Hello fellow North Dakota Counselors! In this new and strange way of life we have all been handed this year, resiliency is more important now than ever. Instilling this skill into our daily lives, and with those we work with, is a now a crucial part of our daily self-care. We need kindness, forgiveness, and faith. I am certain our leadership has these qualities and are we driven to remain steadfast and transparent. North Dakota Executive Board and Governing Board met in Valley City for our Annual Summer meeting at the end of July, and I am proud to say we have some very intelligent and committed people on these boards. I am honored to work with them.

Becky Meidinger, our President-Elect, is using her brilliant imagination to bring us a wonderful 2021 conference, despite all of the hurdles we are encountering in this uncertain time. Jenise Wilson, our Executive Director, has gone over and above this last year to bring our organization to a top-notch level. Leslie Lemke, our Past President, has been working tirelessly on correcting our By-laws, Constitution, Policies and Procedures with the help of ACA staff. We are so excited to welcome Amy Geinert to the Executive Board and look forward to her amazing insight and ideas! I am also grateful to Kelly Pierce for all her hard work as Past President. She will be missed on the board!

As I said before, I am honored to be a part of this exemplary group of women. Connections are being made. Work is being done. I believe the more "connections" we can make with others in our state, kindness we can share, and positive energy we can pour into this Pandemic, the more likely we will all make it through this together, stronger than ever. I look forward to making many new connections with all of you in this coming year.
One Year Anniversary!

I cannot believe I have had the honor for being with NDCA as the Executive Director for one year already! Where did the time go?! I have had quite the year of learning and growing, and I am extra grateful and blessed with so much support, encouragement, and guidance from the Executive Board, Governing Board, and NDCA members! I look forward to continuing to serve NDCA as the Executive Director.

Some of the changes and milestones made during my first year as Executive Director were:

1. Updating our logo and website – go check it out: ndcounseling.org!
2. Getting the governor to come to the conference – Great work Jada!
3. Changing the look of the FOCUS – not much, but there was some change. 😊
4. Updating forms, policies, procedures, and bylaw – Thank you for pioneering this, Leslie!
5. Created membership certificates for members and member log-in portal on the website.

Here are some things we are so looking forward to in the coming fiscal year:

1. An amazing conference in February 2021 – championed by Rebecca Meidinger!
2. More transparency between boards and members.
3. Webinars – NDMHCA has already put one out about Supervision – CHECK IT OUT!
4. Legislative advocacy and our day on the hill! Thanks for helping with this, Becki McConnachie!
5. More collaboration between all divisions to provide more opportunities for members.

Thank you again for all our support, grace, and kindness this past year! I look forward too many more years to come. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me at any time if there is something you’d like to discuss or any questions you have.

2021 Conference

Hi Everyone! I hope you all have been enjoying the summer and spending time refreshing your soul in the sunlight. It feels strange to be already planning something that occurs typically during a snowstorm or sub-zero temperatures. Still, Jenise Wilson and I have already been hard at work planning the 2021 NDCA Conference. We are so excited to announce that Jessie Veeder will be joining us to share her beautiful story with music, tears, and laughter on our opening day, Sunday, February 7th.

If you are a sports fanatic, or married to one like me, you know that our conference is taking place over Super Bowl weekend. Please don’t worry as we are already in the planning stages of a great Super Bowl party to cheer on whoever ends up in the Championship game (fingers crossed for the Dolphins, I mean, it has to happen eventually)!

Additionally, we are pleased to announce that Dr. Carli Kody from Woodbury, MN, will serve as our closing speaker on Tuesday, February 9th. Be on the look-out for the call for proposals to be released. Please submit proposals to share the fantastic things you are doing every day. This year we are going to integrate more Graduate Students into the conference, so Graduate Students be on the look-out for more information coming from your programs!

Thank you all for the opportunity to plan your conference. I hope you all can join us February 7th-9th!

