



# ACACI Winter Newsletter

February, 2018



Helping Children and Adolescents Thrive



## Message from the President

**Peggy  
Mayfield**

The end of 2017 was an exciting time for ACACI. We met many of you at the annual ICA conference which made the conference the highlight of our entire year! Thanks so much for coming by the table to get acquainted! We held our annual membership meeting which featured a wine and cheese reception. It was a great time to review the many accomplishments of our members! We hope that you will all plan to attend the 2018 ICA conference!

We held our ACACI Awards Ceremony at the conference and were so excited to honor two distinguished ACACI members who were nominated during our call for nominations late last summer. We are honored to announce the honorees! See their bios elsewhere in the newsletter!

We are very grateful to a number of organizations that donated to the two raffle baskets we had at our

conference table! Our baskets were a big hit with conference attendees! Here are the names of our generous donors:

- Beauticontrol, Lisa Seyring
- Child Therapy Toys/Play Therapy Supply
- Childswork/Childsplay
- Dynamic Directions Counseling, Laura Doyle
- Gates Consulting, Aisha-Sky Gates
- Gruener Consulting, Catherine Gruener
- Office Oxygen/Trainers Warehouse
- Positive Discipline Assoc.
- SENG, Dr. Mike Postma
- SMB Alternative Healing, Samantha C-Panopoulos

We began the ACACI Emerging Leaders initiative last fall to support students and new professionals as they enter the counseling field. We were happy to be able to send the Emerging Leaders to the ICA Leadership Development Academy held at Adler University on December 2, 2017. Please contact me if you are interested in serving as an ACACI Emerging Leader. We want to provide mentorship, support, training, and opportunities to participate in ACACI. See the bios of

our current emerging leaders elsewhere in the newsletters.

As you know, we have been able to provide members opportunities to attend two free one-hour webinars that provided 1 CEU each. We are so grateful to our two wonderful board members, Catherine Gruener (ACACI Secretary) and Anna Themanson (ACACI Membership Chair) for providing these exceptional webinars to members! Please contact me if you wish to donate a webinar to support the professional development of ACACI members! No prior experience in webinars is needed.

Kind regards,

*Peggy*

[mayfield.peggyc@gmail.com](mailto:mayfield.peggyc@gmail.com)

Peggy Mayfield, ACACI President,  
2017-2019

*Helping Children and Adolescents  
Thrive!*

# ACACI Awards

## ACACI Counselor Educator of the Year- 2017

### RoseMary Cairo, Ed.D.

#### Education

- Ed.D., Counselor Education and Supervision, Argosy University, Schaumburg, 2011
- M.A., Counseling and Human Services, Roosevelt University, 1997
- B.A., Psychology and Education, Barat/DePaul University at Chicago IL, 1978

#### Biography

Dr. Cairo is a clinically licensed Counselor (LCPC), practicing in the profession for over eighteen years. She works with individuals, couples and families, with an emphasis on holistic wellness. Her area of expertise is in relationship counseling. Dr. Cairo is a past treasurer for The Association for Child and Adolescent Counseling in Illinois (ACACI). She is committed to membership in the professional counseling organizations and has served three terms as the president of the Illinois Spiritual, Ethical & Religious Values in Counseling (ISERVIC), one term as the secretary for the Illinois Association for Couples & Family Counseling (IACFC) and is a past treasurer for The Association for Child and Adolescent Counseling in Illinois (ACACI). Dr. Cairo has taught at the graduate level for over eight years with specialty areas in Multicultural Competency, Ethical practice in Counseling & Supervision, and Group Counseling. She is committed to embracing opportunities to further educate and inspire students in graduate and post-graduate counseling programs and to assist their development in becoming professional counselors and counselor educators.



## ACACI Counselor of the Year- 2017

### Christine Vinci, MA, LPC, CCTP, NCC

Christine is a Licensed Professional Counselor, Certified Clinical Trauma Professional, And National Certified Counselor. She obtained her undergraduate degree in Clinical Counseling Psychology at St. Xavier University and earned her Master's Degree in Community Counseling at Argosy University. While in graduate school, Christine participated in Chi Sigma Iota, the honor society for professional counselors.



