



# ***THE FOCAL POINT***

**Stephens Counseling Program Newsletter  
Issue 4**

**STEPHENS**  

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COLLEGE

Stephens College Counseling Program  
Summer/Fall 2025| Issue 4  
School of Health Sciences | June 2025





## *Message from the Director*

Dear counseling students and alums-

Another academic year has flown by—hence the slight delay of The Focal Point, Issue 4! This edition highlights the accomplishments of our students, alumni, and faculty, along with upcoming professional development opportunities, tips for graduate student self-care, and a special Pride feature exploring the history of Pride and mental health.

We're also excited to share that the Counseling Program will be officially submitting its CACREP self-study this summer. We look forward to sharing our progress with you. A heartfelt thank you to all of our students for your support, patience, and flexibility as we've made meaningful changes over the years to strengthen the program.

As we head into another exciting year, don't forget to prioritize your well-being. Here's to continued growth, success, and community!

Best,  
Dr. Kissinger

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# Staff/Faculty & Alumni Spotlight

The Counseling Department is proud of the successes of our faculty members and alumni! Here you will find brief bios and professional updates with Stephens Counseling faculty and alumni, sharing their current experience and showcasing their diverse background and skills.



Pictured: Natasha Jenkins ( L),  
Dr. Andrea Fifield (M), and  
Jessica Hager (R)

**Natasha Jenkins** and **Jessica Hager** graduated in May 2025. This fall, Natasha will begin her career at Marshall Middle School, while Jessica—who completed her degree while working at Fulton Middle School—has accepted a position at Lange Middle School in Columbia.

Congrats also to **Kaylee Parker** and **Amber Barringer**, who are entering their final year and have already secured school counseling positions for the upcoming year! Kaylee will be at Shepard Boulevard Elementary in Columbia, and Amber at Southern Boone Middle School in Ashland.

We're so proud of our students and alumni—your future students are lucky to have you!

Interested in becoming a school counselor? Our program offers two DESE-approved degree plans: a 60-credit School Counseling Track with optional LPC credential, or a 45-credit School Counseling Track. Learn more at <https://live-stephens-college.pantheonsite.io/school-counseling-track/>

# Faculty and Student News

## Black Family Wellness Expo – March 15, 2025

The Central Missouri Chapter of The Links, Incorporated hosted its annual Black Family Wellness Expo on March 15, 2025, at Douglass High School—a vibrant event promoting health and economic equity for Black families in Columbia.

Stephens College was proudly represented by **Dr. Sarah Irvin** and graduate counseling student **Camille Townson**, who helped raise awareness about mental health resources and reflected our program's commitment to community engagement.

The expo offered health screenings, legal and financial wellness resources, mental health checkups, and a Kids Corner with free books. Guest speakers and local organizations fostered a day of education, connection, and empowerment.

As mental health advocate Bebe Moore Campbell once said, “Mental health care is a form of social justice in the Black community.” Thank you to Camille and Dr. Irvin for serving with care and compassion.



Dr. Sarah Irvin (L) and  
Camille Townson (R)





# Faculty and Student News

## Behavioral Threat Assessment Training

In October 2024, the Mid-Missouri School Counselor Association and the Stephens College Counseling Program co-hosted a Behavioral Threat Assessment Training for local counselors and educators. Glen Moore, from the Missouri School Boards' Association Center for Education Safety, led the training and later returned to speak with students in **Dr. Fifield's Child and Adolescent Counseling class**. Participants learned to recognize behavioral warning signs and respond effectively to potential threats.

"School counselors are vital first responders in the lives of students." — American School Counselor Association



Pictured: Glen Moore



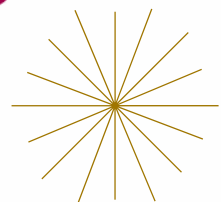
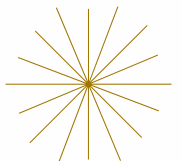
Current graduate students participating in a roleplay activity to simulate a behavioral threat assessment.



Mr. Moore explaining to students how to identify warning signs during roleplay activity.



