

AN ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION OF

Victor Y. Chang for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Counseling presented on August 17, 2017.

Title: A Grounded Theory Approach to Faculty Experiences and Perspectives on Gatekeeping in Counselor Education Programs.

Abstract approved: _____
Deborah J. Rubel

Counselor educators have a responsibility to serve as effective gatekeepers to the counseling profession by graduating only those counselors professionally prepared to serve the public in a myriad of counseling roles. However, despite its importance and the extant literature, gatekeeping still seems poorly understood and inconsistently applied. Although the literature on what counselor educators should do during gatekeeping is robust, much less is known about what they experience during gatekeeping. The purpose of this dissertation is to learn more about counselor educators' internal and microsystemic experiences of gatekeeping for problems of professional competence (PPC).

This dissertation applies a grounded theory approach towards data collected from experienced counselor educators on their internal and microsystemic experiences during gatekeeping. The first study examining participants' internal experiences led to the theory of *striving to be an effective gatekeeper – avoiding, struggling, striving* as counselor educators' central internal experience during gatekeeping. This core category consisted of the sub-processes of: *integrating identities and balancing responsibilities, practicing discernment, managing challenging emotions, and perceiving cohesion and capability in colleagues*. The second study, addressing participants' experiences of their colleagues

and aspects of the faculty microsystem during gatekeeping led to the theory of *collaboration – sharing the burden* and a model of the Faculty Microsystem for Gatekeeping in Counselor Education Programs. The theory and model highlight the contextual conditions and interactive processes of gatekeeping especially between the conditions of *faculty cohesion* and *faculty capability* and the processes of *individual CE actions- engaging vs. avoiding* and *collective CE actions- helping vs. hindering collaboration*. How the faculty microsystemic conditions enhance or inhibit collaboration led to participants' varying levels of experiencing *collaboration – sharing the burden*. This research will benefit counselor educators and counselor education programs; current and future counseling students; and most importantly, the public good by contributing to our understanding of gatekeeping in counselor education programs.

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A Grounded Theory Approach to Faculty Experiences and Perspectives
on Gatekeeping in Counselor Education Programs

by
Victor Y. Chang

A DISSERTATION

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APPROVED:

Major Professor, representing Counseling

Dean of the College of Education

Dean of the Graduate School

I understand that my dissertation will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my dissertation to any reader upon request.

Victor Y. Chang, Author

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how much I appreciate you and how much your love and support mean to me. That has never been more evident than in these last few years. I thank you deeply for your patience, understanding, and perseverance through the struggles and sacrifices that have arisen over this long journey. I thank you for coping with the late nights, lost weekends and grumpy moods. I will be forever grateful at how you keep taking care of all of us and for you bearing more than your share with a smile and tender heart. To Madeleine and Gavin, I thank you for your patience and understanding in not having your father around or available as much you would have liked. I love you both times infinity. Let's go play!

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DEDICATION

This dissertation and the doctoral journey it culminates, I dedicate to my father, Dr. John B. Chang, whose teachings I've tried to embody and whose legacy I endeavor to uphold. Dad, you are my inspiration and primary role model for the consummate scientist-practitioner and Renaissance man: a gifted surgeon, respected teacher, dedicated mentor, generous colleague and prolific scholar, and last but not least, a loving and devoted friend, brother, husband, father and grandfather.

Chapter 1: General Introduction

Gatekeeping in counselor education is a recurring, complex process that invites continued research, especially from a qualitative approach. Counselor educators understand that counseling is a challenging profession that requires competent and ethical counselors to perform the myriad roles of a professional counselor. Moreover, counselor educators appreciate their duty to protect the public and carry out their responsibility to serve as diligent gatekeepers to the profession when faced with a counseling student with problems of professional competence (PPC). This duty is reinforced in the profession's code of ethics and educational standards (ACA, 2016; CACREP, 2015).

Despite gatekeeping's acknowledged importance to the field, ongoing research, and recommended practices, it remains a challenging endeavor for counselor education programs to effectively implement and perform. Every year, programs admit, retain, and graduate students whose emotional, psychological, or interpersonal difficulties may become liabilities once in counseling practice (Brear & Dorrian, 2010; Crawford & Gilroy, 2013; de Vries & Valadez, 2005; White & Franzoni, 1990). Though many recommended strategies for gatekeeping in counselor education programs exist, gatekeeping is still fraught with difficulty: from the subjective nature of these issues, to the humanistic perspective of many counselor educators, to the legal rights of students, and the multiple potential liabilities of faculty and universities (Bernard, 1975; Hutchens, Block, & Young, 2013; McAdams III, Foster, & Ward, 2007). These difficulties make the gatekeeping process challenging and also exert a toll on counselor educators and counselor education programs attempting to fulfill legal and ethical mandates.

This dissertation examines gatekeeping in counselor education programs from the perspective of counselor educators and is influenced by the idea of adapting the ecological model to the counselor educator gatekeeping environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986). Grounded theory research was used to examine and explicate the processes and experiences of gatekeeping from the perspective of counselor educators. This qualitative approach insures that the research question is being properly informed by participants with first-hand knowledge of the issue.

Dissertation Overview

In keeping with the Oregon State University Graduate School requirements, this dissertation follows the Manuscript Document Format, demonstrating scholarly research by putting forth two journal-formatted manuscripts that are related and address a common theme. Chapter 1 introduces an integrating contextual framework for understanding and studying gatekeeping from the counselor educator/faculty perspective and also thematically relates the two manuscripts and their related research questions. Manuscript 1 (Chapter 2) is a study titled *A Grounded Theory Study of Counselor Educators' Internal Experiences of Gatekeeping for Problems of Professional Competence*. Manuscript 2 (Chapter 3) is a study titled *A Grounded Theory Study on Counselor Educators' Experiences Within the Faculty Microsystem During Gatekeeping in Counselor Education Programs*.

