



# Focus

on NDCA

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## Presidential News

Hello Fellow Counselors!

As our annual conference has come and gone, I just need to commend the organizers of this event once again. It was an excellent conference and there were very few snags to overcome. Thank you, Rebecca Meidinger, for thinking of all the details! I am impressed at the number of professionals involved in the online learning, so thank you all for supporting our sessions, we appreciate your participation.

Looking forward to the Annual Conference next year, I challenge you all assist the leadership in growing NDCA, so that it can be an organization we are all proud of. How can you do your part? Invite a coworker or colleague to

be part of NDCA. Volunteer your time to become part of leadership or present a session in the next conference. Bring ideas to the table to enrich and to grow our organization. Tell us what you need, and we can help you figure out how to get it!

I believe our organization is what we make it, so let us all unite in making NDCA what we want it to be! I am waiting to hear from you!  
God Bless and Stay Safe.

*Jada Hofland*  
NDCA President



# Counselor Strong: 2022 Conference

It's time for us to start planning for next year's Annual Conference! I look forward to seeing you at the 2022 Annual Conference, which is scheduled for February 13-15 at the Radisson Hotel in Bismarck. The theme for next year's conference is **Counselor Strong: Strong Minds, Bodies, Plans, & Relationships**. We are looking forward to using what we learn this year and, hopefully, have an in-person conference. Keep your eyes open for more details to come!

*Amy Geinert*

*NDCA President-Elect-Elect*

## 2021 Conference

In reflection on the 2021 NDCA Conference, the first thing I would like to say is **Thank you!**

Thank you to all of the amazing presenters (Taryn Akgul, William Anderson, Bridget Asempapa, Reuben Asempapa, Tyler Auck, Olivia Ayers, Jill Baird, Tracy Barnes, Karanbir Bhatti, Kristi Bitz, Jason Blue, Kelsey Boyce, Emily Brinck, Jessica Brown, Kelsie Carter, Angela Cleveland, Lindsey Danbom, Jessica Danielson, Lucas Demarais, Holly DeVries, Dan Donlin, Kaitlin Doyle, Anna Ellenson, Jeanne Farnsworth, Amanda Fedor, Amy Geinert, Jenna Hershberger, Lisa Holter, Kamryn Holtz, Paige Johnson, Amaliah Johnson, Andjela Kaur, Missy Ketterl, Katie Kleven, Erin Klingenberg, Matt Leavenworth, Alexandru Lefter, Megan Leingang, Ashley Limesand, Angel Lindseth, Shalini Mathew, Becky Meidinger, Presley Morstad, Erin Moser, Katherine Nelson, Christopher Potter, Marilyn Quintero, Kim Rasmussen, Randii Reed, Devan Rohrich, Christina Sambor, Chris Scheufele, Cory Schlack, Chelsie Smith, Pati Swanz-Reiners, Amy Tichy, Julie Traynor, Jim Upgren, Jill Vollmers, Tyler

Ward, Nikki Wegner, Amanda Wiodyla, Douglas Zeltinger) that shared their knowledge with our attendees.

Thank you to our attendees for spending Sunday afternoon, Monday, and Tuesday morning with us learning and creating connections. Thank you to the NDCA Executive Board and Governing Board for their support over the days leading up to and during the conference. Finally, I would like to give the biggest thank you to Jenise Wilson, our amazing Executive Director of NDCA. She was instrumental in making sure everything happened when and how we planned.

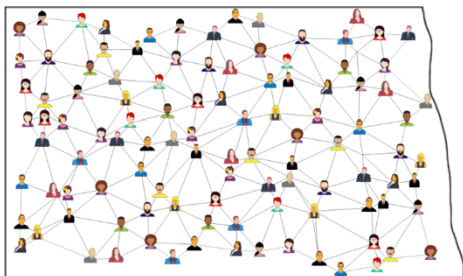
Please remember that you can view the videos until April 15<sup>th</sup> on demand. If you are having issues gaining access to the videos, please contact Jenise Wilson ([ndcajenise@gmail.com](mailto:ndcajenise@gmail.com)) for the passcode.

I know that Amy Geinert is already planning an awesome 2022 NDCA Conference. There were many mentions of specific topics that our members would like to see in future conference sessions, but they cannot happen without YOU. Over the next few months, I would like to challenge you all to think about something you can share with others.

I must give a quick plug for our Bylaws Revision Committee. We are looking for members interested in revising our Bylaws for clarity to make sure our association has the ability to stand the test of time. If you are interested in serving, please feel free to email me at [bmeidinger88@gmail.com](mailto:bmeidinger88@gmail.com) to join our awesome group.

