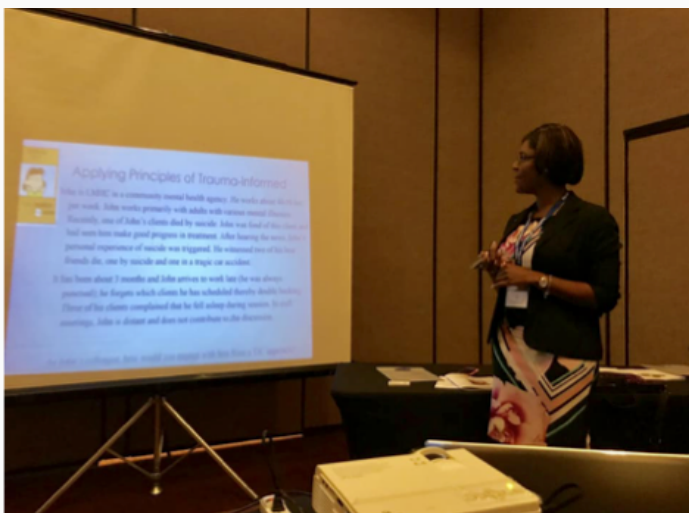
# Highlights of Florida Counseling Association's 2018 Conference In Tampa, Florida



FAMCD President, Daniel Balva presenting on "Persons with Disabilities: A Forgotten Minority."



FAMCD Past-President Dr. Letitia Browne James and FAMCD Member-At Large Elisa Niles presenting on "Gatekeeping in Counseling."



FAMCD Member-At-Large Elisa Niles co-presented with FAMCD Legislative Chair Tia Nagel on "Addressing Counselor Wellness from a Trauma-Informed Care Approach" for the conference's Pre-Convention session.

# Highlights of Florida Counseling Association's 2018 Conference In Tampa, Florida



FAMCD Caribbean Minority Concerns Chairperson Amanda DiLorenzo hosted a poster presentation focused on “Counseling and Sustainable Development: Partnership with Developing Countries Post-Disaster.”



FAMCD Latinx Concerns Chairperson Laura Rendon Finnell co-presented alongside Bethany Russell on “Ethical Dilemmas: Navigating the Use of Child Language Brokers in the Counseling Session.”

Past President Browne James also co-presented on “Multicultural Counseling and Advocacy: Integrating Experiential Pedagogy to Increase Counselor Competencies” alongside Dr. Lameria McRae.

# Highlights of Florida Counseling Association's 2018 Conference In Tampa, Florida



FAMCD's 2018 Annual Division Meeting



FAMCD was honored to have received FCA's Outstanding 2018 Division, 2018 Member Services & Recruitment Award, and FCA's 2018 Best Newsletter at FCA's Annual Conference!



# Division Spotlights



ALGBTIC 2018 Conference In  
Portland, Oregon

FAMCD's LGBTQ+ Concerns  
Chairperson, Justin Maki presenting  
on "A Quantitative Study of Within-  
Group Discrimination of Gay Men."

To read more about this study click  
here



FAMCD Secretary Maria Davis-  
Pierre, LMHC recently was a  
guest on the Therapy for Black  
Girls podcast titled, "The Truth  
About Self Care." The recording  
can be listened to via the  
following link:  
[http://therapyforblackgirls.com/  
ession77](http://therapyforblackgirls.com/session77)

# Division Highlights

## Division Congratulations

Congratulations to FAMCD Past-President Dr. Letitia Browne-James for successfully defending her dissertation in October!!

Congratulations for FAMCD Latinx Concerns Chairperson Laura Rendon Finnell for being named AMCD's Latinx Concerns Mentoring Liaison Chair!!

## FAMCD Tackling Current Events Via Facebook Live

On Saturday, October 6, 2018, Haiti experienced a 5.9 magnitude earthquake which took the lives of many and left the northern part of the country struggling with debris and numerous injuries. Our Caribbean Concerns Chairperson hosted a Facebook Live event in which she discussed Haitian American diaspora, Haitian Americans within Florida, and important considerations for counselors. Amanda also provided numerous resources within the video for professionals working with Haitian Americans! You can watch her video here: <https://www.facebook.com/FLAMCD/videos/155788698704368/>

# Division Highlights

## FAMCD Tackling Current Events Via Facebook Live

October was National Disability Employment Awareness Month, during which time our Disability Concerns Chairperson, Alexis Duggan hosted a Facebook Live event in which she discussed Disability Employment Awareness Month and provided numerous resources for working with persons with disabilities! You can watch her video here: <https://www.facebook.com/FLAMCD/videos/166380557640936/>

October was also LGBT History Month, during which time our LGBTQ+ Concerns Chairperson, Dr. Justin Maki hosted a Facebook Live event in which he discussed the history of the LGBT population and provided important historical resources to keep in mind when working with the LGBTQ+ population! You can watch his video here: <https://www.facebook.com/FLAMCD/videos/316922802421598/>

November was Native American Heritage Month. We encourage all of our members to take some time to learn more about this underserved and marginalized population, as we continuously strive to increase our multicultural counseling competencies! The following links provide some foundational information about this important month, so do be sure to read through them and do additional research into how to best serve our Native American and Indigenous populations!

<https://nativeamericanheritagemonth.gov>

<http://www.ncai.org/initiatives/native-american-heritage-month>

<http://www.pbs.org/specials/native-american-heritage-month/>

<https://nativelearningcenter.com/november-native-american-heritage-month/>

Be sure to Like FAMCD on Facebook to receive access to informative Facebook Live Videos, counseling resources and articles, and updates about the division!

<https://www.facebook.com/FLAMCD/>

# In the Spotlight



## Facebook Page

Therapy for Black Girls is an online space dedicated to encouraging the mental wellness of Black women and girls.



## Facebook Group

Therapists and Healers join the conversation with Compassionate Connectors, as it is a place for those in private practice to learn about the process of grief, death, dying and bereavement and how to navigate through the pain and suffering that can be experienced in grief.

# Upcoming National Conferences



American Counseling Association 2019 Conference and Expo  
New Orleans, LA: March 28-31, 2019  
<https://www.counseling.org/conference/>



AMCD Multicultural and Social Justice Summit  
Orlando, Florida: June 21-22, 2019  
<https://multiculturalcounselingdevelopment.org/events/amcd-summit/>