Rebecca Meidinger
NDCA President-Elect
Feelings the Winds of Change…

Do you feel the wind coming back into you sails? I think I can feel a breeze, then again, sometimes we jump out of the water and right into the boiling pot. This brings me to a topic I wanted to shine a little light on as we keep progressing in our newly found world; pandemic, rioting, civil rights, injustice, and unrest, the United States on the brink of change, comes a common emotion that we all feel at some point or another. It is what you feel after being confided to your homes for weeks upon weeks, go to work and interact with people or go back to work. It is what you feel when you walk next to a stranger in a grocery store. It is what you feel when someone coughs while being in the same line as you or aisle as you. It is fear.

Fear is one of the most powerful emotions. It has a strong effect on your mind and body. Fear can help us in some ways by creating a response in emergencies, like if we were caught in a fire or being attacked. It can also affect you when you are facing non-dangerous events, like exams, public speaking, or a new job. It is a very natural response to a threat that can either be perceived or real. There are many things that can make you feel afraid. Some of these things like fires can keep you safe. Fearing failure can make you try to do well so that you won’t fail, but it can also stop you from doing well if the fear is too strong.

Anxiety is a word we use for some types of fear that usually have to do with the thought of a threat or something going wrong in the future rather than right now. Fear and anxiety can last for a short time and pass and can last for a much longer time and you can get “stuck” in anxiety and fear. In the worse cases, they can take over your life affecting your ability to sleep, eat, concentrate, travel, or enjoy life. They can hold you back from doing things you want or need to do, which can also affect your health, which may be what you have seen or experienced with some of the clients that you work with on a daily/weekly basis. Anxiety and fear tend to go hand in hand. Anxiety is persistent fear, the way you feel when you are frightened and anxious are similar. An emotion that our clients, even within ourselves, may have come to light more than we are accustom to lately.

So, what does fear, and anxiety feel like? Well, we are counselors, we know.....we have this down......we see, hear, and work with this....we have a greater awareness than others... but do you? Can you recognize it within yourself? You know, it is your heart beating very fast, you breathing fast, your muscles feeling weak, you sweating a lot, your stomach churning, or bowel may become loose, it is hard to concentrate, your feeling dizzy, frozen, can’t eat, hot and cold sweats, and tense muscles. The physical feelings of fear can be scary in themselves, especially if you are feeling them and you do not know why. Sometimes, I feel as clinicians, we “know” but we do not take the time to affirm how ”we” feel, what “we” think, how “we” are reacting to the world around us.

So, what can we do to help us overcome fear? To help with anxiety. Avoiding fear can magnify it, and I am not telling you to go into a grocery store and see how close you can stand to someone. What I am saying is the only way out is to get through it (we know that right....do we?). Confronting your fear helps, but in the same sense you must know yourself. You wouldn’t go climb the highest mountain to get over a fear of heights (yes, that is me – fear of heights), you would take small steps. Set small achievable goals for facing your fears. Make a list of things you can do if you become anxious or frightened. We practice these things with our clients, why don’t we practice them with ourselves? So, this may be taking a break from social media or not watching so much news. Learn more about your fear or anxiety. Are you experiencing it only when you go out of your house or when you turn on the TV? Are you experiencing it when you see someone wearing a mask or not wearing a mask? Keep a record when it happens and what happens. Know yourself.

It sounds easier to do than it is “actually” doing it; however, doing those things that many of us don’t like, such as exercise, healthy eating, avoid or drink in moderation, practicing some kind of faith or spirituality, can all help with mental health – and yes, fear is a mental health – something we have dedication our lives to foster, promote, and cultivate with our clients, so why not take a moment to practice and cultivate with ourselves. Some of you may have been able to do this and I hope that ALL of you will take some time to self-reflect and practice some self-love!
A Big, Hearty Hello!

I can still remember attending my first NDCA Midwinter Conference (longer ago than I like to think!) as a graduate student. I loved it, every minute. Professionals from all across the state were reconnecting, learning with and from each other, and sharing their love of counseling. I had never seen or experienced anything like it. I was so encouraged to see experienced professionals still so passionate about their work and willing to speak with an inexperienced graduate student like myself. I returned year after year and found myself recharged and reinvigorated after each conference.