*Rebecca Meidinger*  
*NDCA President-Elect*

## Creating Connections



2021 Conference

# Kryptonite



When you fly, the flight attendants always go over the safety procedures, one being in case of an emergency an oxygen mask will drop if you have little ones or someone you are caring for place the mask on you first before you assist them. Counselors often tell their clients, "You can't help others without helping yourself first", but do counselors walk that talk? Do we take our advice?

We all know that when we experience challenges to our wellness when we are distracted by our stress, anxiety, and unresolved relationship issues, it becomes impossible to be fully present with our clients.

Counselors often feel they should be a superhero, carrying the burden of others while carrying the belief that life's bumps and stressors don't or shouldn't affect us the way they do everyone else. We sometimes see ourselves as invulnerable to stress and impairment. Counseling places us in a position to listen to others hurt, grief, and distress. This is why self-care is important.

The act of self-care itself requires us to "regularly" turn our attention inward and reflect on our wellness, which is not something that we are accustomed to. We spend so much time working with and on the behalf of others, it is easy to lose track of our own needs. Just like we are intentional with our client and with our scope of practicing counseling, so should we be with being intentional in our care. Sometimes we need to step back and take stock and realize that something needs to change, especially when we find ourselves not being fully present at home or in our daily personal lives. Most people enter the counseling profession out of a sense of compassion for others. As we listen empathically to their stories it becomes impossible not to enter their world. So taking a little time to take some supervision from a trusted colleague who can help sort out our priorities and reconnect with our self-care is an okay thing to do.

Engaging in self-care means that we have to put the pain and feelings of our clients aside and reclaim our inner selves as we leave our offices and return home to be with those that need us in other ways. Self-care allows us to learn how to manage stress, whether personal or related to work, make healthy decisions and participate in behaviors that help maintain equilibrium in our daily lives. Proper self-care also means drawing boundaries when necessary and learning to say "no" to take care of ourselves (for a lot of us, it is difficult to be selfish). Self-care is often seen as another "add-on" to an already lengthy to-do list, but self-care needs to be seen as a lifelong journey or a consciously chosen lifestyle.

It is easy for "life" to interfere with self-care efforts, 'I have a busy week this week' or 'Things are hectic right now,' so we don't take time for self-care. It can be a lot of trouble. The reality is that incorporating self-care into an already busy life is never going to be easy. So again, it needs to be part of a lifestyle, not just another "add-on". When we make time to incorporate wellness into our daily routine versus trying to squeeze in a yoga class into an already packed weekend just because we feel we have to, sabotages self-care efforts. Find just one challenge activity that brings you such joy you lose all sense of time while involved in it, whatever, that might be- total immersion of oneself, so deeply that nothing else matters but being in that moment with ourselves.

Set a goal to incorporate self-care into a daily routine. Waiting until the weekend or the next vacation or the end of the semester doesn't work. You need to find your Kryptonite to help render your superpower because everyone needs a little more time as Clark Kent these days rather than Superman!



*\*\* As my last article in FOCUS, I would like to say it has been an honor and pleasure to actively serve the members of NDCA.*

*Leslie Lemke  
NDCA Past President*

## Legislative Update

**UPDATE SB2179 – Passed Senate/ presently in House** - SB2179 has been significantly changed – it has been changed to a legislative management study relating to coverage of telehealth. It passed the Senate 44-3 and was heard in House committee on 3/15. Insurance Commissioner Godfried offered an amendment to the telehealth bill to remove it from the study format which it was changed to within the Senate, however it does not appear that the amendment has been acted upon. Insurance Commissioner Godfried's main comments related to a study in the state and the need for providers and payers in the state to work together to decrease the costs of health care in the state as it has arisen so much and as such utilizing savings offered by telehealth services could be once opportunity to consider that. His letter did indicate that would mean telehealth may not always have the same reimbursement as face to face if determined to be more cost effective.

**SB2179** – Insurance coverage for Telehealth Services - A BILL for an Act to amend and reenact section 26.1-36-09.15 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to health insurance coverage of telehealth; and to declare an emergency. This bill would continue emergency mandates of coverage of telehealth services which was authorized due to the COVID pandemic.

**UPDATE of SB2335 - Failed to Pass** - SB2335 would change the current LAPC to Licensed Professional Counselor – Supervised. This bill appears to be brought about to align with insurance payer's language. The NDBCE spoke in opposition to this bill due to concerns that it would cause confusion with the current LPC licensure and would attempt to create a 2-tiered licensure parameter which the board does not support. NDCA/NDMHCA have not taken any position on this bill. **This bill failed to pass the Senate 0-47**