Christine is a dedicated and compassionate clinician who has a passion for working with children, adolescents, and their families. She has worked in various capacities for over ten years, dedicating her career to working with the disadvantaged and vulnerable populations. She believes in social justice and advocacy, often going above and beyond her role as a counselor. She would often assist clients and their families from linking them up to services to attending IEP meetings. Christine's mission is to provide high quality services in an ethical, respectful, and dignified manner regardless of age, sex, socioeconomic status, religious background, cultural background, sexual orientation, and ethnic background. Christine continues her dedication outside of counseling, often active in volunteer work with children with autism as well as write and present on various topics related to working with youth and families. Christine believes in an integrative perspective, working with clients where they are at and on their individual needs. Christine believes in being creative in the therapy room, often thinking outside the box and utilizing art, music, humor, and other creative outlets to enhance the counseling process.

**Christine is also an ACACI Emerging Leader**

# ACACI Emerging Leaders



## Karina Breezer

My name is Karina Breezer. I am a Master of Arts student at Concordia University in the Clinical Mental Health program. Most likely will work with children, adolescents and families however, I do not want to limit myself. Have a huge interest in anxiety and depression caused by trauma. I am a crisis counselor for Crisis Text Line, I just hit my 1 year mark. I plan on pursuing a PhD in the future.

Attending LDA was a wonderful experience for me. I learned a lot, about the history of the ICA, how to move forward, and what is going on currently. It is always a great experience to be in a room with people who you can learn from, brainstorm with and who genuinely enjoy the profession. My two big takeaways were that, we are in this together and it is like a family. That means a lot to me as I am just starting out and it can be a bit overwhelming at times. The second take away was that, it is okay to say no and that it is okay that everyone works differently. Often, when working with a group, one might feel obligated to take on too much, or that it is not their place to have a voice. I am appreciative that there is room for growth and a place where my ideas matter.



## Richard Smith

My name is Richard Smith. I am currently working on my master's in counseling at Governors State University. I am passionate about both physical and mental health. I have a background in exercise science and look at ways to integrate this component with psychological wellbeing. I also have a love for traveling. I've had the privilege to present on topics related to personal health in both Haiti and Thailand. My long-term goal is to provide a unique service that will benefit both man and woman kind. As I make my way towards that goal, I make sure to enjoy the steps along the way.

I was thoroughly pleased with my experience at the leadership academy. Before receiving food for thought, we were provided food for our gut. Both are vitally essential to any major gathering. This sentiment was well backed by Pat McGinn who was the first speaker. She also expressed the importance of being stubborn to get what is needed and how the work doesn't stop once the goal is achieved. Michelle Kerulis addressed the importance of prioritizing and also opened the floor for discussion. The rest of the day included an open panel and group work that put members in some role of leadership. The day was well spent, and I would encourage anyone who has an interest to go, to attend.



## Carolyn Raitt

My name is Carolyn Raitt. I am a master's candidate in the Counseling Program at The Family Institute (TFI) at Northwestern University pursuing a specialization in child and adolescent psychotherapy. I earned my B.A. in psychology with concentrations in women's studies and biomedical studies at St. Olaf College. I am currently a clinical trainee in the Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) Clinic at TFI, where I conduct empirically supported treatment with complex, multi-problem clients. Previously, I completed my practicum fieldwork in the Bette D. Harris Family and Child Clinic at TFI, where I provided individual psychotherapy for a diverse population of adolescents and adults with a wide variety of presenting problems, in addition to leading a support group for children dealing with divorce. Later, I completed internship fieldwork at Highland Park High School's Drop-in Counseling Center, where I provided individual psychotherapy, led support groups, and did crisis counseling with adolescents. Key clinical interests emerging from my work thus far include depression, anxiety, trauma, self-injury, suicidality, eating disorders, ADHD, LGBTQIA+ issues, grief & loss, adolescence, emerging adulthood, psychodynamic psychotherapy, DBT, and EMDR.

## More Reflections: Leadership Development Academy

By *Carolyn Raitt*

I went into ICA's Leadership Development Academy with considerable undergraduate leadership experience. (During my senior year, I had been president or chair of four student organizations.) I was eager to learn about and develop skills that I could take and immediately apply to my current leadership roles. A few pieces of wisdom that I have taken from the LDA and implemented in my current leadership roles are as follows: (1) delegate and ask for support; (2) remember that your fellow leaders are volunteers; (3) provide food for meetings; (4) call each other out when you see someone taking on too much; (5) remember that you don't have to say "yes" just because you're in a leadership role; (6) know that if you say "no," it doesn't mean that doors are going to closer permanently; other opportunities will present themselves; and (7) understand that you can do everything you want to do, just not all at the same time. These nuggets of wisdom have helped me reign in my usual overzealousness, setting more realistic goals and limits for myself and for my fellow leaders. This has had a positive impact on others on my leadership teams, as well as on my stamina as a leader.