For many years, I would look at the board members in awe; these were the people tasked with running our state professional organization. “Wow, what a privilege,” I thought. And I still believe that. I believe I have been afforded a great privilege to serve you all, the members of the North Dakota Counseling Association. I am excited to work alongside the other members of the board to continue the great work past board members have done and continue to enhance our organization. Thank you for electing me as your President Elect-Elect for the 2020-2021 year.

I’d like to take this chance to introduce myself to you. I currently live in a small town outside Grand Forks. My husband and I have two daughters, two outdoor cats, and a coop full of chickens. I worked as a school counselor for eleven years and am starting my second-year teaching in the Counseling Program at the University of North Dakota. When I’m not working or studying, I enjoy spending time outdoors (as long as it’s not too cold), baking, reading, and listening to music. I look forward to meeting you and working with you on behalf of North Dakota counselors over the next four years.

Amy Geinert
President-Elect-Elect

NDSCA Summer Update

NDSCA has seen some recent shifts in the Executive/Governing Board. Phil Leitner, who served as NDSCA President for 2019-2020, is taking on a new role as Principal/Counselor for his district starting this coming fall and decided to resign from his role as our President effective July 1, 2020. April Foth has stepped into the role as President to complete the new 2-year terms that were put in place last July and will serve as President for 2020-2021.

Two nominations (Natalie Heid and Liz Fraction) were received for our new President-Elect. Natalie declined the nomination, wishing to continue as Secretary and Liz was voted in as our new President-Elect through a unanimous ballot. During our Mid-Winter board meeting, Angel Lindseth (Elementary Vice President) and Megan Leingang (Secondary Vice President) were both voted in to continue their roles for a second term and Katerine Nelson was voted in as our new Post-Secondary Vice President. We are also welcoming a new Student Representative to our board, Chelsie Smith, who is currently enrolled in UND’s Counseling Program. Jarod Bolлом has moved into a new role as Treasurer, taking over for Stacey Eskelson, while Joel Cote-Kanning will fill Jared’s previous role as Government Relations/Public Policy Committee Chair.

Several NDSCA executive team members attended the Leadership Development Institute (LDI) which was held online the end of June. April Foth, Liz Fraction, Jared Bolлом and Natalie Heid attended this conference and felt it was an excellent learning opportunity. They are excited to put some of the knowledge gained into practice to improve and enhance our association! Which is precisely why we send some of our leadership to this amazing conference each year!

It is still in the plans for NDSCA to host a pre-conference prior to Mid-Winter Conference. How this will look is still up for discussion and will depend upon what is happening with COVID-19 as we get closer to February. We hope a face-to-face conference is possible, but will move it online if necessary as we want to ensure the professional development opportunity is available for our members. A speaker has not been decided as of yet, but rest assured it will be a valuable learning opportunity and we hope many will join us regardless of whether we are in person or online!

April Foth
President
North Dakota Mental Health Counselors Association Report

My name is Lory Hellman, LPCC-S. I am the current president of the ND Mental Health Counselors Association. I recently attended the AMHCA Leadership Conference along with some other members of the board of NDMHCA. Other attendees include our President-Elect, Torrina McConnachie. We were supposed to get to go to Las Vegas, because that is where the Leadership Conference was going to be located. But alas, due to Covid-19, the conference in person was canceled and we attended virtually over Zoom.

I attended sessions that included multiple topics. Some of the information that was helpful included information about strategic planning and action plans related to those strategic plans, ways to build membership, professional development, vision, mission statement, and by-laws. I learned about the International Association of Counseling, which is doing research right now on mapping the counseling profession across the globe. Much of the focus was both national and international advocacy for the counseling profession as a whole. Efforts are being made to brand the counseling profession more clearly so that it is common knowledge what we do and what to expect if someone goes to see a counselor. It seems that the goal is universal: Awareness and Advocacy for the counseling profession so we are able to provide quality services to as many people as possible. It was very encouraging and inspiring to see what other state chapters (and international chapters) are doing to grow and create change throughout the country and the world!!