**Update of HB1298 – Passed the House – Currently in the Senate Committee** - HB1298 A bill to enact a requirement for sports to be played exclusively by males and females. This bill would require students in K-12 who wish to participate in a sport to be involved in the sport on the team based on their gender at birth. Changes were made to remove college students from this prior to it passing the Senate – the birth certificate provision was also removed. Since being sent to the House the provision for entities coming into the state for competitions have been removed. The other intent for players k-12 within the state has remained. **The bill passed the House 65-26 and came out of the Senate Committee on a Do Pass of 6-1 on 3/23; re-referred to Senate Judiciary committee and came out of that committee with a Do Pass 6-1 on 3/26.**

**HB1470 – Passed House – currently in Senate Committee** - A BILL for an Act to provide for a legislative management study relating to the behavioral health needs of inmates. The bill was amended to become a study. It was initially a full bill to provide for continued therapy for inmates who are arrested and placed in county jail to continue to see their therapists who they may have been seeing in private or public sector agencies. **Passed House 87-7, presently in Senate Human Services Committee – hearing 3/29**

**SB2311 – Passed Senate, presently in House committee** - A BILL for an Act to provide for a review of North Dakota health education content standards and curriculum; and to provide for a legislative management report.

This bill began as a bill to provide for suicide risk prevention and has been amended to review the health education content standards and provide a report. **Passed Senate 45-2, had House committee hearing 3/3**

**HB1243 – Failed to pass the House** - A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new section to chapter 54-62 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to requiring office of faith-based and community initiatives to establish an outreach and educational program for clergy regarding mental health; and to provide for a legislative management report. **Failed to pass house 5-86**

**SB2025 – passed Senate, presently in House** - A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation for defraying the expenses of the department of veterans' affairs; to provide for a report; and to provide an exemption. This bill would help provide funding to defray the costs of service dogs for veterans with PTSD. **Passed Senate 47-0; House committee hearing 3/8 – no recommendations**

**SB2336 – amended and passed by both houses** - AN ACT to provide for a legislative management study of occupational boards that address mental health and behavioral health. This bill appeared to start out as an occupational bill to address nursing licensure and advanced practice nursing licensure. It was then amended to address occupational boards related to mental health and behavioral health and now is set up to study all boards related to these areas, including the ND Board of Counselor Examiners

Bill passed Senate 46-1; Passed House 89-5; Signed by Governor 3/23; filed Secretary of State 3/24

*Becki McConnachie*  
*Government Affairs Chair*

## North Dakota Mental Health Counselors Association

NDMHCA held their summer board meeting on August 4<sup>th</sup>. All went well, and NDMHCA is looking forward to another impactful year serving the counselors of North Dakota.



NDMHCA had a morning and an afternoon preconference session today. Both were held virtually with Lucas Mitzel LCSW as presenter. He presented on The Impact of COVID-19 on Mental Health in the morning and Internet Safety: What the Kids are Doing These Days in the afternoon.

NDMHCA's Winter Board Meeting was held on Monday, February 8<sup>th</sup> from 4-5:30pm. Members from each

location were able to meet in person if they choose. We also connected across the state over zoom.

NDMHCA has one webinar that is being offered on our website, and members are in the process of recording two others. We hope to keep offering them and add to our collection.

NDMHCA hopes to send members to the AMHCA Leadership Conference in June 2021. We will see if they are able to have it in person, or if it will be virtual again. Looking forward to bringing back some great information from the conference.

*Lory Hellman*  
NDMHCA President

## NDSCA President Update

The pre-conference planning was very successful with the help of Leisl Moriarty with ASCA. We had a total of 100 participants registered as of Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup> and I anticipate a few additional registrations to trickle in. All content will remain available to participants until July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021. We were able to secure 5 sponsors which greatly helped us financially due to the reduced registration fee to \$20/attendee.



We are considering holding a spring conference. This would still most likely be fully virtual as we will have one live conference day available to use as part of our conference platform package with ASCA. We are looking at a presentation by Christian Moore the

founder of WhyTry who is doing. We are still discussing registration costs and dates.

We sent out a membership survey in November and received 81 responses. We plan to use this to assist us in meeting the needs of our members. We used some of the feedback received in planning the pre-conference topics.

A couple things we are looking at this time include researching possible ways of adding value to our NDSCA membership, increasing interest in leadership opportunities within NDSCA, investment opportunities and increasing the value of the ACE recipient award winners.

*April Foth*  
NDSCA President

## Updates from DPI and CTE

### **North Dakota Academic and Career and Technical Education Scholarship Application**

The applications for the North Dakota Academic and Career and Technical Education (CTE) Scholarships is now open, and will remain open until Friday, June 4. Current seniors can apply for the scholarship [online](#). Please review student transcripts in order to make any adjustments needed to student schedules regarding scholarship eligibility. Also, just a reminder that the principal verification report is no longer required for the Academic/CTE Scholarship. With questions on scholarship applications, please contact please contact [Jim Upgren](#) at 701-328-2244.