As much as I felt confident and experienced in running student organizations, I felt exceptionally green and naïve about approaching involvement in a professional organization. I am awed by how much ICA has accomplished for the counseling profession through its

grassroots efforts. I've been eager to get involved (without biting off more than I can chew), and ICA leaders at the LDA gave me a sense of where and how I might be able to begin: (1) when Dan Staci sends an email to contact your representative, do it; (2) start with what you can handle because that gets appreciated; (3) get on your representative's donors list (because there are two things that count with legislators: numbers and money); (4) contact Dan Staci and ask for an assignment; and (5) donate to the Coalition of Illinois Counselor Organizations (CICO), which lobbies on behalf of all counseling organizations in Illinois.

Folks also reassured me about getting involved in ICA. Some of the things that I wrote down were: (1) ICA can be like a good, supportive family; (2) ICA is one of the best counseling organizations in the country; (3) once you get involved, you are not alone; there are other people who are going to help you every step of the way; and (4) ICA past presidents are available to mentor chapter divisions. Especially in light of the support I have experienced from ACACI in sponsoring my attendance of the LDA, as well as the positive experience I had at the LDA, I am excited to break out of my student organization shell and embark on the journey of becoming involved and developing as a leader within ACACI and ICA.



by *Christine Vinci, MA, LCPC, CCTP, NCC*

In November 2017, I attended the Leadership Development Academy through ICA at Adler University in Chicago, IL. After several months as a member in ACACI, I was approached to attend ICA's Leadership Development Academy. At first, my thought was "me! A leader!?! I'm not sure." After some thought, I decided to do it and saw this as an opportunity to increase my leadership skills in order to where I want to be in my career.

After completing the application and thinking about the questionnaire that I had to answer, I thought, "Did I answer these questions right? What if I don't get it?" After thinking about it, I knew it was to really get to know me and what I am looking for, so I decided to be honest and answer them accurately. I'm glad I did because I learned that I was accepted into the program. It was very exciting and empowering because I was myself and honest.

At the LDA, I was both excited and nervous, not sure what to expect. It was a small group, which allowed a more intimate and interactive experience, which I personally enjoy than bigger groups. I met a lot of new people and met some members of ACACI that I previously met. There were people who I have seen at previous ICA conferences and professional networking opportunities. The president of ICA, and my former professor in graduate school, Dr. Kakacek was there as well. There were various presenters during the day as well as individual and group activities on topics such as team dynamics, applied leadership, networking, governance, and idea conception and application. There were many interesting experiences during the day, learning about the logistics of the profession such as

running meetings, program management, and program development. I really appreciated that because I am a person who is interested in the “behind the scenes” aspects to better understand the entire process and made me more mindful of how to develop my own ideas in the future.

There was a panel discussion, which allowed more interaction with the presenters who are very experienced clinicians, who have current or past leadership experience. I thought that was a great opportunity for me personally because it showed that they were a lot like me, initially unsure and did not know what to expect in a leadership role. They gave very helpful advice and ways to increase opportunities in leadership such as what people can do in their work. My personal goal was balancing being true to myself and being a leader. I have had some helpful tips and about this and found that this was a common theme for most of the participants. For example, they encourage everyone to be creative, which I am a creative person and was happy to hear them say that because it is something that was very true to me.

One presenter stated something that has stuck with me and continues to stick with me related to my personal goal; “people are always watching.” This is absolutely true because it is about what you do and having integrity as a professional; it is one thing to act like a leader and to be a leader. Since the LDA, I have thought of this over and over in my decision-making process; “people are always watching.” Overall, I have found the LDA to be a beneficial experience, especially for the trajectory of my career. For those who seek leadership training or even want the opportunity to train and supervise others, going to the LDA is a great start. I am sure glad I did.



## Supporting LGBTQIA+ Children and Adolescents

by

**Anna Themanson, LPC, CADC**

Multicultural competency is a core tenet for effective counseling. A trustworthy and respectful environment is created when clients’ cultural backgrounds are celebrated and honored. Clients who identify within the LGBTQIA+ community deserve culturally competent counselors to provide services that are aligned with best practices. The following text outlines several approaches in supporting LGBTQIA+ children and adolescents.

**The first approach** in supporting a LGBTQIA+ identified child or adolescent is to understand the unique needs associated with each individual identity within the LGBTQIA+ community. It is imperative to continue to educate ourselves on evolving terminology and needs.