Manuscript 1 Overview: A Grounded Theory Study of Counselor Educators' Internal Experiences of Gatekeeping for Problems of Professional Competence

Manuscript 1 begins with an overview of gatekeeping in the mental health professions including how the longstanding challenges and recommended practices continue to shape the understanding of gatekeeping. I review the limited research on the

internal experiences, especially challenging ones, of faculty participants during gatekeeping. While a few researchers have pointed out that certain challenging aspects of gatekeeping cause distress for counselor educators, very little research has been conducted on how these difficulties might affect the process and experience of gatekeeping by counselor educators. Therefore, Chapter 2 uses the grounded theory approach espoused by Corbin and Strauss (2008) to delve deeply into counselor educators' experiences with the gatekeeping process for students with problems of professional competence (PPC) in their programs. The qualitative approach allows the research to be informed by the participants and their multiple and diverse experiences and is a valuable research tool to examine a complex phenomenon such as gatekeeping. Moreover, a grounded theory approach is used when the theoretical literature is scant and the data collected can be analyzed and synthesized in a systematic fashion to produce emerging theory of complex processes; in this case, the interaction of counselor educators' internal experiences and the process of gatekeeping.

The central research question in Manuscript 1 is: How do counselor educators experience their internal reactions within the context of gatekeeping processes for PPC? Chapter 2 thus delves into the internal experiences of the counselor educator within the gatekeeping process and builds a theory of the internal experience of gatekeeping. In this study I examine how the emotional challenges of carrying out the gatekeeping role interact with other intrapersonal dynamics which will contribute to the qualitative research on the difficulties associated with gatekeeping. This study also illuminates other aspects of the ecological model, such as the interactions between the intrapersonal/individual dynamics and the faculty microsystem, with further in-depth

analysis of the faculty microsystem of gatekeeping more fully explored in the second manuscript.

Manuscript 2 Overview: A Grounded Theory Study on Counselor Educators' Experiences within the Faculty Microsystem during Gatekeeping in Counselor Education Programs

In the second manuscript, the research focus broadens to include the microsystem interactions and influences (adapting Bronfenbrenner's (1986) ecological model and associated terminology) by exploring the contextual conditions and processes at play during the gatekeeping process, with a particular focus on faculty group process and faculty decision-making during gatekeeping. Chapter 3 also takes a grounded theory approach by collecting and analyzing rich data from participants to construct a theory of the faculty microsystem and collaboration in gatekeeping in counselor education programs. Chapter 3 lays out a proposed faculty microsystem model of gatekeeping from the counselor educator perspective that will help counselor educators examine the complex and interconnected processes, participants and dynamics that are central to most gatekeeping situations. This knowledge will help counselor educators better understand and carry out their gatekeeping responsibility.

Manuscript 2 addresses the following central research question: How do counselor educators experience microsystemic dynamics in the context of gatekeeping for PPC in counselor education programs? This research study also uses grounded theory to incorporate the context and multiple interactions and influences within the microsystem and mesosystem of the counselor educator. A theory of how these different system-level processes and participants affect one another within the gatekeeping process is derived from the data provided by counselor educators. In particular, the study will propose a

theory of how the microsystem context of the counselor education program and its complex interactions between faculty conditions and faculty processes (such as group decision-making among counselor educators during gatekeeping) either enhances or hinders the strength of collaboration among the faculty.

Counselor Educators at the Center of the Gatekeeping Process

While counseling students are at the center of a gatekeeping situation, how the gatekeeping process is carried out ultimately depends upon the counselor educators as individuals and as a faculty group within the program. Implementing gatekeeping appropriately and fairly is a tall order and a tremendous responsibility for counselor educators whose primary motivations are to teach and nurture the development of counselors-in-training, not necessarily to “weed them out” or critically scrutinize them. This author and others contend that gateslipping endures (despite the acknowledged importance of appropriate gatekeeping) because of the myriad subjective difficulties inherent in the process and the subsequent burden on counselor educators. Thus, putting counselor educators at the center of the gatekeeping process makes sense from a research stance as well as a pragmatic one in order to learn firsthand about their perspectives and experiences during gatekeeping.

The Ecological Model (Adapted from Bronfenbrenner)

Urie Bronfenbrenner first proposed an ecological model of human development that highlighted the systemic determinants of development and the complex interactions between different levels of influence (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986). Bronfenbrenner created a nested system with the individual at the center and various influences radiating from outside the individual, in overlapping levels of influence including the micro-,

meso-, exo-, macro- and chronosystemic levels of influence. The microsystem is an individual's most immediate social circle- one's family, work group and friends. The mesosystem includes the interrelationships between microsystems such as between family, school, work, peer groups, church, etc. The exosystem includes larger forces and institutions (such as economic, environmental and political systems) in which the individual (and their micro- and mesosystems) are embedded yet with which they may only have indirect contact. The macrosystem incorporates societal and cultural beliefs that influence all the other systems and the chronosystem reflects the longitudinal aspect of both individual development as well as the influence of the time period. Besides developing this influential model, Bronfenbrenner (1979) proposed that many seemingly individualistic processes are, in fact, interdependent, with properties and actions of persons and environments needing to be analyzed in systemic terms, i.e. the idea of "development in context" (p. 12).

Other researchers have used Bronfenbrenner's ecological model to study the complex phenomenon of gatekeeping (Linda Forrest, Elman, & Shen Miller, 2008; Shen-Miller, Forrest, & Burt, 2012). This dissertation also uses the ecological model as a tool to conceptualize gatekeeping as a "process-in-context", by proposing an initial orienting ecological model of gatekeeping with the counselor educator at the center of the model. Previous researchers have put the student with PPC at the center of their adapted model to make recommendations of best practices flowing from an ecological perspective (Linda Forrest et al., 2008). Shen-Miller et al. (2012) continued the use of the adapted model to examine exo- and macrosystem variables such as attitudes and biases around gender, race, ethnicity and social class of psychology faculty and how these variables

affected gatekeeping outcomes. They recommend further research into the micro- and mesosystem processes which the two studies in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 have undertaken.

The adapted model of gatekeeping from a faculty perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986), illustrated in Figure 1, is an initial contextual tool to help situate the findings from these two grounded theory studies. Both developed theories from chapter 2 and chapter 3 are connected thematically by their focus on counselor educators' experiences and perspectives of gatekeeping and how their internal experiences interact with the contextual faculty dynamics to affect their overall experience with the gatekeeping process.