# Stephens College



# Creativity in the Classroom

## Teaching Outside the lines

The Stephens College Counseling Program is committed to innovation in counselor education, recognizing the vital role of creativity in effective teaching. This year, faculty incorporated art-based interventions, reflective journaling, role-play, multimedia projects, and guest speakers from diverse backgrounds into the curriculum. These approaches foster flexible, client-centered thinking and help students develop dynamic, culturally responsive counseling skills.

## Creative Approaches to Crisis Counseling



**Dr. Irvin's Crisis Counseling class** had the opportunity to work with Jamey Grisham, Assistant Professor of Musical Theatre in the Conservatory for the Performing Arts at Stephens College. Jamey led students through acting exercises that promoted relaxation, presence, and emotional focus, followed by Shakespeare-based techniques for safely exploring and expressing anger and other intense emotions. The class also watched a video about the DE-CRUIT program, which uses Shakespeare to help treat military trauma. These experiential activities supported embodied learning, emotional insight, and creativity—skills essential to counseling practice. We're grateful to Jamey for sharing his time and expertise.



Conservatory Faculty (Jamey Grisham)



Current graduate students participating in the classroom.





# Creativity in the Classroom

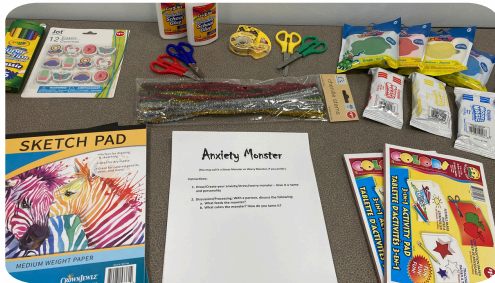
## An Epic Journey Through Group Stages

**Dr. Irvin** brings creativity to group counseling by using *The Lord of the Rings* to teach group stages in an immersive, themed classroom. Students watch Corey's experiential group videos alongside this engaging environment, deepening their understanding of group development. This memorable approach helps students apply group dynamics to real-world practice. As Gandalf reminds us, "All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us."



Understanding the emotional demands of counseling, **Dr. Fifield** ends her **Child & Adolescent Counseling class** with a focus on self-care and coping skills. Students created "anxiety monsters," shared personal coping strategies, and made custom aromatherapy diffusers—reminders that caring for others begins with caring for themselves. Here are some of the strategies they shared:

## Coping Skills in Action



### Mental Distractions or Learning

- Watching a Favorite TV Show
- Puzzles
- Learning a New Skill

### Calming Night-Time Activities

- Reading Before Bed
- Bubble Bath
- Eating a Nutritious Meal

### Social & Connection

- Hanging Out with Friends
- Cuddling with a Pet
- Quality Time with Family

# Awards and Recognitions

Congratulations to our **Outstanding Student Award** winners!

**Cassandra Martin (CMHC) &**

**Jessica Hager (SC)**

We are proud to announce the 2025 recipient of the Outstanding School Counseling (SC) student award and the Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) student award. The winners of the SC and CMHC outstanding student awards are selected by Counseling faculty. Congratulations to Jessica Hager (Outstanding SC student award recipient) and Cassandra Martin (Outstanding CMHC student award recipient!)



Jessica Hager (L), Dr. Kendra Shoge (M), and Jen McIntyre (R) accepting awards at the spring award ceremony

Congratulations to our **Graduate Faculty Program Service Award** winner!

**Dr. Kendra Shoge**

We are proud to announce Dr. Shoge as the 2025 recipient of the Graduate Faculty Program Service Award. The graduate faculty teaching award recognizes a Stephens College graduate faculty member who demonstrates excellence in the areas of teaching, advising, and mentorship. The graduate faculty teaching award is selected by a vote of both students and graduate faculty. Congrats, Dr. Shoge!



# Conference Experiences

## ***THRIVE IN THE SHIFT Conference - Columbia, MO***

Stephens College Counseling faculty **Dr. Andrea Fifield, Dr. Sarah Irvin, and Dr. Kendra Shoge** presented at the 2025 Missouri Career Development Association Conference at the University of Missouri. Their session, “From Paychecks to Purpose,” examined the shift in career development from survival-focused models to those centered on personal fulfillment. They offered practical strategies for incorporating meaning-making and lifestyle alignment into counseling. Their contribution reflects the program’s active engagement in advancing the field. As career theorist Donald Super once said, “Vocational development is a lifelong process of implementing a self-concept.”