**Another support** system counselors can implement is to be aware of the language counselors utilize in working with clients.

Microaggressions can be unintentional but often divisive and hurtful (Wing Sue, 2010). Using gender neutral and inclusive language such as partner and guardian creates a welcoming environment for the client. Don’t forget to ask for the client’s pronouns! Affirming and validating the child or adolescents’ identity shows support to the client in a genuine and compassionate way.

**Recommending parents** and guardians to use affirming and validating language and actions can encourage open communication between the youth and their caretaker. Support for parents and guardians include PFLAG, Family Acceptance Project, and Trans Youth Family Allies.

**Utilizing the Cass Identity Model** can help counselors conceptualize their clients’ needs in regards to their current stage of identity development (Ritter & Terndrup, 2002). In addition to using the Cass Identity Model, it is beneficial to acknowledge the complexities of intersectional identities the child or adolescent may hold. Affirming and celebrating the various aspects of the child or adolescents’ identity provides a welcoming and supportive environment for the client.

**Lastly, displaying LGBTQIA+** affirming posters and literature in the workplace can encourage a safe and inclusive environment. Counselors are important allies to LGBTQIA+ identified children and adolescents and have the ability to model a positive support system.



## Mindfulness in a mindless world: Applying the art of mindfulness and presence in psychotherapy with children

by

**Karolina Hogueisson, MA,  
LCPC, NCC, RDDP**

**Mindfulness:** being mindful, present, aware, living in the moment, noticing, experiencing, witnessing. Being conscious. Being in the here and now. (You can insert your own definition here).

Most of us probably know how to define mindfulness. We've heard/read a lot about it in the recent years. You may have heard that it's good for us: that we don't do it enough and should do it more often. I would dare to suggest that most of us are able to conceptualize the link between mindfulness and our overall wellbeing and to explain the basic mindfulness skills and strategies to others. By the show of hands, how many of you find this to be true for you? We also are not aware of how mindless we are: ever seen a person putting on makeup while driving? How about people eating

and texting also while driving? How about mindless injuries while performing our daily tasks? Ever got home and didn't even notice any landmarks until you were opening your garage door? Since so much has been written about the benefits of mindfulness and meditation for adults, I'd like to focus on teaching mindfulness strategies to children.

**Research suggests** that by applying mindfulness practices, we might notice a variety of changes: "These include improvements in working memory, attention, academic skills, social skills, emotional regulation, and self-esteem, as well as self-reported improvements in mood, and decreases in anxiety, stress and fatigue" (Meiklejohn, J., Phillips, C., Freedman, M.L. et al. 2012). Children tend to live in the moment already – they experience their emotions, react and move on (Hooker & Fodor 2008).

**Given the multitude of benefits** for using mindfulness in our daily operations, let's see how we might teach it to the children we work with. I often find myself working with children who experience increased levels of anxiety, depressive symptoms, peer relationship issues, ADHD, and inability to regulate their emotions, among other complaints. I often engage various playful strategies to help them overcome their challenges. Our work is regularly enhanced by the application of mindfulness strategies during our sessions. Most of my therapy sessions begin with a mindfulness

exercise of choice. The following are my favorites:

1. **Breathing practice** – I guide children in inhaling through the nose until the air fills their body all the way down to their toes (from your nose to your toes), and exhaling through the mouth, until there is no oxygen left in the body. A helpful illustration of this is imagining that the body will stretch out to stand tall like a tree when we inhale and that it will wither to fall to the ground when we exhale (out of your toes through your nose). Children generally find this to be a fun activity and are readily able to engage in it. Their subjective reports usually indicate a level of relaxation and awareness post exercise. Controlled breathing is the basic symptom management skill and I teach it first, then use it in other strategies. Blowing bubbles is another strategy I use to teach mindful breathing.

2. **Progressive muscle relaxation** – the "cook your spaghetti" strategy. We begin by selecting the part of body the child would like to begin with. They might start with their hands or feet, as those might be the easiest to work with. Facial muscles can also be used as a good starting point. I guide them through the process and use a variety of scenarios and props as we move along. I might use stress balls to aid in the tensing and relaxing of hands and feet. The idea here is to be able to engage the children in aware experiencing of the moment, a process that might be abstract to some of them. We move through the process together as I practice with them.