NDMHCA also just released their first webinar titled, LAPC Supervision. It is available on at ndcounseling.org. You will need your membership login, which were emailed out some time ago. If you do not have it, please email Jenise Wilson at ndcajenise@gmail.com.

Lory Hellman  
President

Scholarship Information!!

ATTENTION GRADUATE STUDENTS

NDCA Graduate Scholarship

The NDCA Graduate Scholarship Application will be sent to counseling program advisors at NDSU, UND, MSU-M, and University of Jamestown, and University of Mary to make available to students by the beginning of October.

The updated application will also be available at our website: http://www.ndcounseling.org/. The deadline for postmarked application submission will be November 10, 2020.

Melissa Mickelson  
Grad Scholarship Chair
Updates from CTE

What a crazy spring, even more crazy than usual. Meeting virtually with students, state assessments waived, STARS reporting on interest inventories/four-year plans, and now some details about how to handle the North Dakota Scholarship. First, eligible students need to apply for the State scholarship by June 5, 2020, even if they have not met the testing requirement. Second, schools can begin WorkKeys testing in schools after June 1, before, if an off-site location can be secured. Third, students will have until the end of August to provide qualifying test scores. The final change is that the grade requirement (nothing below a C) has been waived for the spring semester of 2020, as long as the student passes the course. Even with no extracurriculars, nothing seems to slow down for counselors.

The annual CTE Professional Development Conference typically held in August will be presented in a virtual format, so please watch for updates for that in the CTE monthly newsletter or on the CTE website.

Career Advisor Training Opportunities – Career advisor training registration is now open.
- Training is Currently Scheduled for
  - Summer – July 8 through October 20, 2020 (Registration deadline June 10, 2020)
  - Fall – September 9 through December 22, 2020 (Registration deadline August 10, 2020)
- A minimum of 5 registrants are required to conduct the training, so there is a possibility of only one training.

Ethics Update

During the COVID-19 pandemic, I received calls about providing services across state lines to clients that left North Dakota. I provided a list of regulations by state. I also cautioned each individual needs to confirm their type of licensure with out-of-state regulations. Regulations were and continue to be fluid. As each professional counselor continues to provide services to their out-of-state clients, they need to be sure they are following state regulations. It is recommended that the professional counselor contact the state licensure board of the state residence of the client.

Erin Klingenberg, PhD, LPCC, NCC
Ethics Chair
AMHCA hosted a Leadership Training on June 23. This was a part of their first ever virtual national conference. I attended a state and federal advocacy update presented by their Government Affairs Consultant, David Bergman. He shared that though $3 trillion has been passed for COVID-19 relief with only $425 million of that being for mental health and addiction.

He highlighted legislation he has been working with the Veteran’s Administration on that would create an occupational series for counselors within the VA. S2991 and HR100 Veteran’s Overmedication and Suicide Prevention Act works to hire counselors in the VA.

He reported that he has been working to get Medicare reimbursement passed since the first bill was introduced in 2000 – 20 years ago. I have been working on this legislation that long as well – I believe that is when I began working as legislative chair. According to him it has passed the House twice and the Senate twice that never at the same time. This time there is bipartisan support – a record 116 cosponsors in the House and 31 in the Senate. The Bipartisan Policy Center Report recommended passage in order for adequate access to mental health care. A mental health liaison group with 43 national organizations signing on it sent a letter from house sponsors to leadership requesting inclusion in the HR 945 COVID 19 package Heroes Act. The have had a congressional briefing with the Michael J Fox Foundation for Parkinson’s Research. They are working to get it added to the COVID stimulus package in the Senate. **There will be a hearing in the House Energy and Commerce on HR 945 in the coming weeks – this is the furthest this has come in recent years.** However, the Senate does not have a similar consideration at this time. He is recommending more grassroots activity. Saying that congressional delegates want to hear from their constituents. Though emails through options like Voter Voice are easy and take little time they are actually the least likely to get a response from delegates. Phone calls, personal letters, meetings with staff, meetings with delegate, relationship with staff and relationship with delegate are increasingly more effective means.