Counseling Program faculty –(L-R):  
Dr. Kendra Shoge, Dr. Andrea  
Fifield, and Dr. Sarah Irvin

# Conference Experiences

## 10th Annual Law and Ethics in Counseling Conference - New Orleans, Louisiana

The annual Law and Ethics in Counseling Conference is held in New Orleans and offers cutting-edge content on legal and ethical issues in counseling. The date shifts each year based on the Mardi Gras calendar. The next conference will be January 27–30, 2026, and will be offered in a hybrid format, allowing both in-person and virtual attendance.

**Dr. Sarah Irvin** has served as Program Chair for several years, working alongside Conference Director Dr. Theodore Remley, a leading expert and co-author of the textbook used in our ethics course. Stephens faculty actively contribute to the conference—Dr. Irvin and Dr. Kissinger presented on ethical counselor supervision, and all faculty participate in the blind review process.

Students are encouraged to attend, present, or volunteer at the conference. Volunteers receive free admission. To learn more or express interest, email Dr. Irvin.

 Learn more about the 2026 conference here: **[Conference Info](#)**



Dr. Remley (L) and Dr. Irvin (R)



Dr. Irvin (L), Dr. Gerald Corey (M),  
Dr. Marianne Corey



# 2025 Spring Research Conference

The School of Health Sciences hosted its annual Spring 2025 Research Conference, celebrating student research under the theme Innovation in Science, Health, and Wellness. Undergraduate and graduate students from diverse programs—including Biology, Chemistry, Nursing, Psychology, Counseling, Physician Assistant Studies, Equestrian Studies, and Women in STEM—shared their work across campus.

This year's featured speakers included **Dr. Kissinger**, Emily Pivovarnik, Dr. Ashley J. Blount, and Dr. Kara Schneider, presenting on topics such as women's health, music therapy with premature infants, and athlete wellness. The conference showcased interdisciplinary research and fostered collaboration to advance health and well-being at both individual and community levels.



Pictured from left to right  
Emily Pivovarnik, Dr. Dan  
Kissinger, Dr. Ashley J.  
Blount, and Kara  
Schneider



The **Spring 2026 School of Health Sciences Research Conference** is right around the corner—an excellent opportunity for counseling students to share their work in a supportive, low-pressure environment. If you have ideas for a project or presentation, talk with your instructors or advisors about how to get involved.

More details will be shared as the conference approaches, including a keynote from a leading counseling professional. We hope you'll join us—you won't want to miss it!



# Congrats to our Graduates!



## Spring 2025 Graduates CMHC & SC



Pictured (L-R): Jessica Hager, Natasha Jenkins, Donna Gerling, Julia Stanley, Maddie Smith, Carli Wilson, Erin Grueneberg, Bremner Smith, Marisa Collado

## Fall 2024 Graduates CMHC



Pictured (L-R): Mya Garcia, Lisa Pegg, Shelley Ward, Alaina Young



# The Self-Care Spot

**“You can’t pour from an empty cup. But you can refill it with coffee.”**

**– Play on the well-known quote by Eleanor Brownn**



## **Brief Message:**

Graduate school is a time of growth—but it can also be overwhelming. As future counselors, we’re trained to support others, but it’s easy to forget that we, too, need rest, reflection, and renewal. Prioritizing self-care isn’t indulgent—it’s essential. Whether it’s a 5-minute break or a full weekend recharge, tending to your well-being helps you show up fully—for your clients, your studies, and yourself.