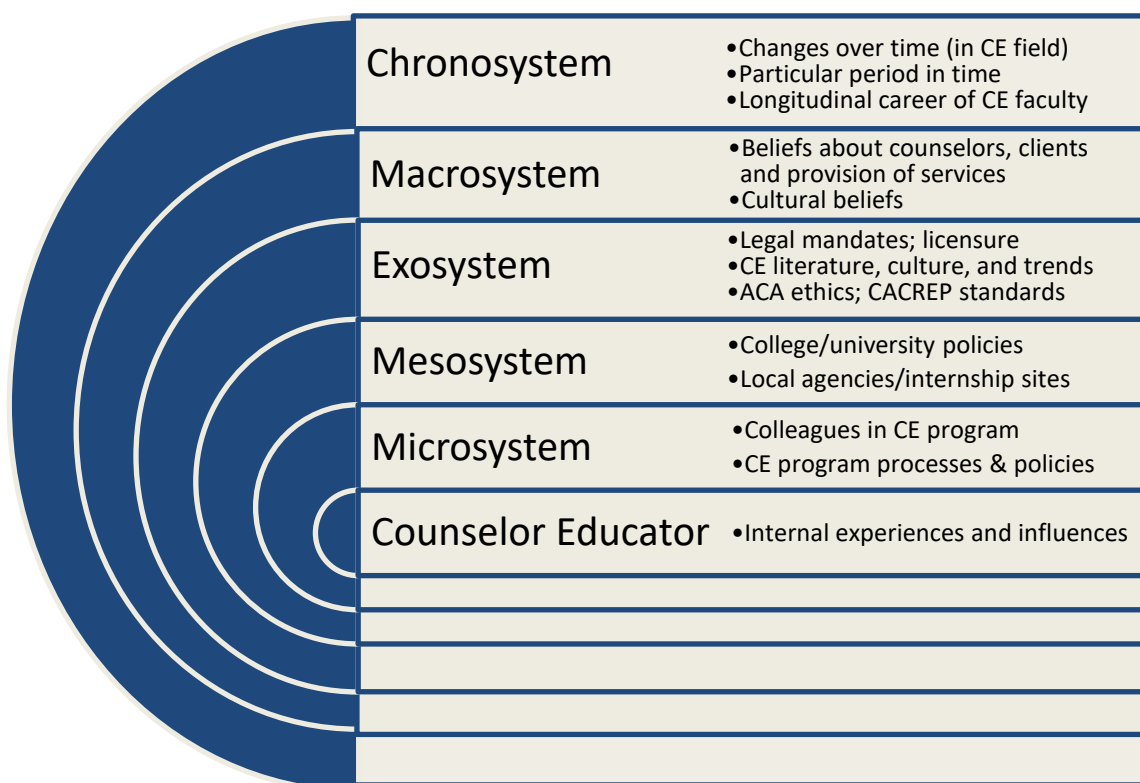


Figure 1. The Ecological Model of Gatekeeping in Counselor Education

Importance to the Profession of Counseling

It is hoped that these two studies will contribute to the growing literature that considers the complex phenomenon of gatekeeping utilizing a conceptual framework that is suited to understanding those complexities. Additionally, these studies will help counselor educators understand and pay closer attention to the multiple ecological factors that influence the gatekeeping process. Equipped with this knowledge, counselor educators can design policies, processes, and supports that will lead to the development of better informed gatekeeping procedures and practices for counseling students and the faculty who teach them.

Glossary of Terms

Counselor educator- a full-time, tenure-track or non-tenure track “core” faculty member of a counselor education program

Ecological model- adapted from Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1986), a useful framework for considering the complex interactions of individuals, behaviors, systems, and contexts as applied to gatekeeping in counselor education

Gatekeeping- “Gatekeeping is the evaluation of student suitability for professional practice. It is a mechanism that aims to ensure the health of the profession by controlling access to it. It involves the identification of evaluative criteria and process, and the accountability of the gatekeeper to apply the criteria and take responsibility for the evaluative decisions.” (Brear, Dorrian, & Luscri, 2008, p. 93-94). Additionally, I recognize that gatekeeping’s ultimate purpose is to safeguard future counseling clients.

Gatekeeping process- the process that a student, counselor educators, and the counseling program undergo when a matriculated student exhibits PPC while enrolled in the counselor education program post admission; this includes the processes of student progress evaluation, remediation, and remediation outcomes (Ziomek-Daigle & Christensen, 2010).

Problems of professional competence (PPC)- describes students “who are making unsatisfactory progress in professional training” (Elman & Forrest, 2007, p. 506)

Chapter 2

A Grounded Theory Study of Counselor Educators'
Internal Experiences of Gatekeeping for Problems of Professional Competence

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Abstract

Counselor educators have an ethical responsibility to serve as effective gatekeepers to the counseling profession by admitting, training, and graduating only those counselors personally and professionally prepared to serve the public in a myriad of counseling roles. However, the literature and experience reveal that: students with problems of professional competence (PPC) regularly enter and graduate from graduate counseling programs and, that despite the sense of importance; the gatekeeping process is still poorly understood and inconsistently applied across the counselor education programs.

Gatekeeping for students exhibiting PPC involves multiple challenges for the counselor educator and also seems to be influenced by a myriad of faculty, administrative, ethical, and legal concerns. Thus, the research question is: How do counselor educators

experience their internal reactions within the context of gatekeeping processes for PPC?

This grounded theory study collected rich data from 12 diverse and experienced counselor educators about their experiences with the gatekeeping process within their program. In-depth and multiple interviews, member checking, and researcher reflexivity promotes trustworthiness. The authors propose a model of counselor educators' internal experiences during gatekeeping that points to a core experience and process of *striving to be an effective gatekeeper*. This research will benefit counselor educators and counselor education programs; current and future counseling students; and most importantly, the public good.