Within state advocacy he recommended watching for changes in the counselor licensure law; scope of practice; education; experience; supervision; examination; and title. In addition, to monitor reimbursement and recognition including: coverage of Medicaid, often state run who decides providers; state employers’ health plan; insurance/managed car; state occupational classification; portability; and board consolidation. He suggested having someone attend the licensure board meetings from our organization; and to have people at the legislature throughout the session getting to know the legislators so they get to know who we are. I would suggest increasing our committee to more members in order to assign members to these roles so we can have an increased presence and active role.

On 5/27/20, I attended the ACA Town Hall meeting. A lot of time was spent on the Medicare legislation. Most interesting was Rep Mike Thompson’s report. He is the primary sponsor in the House and is the chair of the House Ways and Means Committee. He offered ideas to help push the MH Access Improvement Act through and felt it could go through this year. He said the key is to get more Senators and Representatives on as co-sponsors. He said though voter voice and other such models make it nice to get information out easily, grassroots campaigns are paid more attention by Congressional delegates. They want to hear personal stories. They want to hear from counselors, mental health technicians, but they also want to hear from people this affects, such as clients, family members, etc. Though it is important that it is an unfairness in terms of counselors not receiving coverage – more important is that constituents are not receiving services, especially during this time when they are isolated and unable to leave their homes. The isolation makes it more imperative for them to have access to services.

Other areas discussed was the CARES ACT and telehealth services; Title 4 Part A – School Counseling Programs; Veteran Affairs/ VA Career Options; Medicare Access Coalition; Plan for state agendas for the next legislative sessions; Conversion therapy bans; ethical/education standards.

Rebecca McConnachie
Government Affairs Chair
NDCA Awards Committee Report &
Calling All Nominators!

2020 Awards:
We received no nominations for the Innovations Award, the Glenn Dolan Award, or the Outstanding New Professional Award. We received two nominations for the Friend of Counseling Award and two for the NDCA Member Emeritus Award. We awarded both Member Emeritus Awards this year! One to Geraldine Cariveau and one to Marcia Foss. In addition, Ryan Hanson was awarded the Friend of Counseling Award. The Awards Ceremony was shifted to the evening and was a terrific success! In the past, the Awards Committee was granted leeway in reviewing past year’s nominations, so if we do not receive nominations next year for the Friend of Counseling Award, we will potentially revisit the nominations which were not chosen this year and nominations not chosen in 2019.

Nomination Information:
Is there someone you admire for their techniques, ideas, practices, capabilities, or approaches? Please show them by nominating them for a NDCA award! We love honoring those who excel in their field!

You can submit your nomination at any time; however, the deadline to submit nominations is November 30th! Nomination criteria and forms can be found at ndcounseling.org → Awards. Please submit award nominations to: Rebecca Ringham, Minot State University, Registrar’s Office, 500 University Ave W, Minot, ND 58707 / Fax: 701-858-3386 / Email: rebecca.ringham@minotstateu.edu

Glenn Dolan Award – An individual who has demonstrated able leadership, excellent rapport and service to the community, outstanding contributions to their organization

Innovations Award – An individual who has made innovative contributions in research or published articles in the field of counseling

Friend of Counseling Award – An individual who has demonstrated support for counseling in the state of North Dakota through his/her profession

Outstanding New Professional Award – An individual who has developed an outstanding program and demonstrates exceptional interpersonal skills

Member Emeritus Award – for NDCA members who have retired

Awards Committee Information Membership:
Currently there are two members; however, we could definitely grow membership!
Rebecca Ringham, chair; Ashley Michael; and Jill Vollmers

Job Duties:
➤ Read and rank awards nominations in December each year
➤ Provide additional opportunities for NDCA members to be involved in the Awards Committee
➤ Provide more awareness of NDCA awards and nomination processes
➤ Encourage NDCA members to submit awards nominations
➤ Attend Midwinter Conference, be recognized by being announced and standing at Awards Ceremony for participation in the committee
➤ Represent the Awards Committee on the NDCA Board meeting if chair is unable to attend

Rebecca Ringham, M.S.
Awards Committee Chair