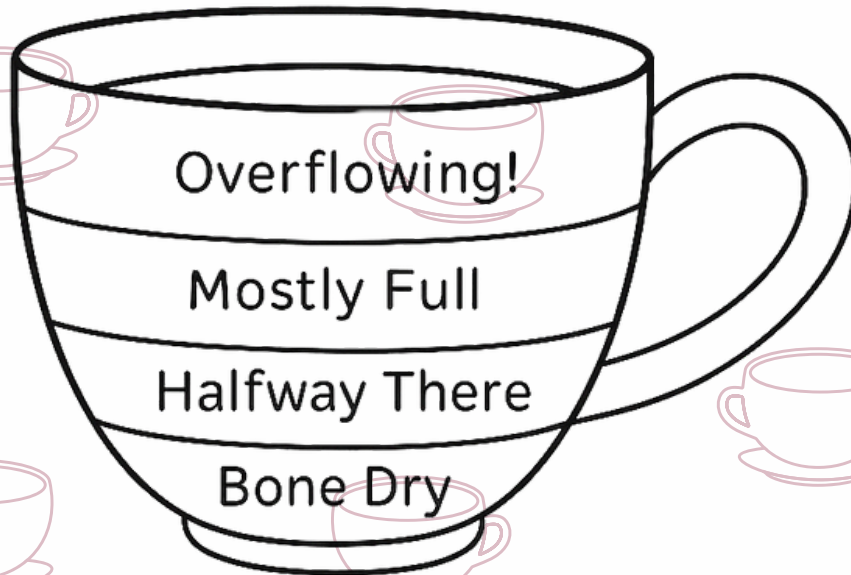
## **Self-Care Tips for Grad Students:**

- **Make a “No” List:** Know your limits and practice healthy boundaries.
- **Micro Moments Matter:** Stretch, sip tea, or listen to one song—small breaks help.
- **Move Gently:** Walk, dance, or stretch—movement supports mood.
- **Digital Detox:** Unplug for a few hours to give your mind space to reset.
- **Connect:** Talk to a friend, advisor, or peer when things get heavy.
- **Create:** Journal, draw, or bake—creative expression is self-soothing.
- **Sleep Like It’s Sacred:** Because it is.









# The Self-Care Spot

## How full is your cup?

Color  
Me!



### My Weekly Self-Care Tracker

- ☐ I got 7+ hours of sleep most nights 
- ☐ I moved my body in a way that felt good 
- ☐ I connected with someone who supports me
- ☐ I said no to something I didn't have space 
- ☐ I did something just for fun 
- ☐ I took a break without feeling guilty 
- ☐ I ate something nourishing 
- ☐ I asked for help when I needed it 
- ☐ I asked for help when I needed it 

One thing I'll do to care for  
myself this week is...



# Happy Pride!

## Pride & Progress: LGBTQIA+ Mental Health Through History

### EARLY RESISTANCE: BEFORE STONEWALL

1903 – Ariston Bathhouse Raid (NYC)

Among the first recorded police raids targeting gay men in America



1924 – Society for Human Rights (Chicago)

The first gay rights organization in the U.S., chartered in Illinois—it dissolved after arrests of its members



1956 – Hazel’s Inn Raid (Pacifica, CA)

Over 90 patrons arrested under vagrancy laws, catalyzing early legal defense for LGBTQ individuals



1959 – Cooper Do-nuts Riot (Los Angeles)

Trans patrons retaliated against police harassment by throwing donuts and coffee, often noted as the first gay uprising



1965 – Dewey’s Sit-Ins (Philadelphia)

Queer youth led sit-ins protesting refusal of service based on “non-conformist clothing”; the restaurant reversed their policy after two actions



### 1969 & Beyond: Stonewall and Liberation

On June 28, 1969, the Stonewall uprising in NYC, sparked by a police raid at the Stonewall Inn, became a watershed moment. It transformed grassroots protest into a modern LGBTQ liberation movement and paved the way for the first Pride marches in 1970



### Mental Health and Well-Being

The study by Sunil and Mohammadnezhad (2024) found that LGBTQ+ youth face disproportionately high levels of anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation, primarily due to social stigma, family rejection, and limited access to culturally competent mental health services. They identified strategies to promote well-being including inclusive school environments, family support interventions, access to affirming mental health care, and comprehensive sexuality education.