Keywords: gatekeeping, problems of professional competence, counseling students, counselor education programs

Introduction

Unethical and incompetent counselors can harm future clients. The counselor education field has long recognized that it has a responsibility to educate, train and graduate counselors that practice ethically and competently. The American Counseling Association Code of Ethics and the Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP) standards each speak to the importance of these responsibilities (American Counseling Association, 2014; CACREP, 2015). Section F of the ACA Code of Ethics (ACA, 2014) addresses the responsibilities counselor educators have to the general public and trainees, including ensuring client welfare and monitoring trainee performance (Standard F.1.a.), being aware of and addressing trainee limitations (Standards F.5.b. and F.8.b.), and not endorsing trainees who cannot adequately perform their roles and responsibilities (Standard F.5.d.). In addition, research on the efficacy of the therapeutic alliance asserts that the personhood and the interpersonal effectiveness of the counselor are fundamental to effective counseling (Bemak, Epp, & Keys, 1999; Hauser & Hays, 2010; Hubble, Duncan, & Miller, 1999; Pope & Kline, 1999).

Gatekeeping in the helping professions has long been recognized as an important professional function that has been difficult to effectively address and perform. Research demonstrates that every year graduate counseling programs admit, retain, and even graduate students whose emotional, psychological, or interpersonal difficulties are likely to become liabilities once in counseling practice (Brear & Dorrian, 2010; Crawford & Gilroy, 2013; de Vries & Valadez, 2005; White & Franzoni, 1990). These students require effective remediation and, if not successful, dismissal from the program. Research shows that counseling students display more psychological disturbance than the

general population (Brear, Dorrian, & Luscri, 2008; de Vries & Valadez, 2005; White & Franzoni, 1990) and that graduate counseling students are asked to leave programs more often for personal reasons (psychological, interpersonal and emotional) than academic reasons. Besides personal difficulties, other “non-academic” reasons students require gatekeeping include: interpersonal difficulties, poor clinical skills, unethical behavior, difficulty accepting feedback, and other unprofessional behaviors (Brear et al., 2008). Despite the proliferation of gatekeeping practices, some programs continue to allow students to graduate who may not be a good fit for the profession, by allowing “gateslipping” (Gaubatz & Vera, 2002). Thus, improving gatekeeping practices and outcomes is crucial, given that potentially unsuitable students continue to graduate from counseling programs (Crawford & Gilroy, 2013) and may subsequently be of danger to future clients.

Gatekeeping Defined

Despite the clear need, gatekeeping has held various meanings within counselor education and other allied mental health professional training programs (Brear et al., 2008). Brear et al. (2008) proposed a working definition of gatekeeping that remains flexibly broad and at the same time is specific enough to ensure consensus.

Gatekeeping is the evaluation of student suitability for professional practice. It is a mechanism that aims to ensure the health of the profession by controlling access to it. It involves the identification of evaluative criteria and process, and the accountability of the gatekeeper to apply the criteria and take responsibility for the evaluative decisions. (Brear et al., 2008, 93-94).

Other definitions of gatekeeping have referred to “monitoring and evaluating the supervisee’s competence” (Corey, Haynes, Moulton, & Muratori, 2010) and “the process whereby counselor educators intervene when students are not prepared with knowledge,

skills, and values necessary for the practice of counseling” (Ziomek-Daigle & Christensen, 2010). The field recognizes that ultimately gatekeeping’s highest purpose is to protect and safeguard client well-being and safety.

Although counselor educators have traditionally confined the scope of gatekeeping to non-academic factors (those dispositions, behaviors, and other observed characteristics of counseling students that are not usually graded, unlike test scores and written papers), many emerging practices strongly suggest making these previously ungraded criteria into evaluative criteria for remaining in a training program, as personal dispositions (Spurgeon, Gibbons, & Cochran, 2012) or other “nonacademic characteristics” (Duba, Paez, & Kindsvatter, 2010).

Effective Gatekeeping Practices

Although recommended gatekeeping practices exist (Baldo & Softas-Nall, 1997; Bernard, 1975; Frame & Stevens-Smith, 1995; Henderson & Dufrene, 2011; Lumadue & Duffey, 1999; Wolf, Green, Nochajski, & Kost, 2014; Ziomek-Daigle & Christensen, 2010), most have not been widely disseminated nor adopted as professional standards; thus the recurring themes in the gatekeeping literature will be highlighted. Multiple models for gatekeeping exist (Dufrene & Henderson, 2009; Frame & Stevens-Smith, 1995; Henderson & Dufrene, 2011; Kaslow, Rubin, Bebeau, et al., 2007) as do multiple evaluative points, or gateways, throughout a student’s academic progress during which deficiencies may be noted and gatekeeping procedures might be applied, including: preadmission, postadmission, remediation plan, and remediation outcome (Ziomek-Daigle & Christensen, 2010). Since the latter stages (especially dismissal) are fraught

with difficulties, researchers increasingly highlight the importance of effective screening and admissions procedures (Swank & Smith-Adcock, 2014).

Due process is an important concept in gatekeeping and was first iterated by Bernard (1975). Due process relates to students' rights in a disciplinary or academic proceeding following fair practices that would stand up in a court of law and has been a legal concept in academia since the 1960s (Fournet, 1977). Researchers continue to highlight the need for due process in gatekeeping situations (Dugger & Francis, 2014; Wilkerson, 2006), and the associated practices of fairness, clear communication, uniformity/consistency, and openness are essential to a strong and legally defensible gatekeeping process, especially during the remediation or dismissal process (Duba, Paez, & Kindsvatter, 2010; Dugger & Francis, 2014; Henderson & Dufrene, 2011; McAdams III & Foster, 2007; Rust, Raskin, & Hill, 2013; Wolf et al., 2014).

Related to the concept of due process is the practice of informed consent, or the clear communication by counselor education programs to inform potential and current students about the program's expectations, standards, and evaluation and gatekeeping processes (Wilkerson, 2006). Establishing clear guidelines and objective evaluative criteria and insuring that students are aware of these expectations has certainly emerged as a consensus best practice (Duba et al., 2010; Homrich, 2009; Homrich, DeLorenzi, Bloom, & Godbee, 2014). In fact, counseling students strongly prefer that all aspects of feedback (both formal procedures and informal information) be made available through multiple modalities as a part of a program's informed consent (Pease-Carter & Barrio Minton, 2012). A climate of open communication among students and faculty about

potential impairment among counseling students and normalizing awareness and intervention would lead to better results for all involved (Wolf et al., 2014).