3. **Gymnastics poses** – I prompt children to assume a variety of poses that help them to bring awareness to certain body parts such as standing on one foot with a hand on top of their head, while focusing on their breathing. We might also lie flat on the floor, feeling the pressure points where our bodies touch the floor, while also feeling the texture of the carpet with our hands. We work on describing those sensations, which in turn builds the children's awareness of their bodies in space. We also practice mindful sitting on the couch or chair, with our feet planted firm on the ground, hands in our laps, backs straight and looking straight ahead. We discuss the process as we go along and often write the strategies on index cards, for future reference outside of my office.

4. **Meditation** – or an abbreviated, child-friendly version of it. A playful approach to focusing on all five senses might be adding props (with parental consent when indicated) – I tend to use different flavors of small candy (sour or sweet), ice cubes, scented lotions, scented markers, feathers, etc. I also utilize a variety of textures that can be readily found in my office. We engage all senses, while paying attention to our immediate environment and our

own sensations. Children often receive an assignment to be detectives in their daily operations – paying attention to their daily routines, feelings, sensations, behaviors, etc. and to keep a written report of their findings (if they are able to write).

5. **Mindful counting**: this is very basic and very helpful – it allows the child to take a moment to distance themselves from a challenging situation. It will help them to shift their focus, gain a perspective, and regulate their breathing at the same time.

6. **Arts and crafts** – I often engage children in creating their own props for practicing mindfulness in their own settings: mainly at home and at school. Items we have created and included in the past included glitter and water containers, sand bottles that could serve as hourglasses, mindfulness bags or boxes stacked with items that promote the art of meditation: small bottles of bubbles, bead bracelets, feathers, lotions, cotton balls with different smells on them, rocks and anything else that the children have identified as helpful to them. Creativity and simplicity are the key here.

**Similarly, we close every session** with a mindfulness exercise. With my younger patients' permission, we explain our

mindfulness practices and exercises to their parents/caregivers, as a way of teaching them to participate and prompt their children when they can't regulate their responses.

**Special considerations** should be made in assessing the children's ability to engage and taking their presenting and past concerns into account: age, developmental stage, trauma history, environment, presenting issues, etc.

**While the amount of information** on the art of mindfulness can be overwhelming to sort through, the basic premise of it is to "just be." I really think that all of us could use a little bit more of it, and the children that visit our offices could definitely benefit from it. I hope that this brief piece can serve as a springboard for you to begin to engage children in the art of mindfulness. It truly can be a fun way to connect, engage, educate and relax and just be.

~ Just Be ~

## Article Submissions

Please consider submitting an article for the April 2018, newsletter. Articles may be from 2 paragraphs to 2 pages and must relate to counseling children and adolescents. Due date for the April newsletter will be March 31st. Please send article proposals to: [lesliecontos@gmail.com](mailto:lesliecontos@gmail.com)

## Member Resources

We hope to create a list of on-line resources and tools that help our members provide quality care to our clients. You can forward any recommended resources to **Greta Nielsen, MA, NCC, LCPC** [GretaN@clinicalcareconsultants.com](mailto:GretaN@clinicalcareconsultants.com)

**Victim Assistance Training Online** (VAT Online) is a Web-based basic victim advocacy training program that offers victim service providers and allied professionals the opportunity to acquire the basic skills and knowledge they need to better assist victims of crime. [View Online Trainings](#)

**National Human Trafficking Resource Center** NHTRC & Polaris offer links to free interactive trainings and pre-recorded webinars developed by experts working in the anti-trafficking and related fields on a variety of topics related to human trafficking. [View Online Training](#)

**Child Victim Web** is a multimedia, online training resource for professionals in the child advocacy and trauma response fields. This free, online resource provides foundational training on trauma response, and connects professionals in the child abuse intervention field with valuable information and industry best practices. It is designed for professionals from all disciplines who work with children and adolescents who have experienced trauma as result of abuse of witnessing violence. Child Victim Web is frequently updated to reflect up-to-date information and best practice. [View Multimedia & Online Training Resources](#)

## Member Benefits

We are excited to offer members a variety of benefits such as:

- Serve on a task force
- Write an article for the newsletter—get published!
- Attend free webinars or
- Have an ACACI speaker at your organization or university to learn more about ACACI.

Please let me know if there are other benefits you would enjoy!

Are you looking for other ways to get involved? We have so many opportunities for you!

Please contact me at [mayfield.peggyc@gmail.com](mailto:mayfield.peggyc@gmail.com) or 217.972.7036.

I would love to hear from you!

Kind regards,

*Peggy*