### Counselor Takeaways

- Acknowledge history — Understand past trauma to better support clients.
- Normalize disparities — Validate clients’ experiences of stress and mental health challenges.
- Use affirming care — Employ strength-based, identity-affirming approaches.
- Connect to community — Leverage peer support and LGBTQ-competent services.
- Advocate structurally — Counselors can push for LGBTQ-inclusive policies and environment



**Dr. Lillian Faderman (historian & LGBTQ mental health advocate):**

“Queer history is full of courage, healing, and the power of community.”

# Welcome Fall 2025 Cohort!

## Not Pictured:



Camellia Bird

Danielle Anderson Timothy Schmidt

Leanna Collins Katie Beth Scott

Audrey Ewers Deniz Tuncer

Anna Kammeyer Aaron Vandyke

Jordyn Moore Robyn Wadley

Wendy Williams



Martha Dey



Lisa Kent



Jennifer Mihalevich



Shana Nunn



Talia Price



# Upcoming Events

## **NCACES 2025 Conference**

- October 8–12, 2025 • Philadelphia, PA
- <https://www.ncaces.net/ncaces-conference>

## **ACES National Conference 2025**

- October 8–12, 2025 • Philadelphia, PA
- <https://acesonline.net/aces-national-conference/>

## **SACES 2026 Conference**

- November 5–7, 2026 • Louisville, KY
- <https://saces.wildapricot.org/conferencequilltherapynotes.com+7motreatmentcourts.org+7moschoolcounselor.org+7en.wikipedia.org>

## **ACA Conference & Expo 2026**

- April 9–11, 2026 • Columbus, OH
- Website: <https://www.counseling.org/events-education/conferencesmohealthcare.com+12mmhca.com+12mobhc.org+12quilltherapynotes.com>

## **ASCA Annual Conference 2026**

- July 11–14, 2026 • New Orleans, LA (in-person & virtual)
- <https://ascaconferences.org/motreatmentcourts.org+2moschoolcounselor.org+2mopqc.org+2>

## **Law & Ethics in Counseling Conference 2026**

- January 27–30, 2026 • Hybrid (New Orleans & virtual)
- <https://uhcno.edu/academics/ways-to-learn/continuing-education.phpmmhca.com+1facebook.com+1mobhc.org>



# Upcoming Events

## Missouri Suicide Prevention Conference

- July 17, 2025 • Holiday Inn Executive Center, Columbia, MO
- <https://www.mospn.org/conference>

## Missouri Behavioral Health Conference

- September 10–12, 2025 • Branson Convention Center, Branson, MO
- <https://www.mobhc.org/missouri-behavioral-health-conferencefacebook.com+13mobhc.org+13mobhc.org+13>

## Missouri Mental Health Counselors Association Annual Conference

- September 18–20, 2025 • DoubleTree, Springfield, MO
- Website: <https://www.mmhca.com/training-events/2025-annual-conference>

## Missouri School Counselor Association Fall Conference

- November 2–4, 2025 • Tan-Tar-A Conference Center, Osage Beach, MO
- <https://www.moschoolcounselor.org/2025-fall-conferencefacebook.com+9moschoolcounselor.org+9moschoolcounselor.org+9moschoolcounselor.org+4moschoolcounselor.org+4facebook.com+4>

## NAMIcon 2026

- Summer 2026 (exact dates TBD) • Fully virtual
- <https://events.nami.org/namicon/>

### Have photos or news to share?

Send your photos, updates, or achievements to **[snunn@stephens.edu](mailto:snunn@stephens.edu)** for a chance to appear in the next edition of The Focal Point and on social media!



## New Editions



We're thrilled to share joyful news from our Counseling Program faculty! Dr. Kendra Shoge and her wife Julie are eagerly awaiting the arrival of their baby girl, Ruby. The Stephens community celebrates with them and sends heartfelt congratulations to the growing Shoge family!



## Growing Our Team



Please join us in welcoming Shana Nunn, our new Graduate Assistant in the Counseling Program! Shana is a first-year student specializing in School Counseling. We're excited to have her on board and look forward to the great work she'll do in supporting our students and faculty.



Stephens College

Stephens College  
School of Health Sciences  
Counseling Department