Lastly, the difficult yet worthy strategy of developing a set of personal dispositions in order to effectively evaluate and guide students continues to receive attention from researchers (Pope & Kline, 1999; Spurgeon et al., 2012). Researchers have also focused on applying similar standards to the screening and admissions processes to reduce the potential number of students requiring later gatekeeping (McCaughan & Hill, 2015; Swank & Smith-Adcock, 2014). This area of research is promising and needs more attention. It is evident that the counselor education field continues to develop effective and promising gatekeeping practices; yet challenges still remain.

Gatekeeping Challenges

Despite emerging and established practices, the gatekeeping process continues to be fraught with difficulties: from gatekeeping's subjective nature, to the humanistic orientation of many counselor educators, to the challenges of safeguarding due process and students' rights, culminating in the multiple potential liabilities encountered by faculty, programs, and universities (Bernard, 1975; Crawford & Gilroy, 2013; Forrest et al., 2008; Hutchens, Block, & Young, 2013; Kaslow, Rubin, Forrest, et al., 2007; McAdams III, Foster, & Ward, 2007). McAdams III and Foster (2007) note that legal liability has become a particularly problematic factor that influences gatekeeping processes. Though ACA's Code of Ethics and CACREP accreditation guidelines outline some clear ethical standards and duties, actual gatekeeping practices seem to vary significantly across counseling programs (McAdams III & Foster, 2007). Homrich (2009) reiterates that many counseling programs continue to ineffectively carry out their

gatekeeping responsibilities and that much inconsistency exists in gatekeeping procedures. She also notes that discrepancies in definition and terminology are a detriment to these efforts.

The field has searched for consensus on the terminology regarding gatekeeping (Bemak et al., 1999; Enochs & Etzbach, 2004; Forrest et al., 2008; Wilkerson, 2006). Brear et al. (2008) summarized that there is definitional confusion regarding the appropriate terminology, noting the various and problematic uses of the terms: “impairment”, “unsuitability”, “competence/incompetence”, “problematic”, etc. These researchers did conclude from their meta-analysis of this phenomenon that significant overlap and similarity exist, noting that intrapersonal and interpersonal problems were the top ranking of nine separate “deficiency” domains (Brear et al., 2008).

Gaubatz and Vera (2006) used the term “professionally deficient” to mean “trainees thought to be poorly or marginally suited for the field due to interpersonal, emotional, skills-based or other professional fitness reasons.” Malikiosi-Loizos (2013, p.33) concurs with Norcross and others by stating “counsellors and counselling psychologists should have attained a significant level of psychological maturation, adjustment, and personal awareness in order to be able to help another person do the same” and suggests that those trainees unable to attain this level might be seen as personally or professionally unfit. Foster and McAdams (2009) refer to nonacademic professional performance deficiencies. Most recently, researchers have attempted to define deficiencies as “behaviors and dispositions that might be contradictory to the qualities of effective counselors (e.g. emotional maturity, empathy, and the ability to give and receive feedback)” (Swank & Smith-Adcock, 2013, p.38).

As has been noted earlier, this author will refer to students who require gatekeeping for non-academic reasons to have “problems of professional competence” or PPC, which is at once, more generalized and more descriptive and less pejorative than other terms (Kaslow, Rubin, Forrest, et al., 2007; Shen-Miller et al., 2011). Evaluating a student’s professional competence focuses on the student’s current ability to perform the necessary counseling/clinical skills and demonstrate the appropriate interpersonal and intrapersonal functioning and behavioral competencies to perform the role of a counselor. Others define PPC as “...consistent maladaptive behaviors (not associated with normal developmental training deficits) related to the trainee’s physical, cognitive, mental, emotional, and interpersonal functioning that interfere with the ability to adequately provide services” (Rust et al., 2013, p.31). Obviously, the stronger the consensus the counseling education field can develop regarding gatekeeping terminology, the clearer, the more efficacious, and the better-researched our gatekeeping processes can be (Brear et al., 2008).

A second major challenge in gatekeeping are the ethical concerns and the fear of legal liability as numerous authors have noted (Baldo & Softas-Nall, 1997; Bernard, 1975; Dugger & Francis, 2014; L. Forrest, Elman, Gizara, & Vacha-Haase, 1999; Gaubatz & Vera, 2002; Hutchens et al., 2013; McAdams III et al., 2007; Sowbel, 2012; Vacha-Haase, Davenport, & Kerewsky, 2004; Wolf et al., 2014). Courts have usually decided in favor of counselor education programs and universities, upholding their right to administer their counseling programs, maintain curricula, and set and maintain the standards of the field for their students (Jacobs et al., 2011; Rust et al., 2013).

Unfortunately, recent cases do little to assuage the fears that counselor educators might have regarding gatekeeping, especially dismissal decisions (Dugger & Francis, 2014).

A third significant and longstanding difficulty in gatekeeping is its inherent subjective nature. Although there seems to be a fair amount of consensus on associated terminology, effective prevention and remediation, and the importance of standardized procedures and due process, gatekeeping remains a largely subjective experience for counseling students and counselor educators (Brear et al., 2008; Forrest et al., 1999; Rust et al., 2013). Despite trying to elucidate objective criteria for evaluation, the reality is that evaluating dispositions, attitudes, and intrapersonal and interpersonal competencies (such as warmth, empathy, ability to accept difficult feedback, genuineness, etc.) is a subjective experience. Relatedly, the field has not reached consensus on what makes a good or bad counselor nor adequately addressed the counselor's and counseling student's propensity to often be a "wounded healer" and how much counselor education programs should take this dynamic into account (Wheeler, 2002; Zerubavel & Wright, 2012).

The literature reveals a striking dearth of research on the efficacy of the various common remediation practices that counselor educators employ when a student enters into the gatekeeping process (Henderson & Dufrene, 2011b; Rust et al., 2013). The most-often used remediation techniques include: personal counseling, increased supervision, ad hoc meetings and documentation, consideration for dismissal or a leave of absence, increased assignments, and decreased clinical caseload (Henderson & Dufrene, 2011b; Kress & Protivnak, 2009; McDaniel, 2007; Rust et al., 2013). Kaslow et al. (2007) note the ethical concerns and lack of efficacy research for a very common gatekeeping remediation practice of required counseling for the student demonstrating PPC.