### **Work Keys Testing Information**

Students that have taken the WorkKeys examination for the North Dakota Career and Technical Education Scholarship should mail a hard copy of the results to Jim Upgren at the Department of Public Instruction. The mailing address is:

600 E. Boulevard Ave., Department 201  
Bismarck, ND 58505-0440

Qualifying scores of 5 or higher on the Applied Mathematics, Graphic Literacy, and Workplace Documents sections are required in order to be considered for the CTE Scholarship. Please contact [Jim Upgren](#) at 701-328-2244 with any questions regarding the Academic or CTE Scholarships.

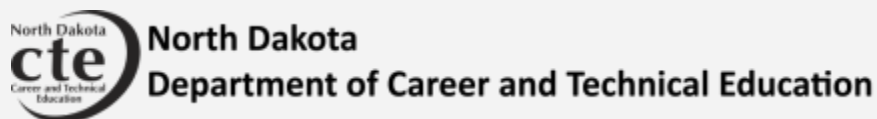
With Questions specific to the administration of the WorkKeys test, please contact [Bonnie Weisz](#) with the DPI Assessment Office at 701-328-1838.

### **eTranscripts for Scholarship Application and Progress Monitoring**

The progress monitoring tool in eTranscript can be used by school staff to track the progress of students toward the Academic and CTE Scholarship. Students and parents can access eTranscript from a link in PowerSchool and use the progress monitoring tool to track scholarship progress. Please call [Jim Upgren](#) at 701-328-2244 with questions.

### **eTranscript Certification**

Please be sure that students' transcripts are certified at the end of the school year in order to make them official for purposes or reviewing for the Academic/CTE Scholarship. Transcripts that are not certified are not considered official and will not be reviewed. Please contact [Jim Upgren](#) at 701-328-2244 with questions on the use of eTranscripts.



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## NDACES

NDACES has resumed monthly meetings via Zoom starting in September under the leadership of President Jenna Hershberger. We have been working on featuring a specific mental health related topic for each monthly meeting. At the October meeting, Aaron Suomala Folkerds, a professor at MN State University, discussed his work as an embedded mental health professional/wellness coordinator with the Moorhead Police Department. At the January meeting, Lisa Holter presented a roundtable on telesupervision. We continue to work on expanding the membership of the organization and increasing the attendance of the monthly meetings. This year NDACES offered a supervisor of the year award to Paul Milner which was presented during the mid-winter conference. NDACES also hosted a trivia activity on Monday, February 8<sup>th</sup> during the conference as well. There was a meeting on February 7<sup>th</sup> 2021 at 12:00 and filling the positions of President Elect, Treasurer, and Secretary. The next regular monthly meeting of NDACES was on February 11<sup>th</sup> at 12:00.

*Aaron Suomala Folkerds, PhD  
NDACES Rep*

## NCA Awards Recipients

Congratulations to our exemplary individuals honored at the 2021 NCA Virtual Conference Awards Ceremony! It was a little different having silent applause and lots and lots of congratulation chat messages. The videos were heartwarming and wonderful! Thank you to all those who submitted nominations and nomination videos for the ceremony! These awards would not be possible without you noticing your colleagues' great work and honoring them for it.

Thank you also to Ashley Michael and Jill Vollmers, the NCA Awards Committee members who reviewed the NCA nominations and helped choose the winners!

If any NCA member has interest in serving on the Awards Committee, feel free to email Rebecca Ringham at [rebecca.ringham@minotstateu.edu](mailto:rebecca.ringham@minotstateu.edu).

### **NCA Graduate Scholarship Awards**

Taylor Bearinger – Clinical Mental Health Counseling – University of Mary,  
*\$1000 Scholarship Recipient*

Ashley Guy – Counselor Education – Emphasis in School Counseling – North Dakota State University, *Silent Auction Recipient*

### **NCSA High School Essay Award**

Mattilyn Biehl from Dickinson High School

### **NCSA School Counselor of the Year Award**

Heather Berg – Midway Public School – Inkster, ND, **School Counselor of the Year**

### **NMCA Outstanding Mental Health Counselor Award**

Due to the challenges of the pandemic year and the continuous support of mental health counselors throughout, the NMCA decided to honor all North Dakota mental health counselors with this award.

### **NACES Robert C. Nielsen Supervisor of the Year Award**

Paul Millner – CHI St. Alexius Health Employee Assistance Program – Bismarck, ND

### **NCA Friend of Counselor Award**

Marge Ellefson – Executive Secretary for NDBCE – Mandan, ND

Christina Sambor – Sambor Law – Bismarck, ND

### **NCA Member Emeritus Award**

Erin Klingenberg – Valley City State University – Valley City, ND

*Rebecca Ringham, M.S.  
Awards Committee Chair*