The remaining challenges reflect the reality that gatekeeping is stressful and emotionally difficult for counselor educators. While the literature is sparse, authors have noted potential difficulties arising from the conflict in roles and values between gatekeeping's duties and the counselor educators' humanistic values and desire to support students (Johnson et al., 2008; Sowbel, 2012; Vacha-Haase et al., 2004). Gatekeeping becomes difficult for counselor educators who "... assume the responsibility of providing guidance, direction, and assistance to students..." (Kerl & Eichler, 2007, p. 72). Kerl et al. (2002) and Kerl and Eichler (2007) noted that counselor educators, being counselors themselves, may be more inclined towards empathy and helping vs. disciplining and dismissing. Counselor educators do not want to diagnose, discriminate against, or otherwise hurt their students, especially because dismissing a student from a counselor education program has serious and lasting consequences on the student.

In Gizara and Forrest (2004), university internship supervisors conveyed the emotional difficulties of intervening with PPC as "horrible", "painful", and "very sad" (p. 136). The longer the relationship, the harder gatekeeping might become due to the dual factors of increased personal impact and perhaps increasing loss of objectivity (Gizara & Forrest, 2004; Johnson et al., 2008). Robiner (Johnson et al., 2008) suggested that another possible barrier is that confronting students' PPC may disrupt the social and professional reinforcement that supervisors and educators receive for successfully educating and promoting students and trainees. Kerl and Eichler (2007) noted that negative impacts of gatekeeping can include retribution from students in the form of negative evaluations, harassment, and legal actions; potential conflicts with colleagues and the possibility of energy and time-intensive processes and interactions.

Jackson-Cherry (2006) noted that gatekeeping is hard on faculty without enough due process for counselor educators while other authors have described working with students with PPC as “one of the most complex and emotionally stressful situations faced by educators in clinical training programs...” (Sampson, Kelly-Trombley, Zubatsky, & Harris, 2013, p. 26). Kerl et al. (2002) and Russell and Peterson (2003) noted that programs and universities do not adequately support faculty in their gatekeeping roles and also might exacerbate difficulties with other administrative priorities such as enrollment and upper administration interference in gatekeeping decisions. Many authors have suggested that, at a minimum, faculty need additional supports, training, and resources to be effective and resilient gatekeepers (Gizara & Forrest, 2004; Jacobs et al., 2011; Johnson et al., 2008). All of these factors lead to some counselor educators ignoring or minimizing their gatekeeping responsibilities which could increase the ‘gateslipping’ observed in the field by colleagues and students (Jacobs et al., 2011; Kerl & Eichler, 2007).

Counselor Educators’ Internal Challenges with Gatekeeping

While these few studies generally demonstrate that gatekeeping can be personally difficult for educators (Frame & Stevens-Smith, 1995; Gizara & Forrest, 2004; Jacobs et al., 2011; Johnson et al., 2008; Kerl et al., 2002; Kerl & Eichler, 2007; Vacha-Haase et al., 2004), not enough is known about how the difficulties of gatekeeping affect educators and how those internal effects influence the gatekeeping process. Since much of the cited research pertains to psychology faculty, training directors, and clinical supervisors, the counselor education field needs to know more about the reciprocal impacts of gatekeeping on counselor educators. It is hoped that this research will lead to more

effective, ethical, and humane gatekeeping processes for students and counselor educators alike.

This study seeks to explore the internal experiences of counselor educators involved in gatekeeping by directly asking counselor educators about their gatekeeping experiences. To further clarify the focus of this research study, the focus will be on gatekeeping processes for problems of professional competence (PPC) once a student has matriculated into the counselor education program and therefore will not be examining the screening and admissions role that counselor educators play in gatekeeping. Lastly, although gatekeeping occurs in a complex context, this study will focus on the internal experiences of counselor educators.

The central research question is: How do counselor educators experience their internal reactions within the context of gatekeeping processes for PPC? Peripheral research questions would include: What internal processes, factors, influences, thoughts, and feelings are involved in gatekeeping? What are the most salient impacts of gatekeeping on the counselor educator? How do these internal experiences of counselor educators affect the gatekeeping process and resulting gatekeeping decisions/outcomes within their counselor education program? Does a reciprocal influence exist between counselor educators' internal experiences of gatekeeping and how they approach subsequent gatekeeping situations?

Method

Gathering qualitative data directly from counselor educators about their internal experiences with gatekeeping and giving value to the participants' perspective are hallmarks of qualitative research; especially when the research addresses complex

research questions (Creswell, 2013). Grounded theory research examines a process by collecting data from relevant participants and then using inductive/deductive data analysis to develop a theory grounded in the collected data that helps to explain the process under research (Creswell, 2013). There is currently no theory to understand or explain the interactions between the gatekeeping process and counselor educators' internal experiences of gatekeeping. The counselor education field has only a preliminary grounded theory on the entirety of the gatekeeping process (Ziomek-Daigle et al, 2010). The current study seeks to develop a theory of how counselor educators' internal experiences of gatekeeping affect the gatekeeping process.

As a qualitative researcher, I hold to the constructivist paradigm that there are few universal truths and that reality is relative, subjective, and constructed within the minds of individuals. The knowledge sought in this study will involve deep interaction and co-construction between the researcher and participants. Another influential paradigm is that of pragmatism in that I believe research should be practical to the field and should employ practices that make the research maximally applicable to the field. As a professional counselor of 17 years – having witnessed fellow graduate students and later, practicing professionals whose suitability for the counseling field I questioned, I often wondered why these students and counselors were not “weeded out” by their graduate programs. As an adjunct faculty member in a counselor education program and as an agency/internship supervisor, I have observed struggling/distressed and perhaps impaired students exhibiting PPC. As a university counseling center director, I have provided clinical services to graduate counseling students who were struggling personally and academically, including students mandated to counseling by their program as part of the

program's remediation efforts. Lastly, I have consulted with counselor education and teacher education programs about the suitability or fitness of particular students. Thus, I have observed and participated in gatekeeping processes throughout my professional life and I believe the counselor education field can improve in fulfilling its gatekeeping role and ethical obligation to the public. I believe that the counselor education field will become better at gatekeeping when equipped with more in-depth information and practical theory about the personal challenges of gatekeeping on counselor educators. However, I will remain aware of my beliefs and assumptions to allow the data and theory to emerge from the participants, which is crucial for grounded theory research (Creswell, 2013).

Participants

This grounded theory study collected qualitative data from participants with personal experience of the gatekeeping process to generate theory grounded in the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Participants are current full-time/tenure-track counseling faculty (or very recently retired) who have been directly involved with at least two recent and in-depth gatekeeping situations with a counseling student exhibiting PPC; therefore, purposive and theoretical sampling included this important criterion. Volunteer, opportunity, and snowball sampling were used to achieve a requisite number of participants and a representative sample of graduate counseling programs. Participants were not adjunct instructors because of their limited role in gatekeeping. Inclusion criteria included: full-time, clinical tenure-track or non-tenure-track faculty in a CACREP-accredited counselor education program in the United States; experience and involvement in student gatekeeping situations as a faculty member; recent emeritus

faculty (retired within the last three years) were also eligible. Exclusion criteria included: those not willing or able to fully participate in the research study; adjunct instructors; faculty from another mental health training program besides counseling/counselor education; faculty who have not been involved in gatekeeping; participants unfamiliar with gatekeeping in counselor education programs; participants from counselor education programs that are not CACREP-accredited.

Participant access and rapport issues largely involve time, distance, and establishing trust, which are crucial to data saturation and theory development (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 2013). The physical distance between researcher and participants provided some logistical challenges to face-to-face interviews; therefore, online and phone interviews were employed. Establishing trust and rapport with participants is crucial for sound grounded theory research as well as protecting participants from potential harm.

Ethical considerations regarding trust are also necessary because participants may be providing data that reflect poorly on their particular programs or colleagues (or themselves) and because the counselor educator world is small and interconnected, participants may have some initial reluctance to venture fully into this research study. Besides providing a full informed consent agreement, strong confidentiality guarantees, and the IRB process, the primary researcher (first author) spent time building rapport and gaining the confidence of participants to produce a robust data set.

After gaining approval from the Oregon State University Institutional Review Board, a preliminary participant recruitment process took place, in the form of electronic outreach to prospective participants via counselor educator listserves and emails from the

researchers. Prospective participants were screened and entered into the study if they fit all the criteria. Modes of data collection included: in-person, online/video-conferenced, and phone open-ended interview responses and supplementary email communication as needed. Collecting participant demographic information and salient characteristics of their respective counselor education programs occurred via an online Qualtrics survey. Participants were interviewed two separate times by the primary researcher, with each interview ranging in length from 45 minutes to 1.25 hours. Interviews most often occurred by phone, but in-person and AdobeConnect (video conferencing) interviews were also conducted.

Of the 12 participants, seven identified as female and five as male. Eight identified as White, one as Black or African-American, one as Hispanic or Latino/a, one as Asian and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and one as Multiple. Six participants are tenured and six are not yet tenured (or not on the tenure-track) and likewise, six have been a counselor educator between 0 – 11 years and six have been a counselor educator for more than 12 years. Participants hailed from all over the United States and using the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) regions, six participants were from the Western region, one from the North Central region, two from the Southern region, and three from the North Atlantic region. Participants represent a number of different CACREP specialty areas with the predominant two being clinical mental health counseling and school counseling.

Procedures

Qualitative research relying on in-depth participant interviews necessitates interview questions that are both broad enough to allow for wide-ranging and deep

participant engagement while also covering the relevant subject area. A semi-structured interview format was used which included questions such as: “How would you define gatekeeping in counselor education?”, “What particular thoughts, feelings, or other internal reactions did you experience during or after the gatekeeping process with a student in your program?” and “What are the most challenging or difficult aspects of gatekeeping?” For the complete round 1 and round 2 interview questions, see Appendix F and Appendix O.

Data Analysis

Creswell (2013) depicts data analysis in a grounded theory study as a continual loop of data collection, analysis, checking, and revising, often followed by further data collection, until thick description and saturation are reached. Researchers used Corbin and Strauss’ (2008) updated systematic model of grounded theory analysis and techniques such as collecting rich data, continual/concurrent data collection and data analysis, open/axial/selective coding, memo writing, and continuous theory development from the data to insure that the developed theory truly reflects the data. After the transcription of the first round of interviews, the primary researcher conducted open coding on all transcripts. Preliminary axial coding began as categories were constructed from the developed codes. Initial memoing helped to clarify the emerging categories and concepts. Second round interview questions were developed to address gaps in the emerging concepts and related conceptual structure. Second round interviews were partially open coded and then selectively coded to fill in gaps and achieve theoretical saturation. Theoretical memos helped to articulate the connections and interactions between the main categories and the core category, and the emerging grounded theory.

Trustworthiness

I used strategies from Creswell (2013), Lincoln and Guba, (1985) and Morrow (2005) to maximize trustworthiness/credibility of my research study. Prolonged engagement involved learning the culture, increasing trust, and knowing the context in order to obtain the best data with the least distortions possible. Not being a counselor educator both hindered some understanding of counselor education culture but also provided for more objectivity. Taking time to get to know participants and their work context (their particular counselor education program and university setting) and allowing them to go in-depth into their gatekeeping experiences promoted researcher sensitivity and enhanced trust and rapport with participants. Peer debriefing with informed yet disinterested colleagues helped to insure quality, fairness, and accuracy of the research process and reveal any primary researcher bias. In this study, the faculty advisor and a doctoral student colleague provided debriefing and reflexivity opportunities by questioning the analysis and developing theory and challenging the primary researcher to explain the results that were being conceptualized at key points of the data collection/analysis process. Researcher reflexivity was further enhanced by keeping a journal along with the process of “memoing” throughout the research study. Lastly, member checking with the participants giving feedback on the emerging theory took place in order for participants to comment on the accuracy and validity of the findings. Of the 12 participants contacted, 8 responded to the member check inquiry and provided feedback that overwhelmingly supported the model and theory derived from the interview data. This step is seen by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as the “most crucial” of all techniques in the body of qualitative research methodology to insure credibility.

Results

Participants experienced a variety of internal reactions during gatekeeping which we conceptualized as four interacting internal processes influencing the core category of *striving to be an effective gatekeeper*. The four internal processes are: *integrating identities and balancing responsibilities, practicing discernment, managing challenging emotions, and perceiving cohesion and capability in colleagues*.

Theory of Striving to Be an Effective Gatekeeper – Avoiding, Struggling, Striving

Striving to be an effective gatekeeper emerged as the central category describing the counselor educator participants' internal experience of gatekeeping. The concept of *striving to be an effective gatekeeper* captures the enormous efforts that participants and most counselor educators put into gatekeeping within their programs and also how much participants sought to provide high quality gatekeeping reflecting the value they place on gatekeeping. Participants' self-reported and collegial observations levels of striving seemed to range from a lower end of *avoiding*, to a middle range of *struggling*, to an upper end of *striving*. Whether a participant was avoiding, struggling or striving as an effective gatekeeper appeared to depend upon the strength and interactions of the four supporting internal processes. Figure 2.1 illustrates the relationships between these internal processes and *striving to be an effective gatekeeper*.

Each supporting internal process will be further explicated along with data to support its relationship to the core category and to other internal processes.

Counselor Educators' Internal Experiences of Gatekeeping

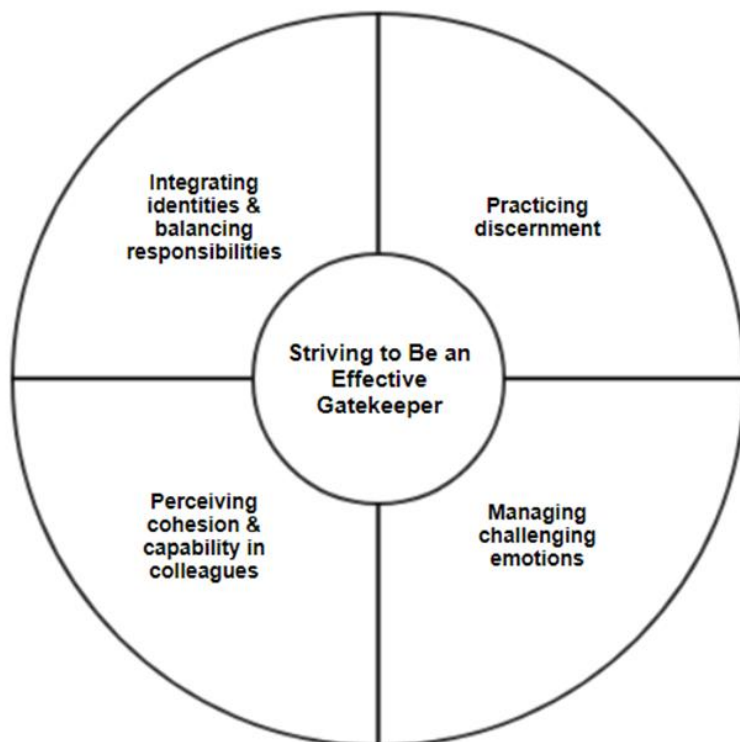


Figure 2. Theory of Striving to Be an Effective Gatekeeper – Avoiding, Struggling, Striving

Integrating Identities and Balancing Responsibilities

Integrating identities and balancing responsibilities is the internal process and context whereby participants continually assess and reconcile their different roles/identities, values and responsibilities in gatekeeping situations. Although participants are motivated gatekeepers, they sometimes struggled to balance their positive and supportive feelings towards students with the duties that arose when those students began to exhibit PPC. They described an experience where the evaluative and gatekeeping stance of a counselor educator conflicted with their developmental and humanistic views as a counselor.

Integrating identities and balancing responsibilities incorporates becoming a *gatekeeper* and *balancing gatekeeping, counselor, and counselor educator values and duties*. Participants learned about gatekeeping in various ways (e.g. observation, training, and experience) and took on the responsibility of gatekeeping to the extent that they understood gatekeeping and were motivated towards quality in their counselor education program. As participants became involved in gatekeeping they had to reconcile the values and priorities of a counselor with those of a counselor educator, as this counselor educator with over 12 years in the field, stated, “As counselors we accept people as they are, where they are, and they can take as long as they want to change... [but] as counselor educators we are putting other people at risk by doing so... we have a different... investment and a different responsibility.” Another participant, a clinical coordinator with over 12 years of experience, noted the challenge as, “...we are trained, most of us, to be counselors... we are trained to empower folks and to encourage them, and not have an absolute, you are OK, you are not OK.” The emotional challenges and consequences that arise from taking the gatekeeping stance are addressed in *managing challenging emotions*.

As part of *balancing responsibilities*, participants took stock of their own *capacity* (time, energy, and other duties) and *motivation* as a gatekeeper and applied them to the current situation. As this participant, a coordinator and professor said, “The challenges of being a faculty member are that you have 27 hours in your day and that’s all. You decide how you use it, so it’s really the squeaky wheel sometimes...” These counselor educators’ lived experiences of their multiple duties and demands evolved alongside their

accumulating experiences of gatekeeping to influence their sense of *striving to be an effective gatekeeper*.

Successfully *integrating identities and balancing responsibilities* seems to contribute to *striving to be an effective gatekeeper*. Being an effective gatekeeper is complexly influenced by a counselor educator's gatekeeping experiences and their evolving understanding of how they can most effectively enact their gatekeeping responsibility.

Practicing Discernment

Practicing discernment is the internal process of continuously enacting introspection and self-awareness in order to accurately appraise, evaluate, remediate and monitor a student with potential PPC. Owing to the subjective nature of perceiving and evaluating student PPC and the potential for significant consequences if PPC exists, participants endeavored to practice good judgment, self-awareness, and timely collegial consultation to be as discerning as possible in proceeding through the gatekeeping process for a student with PPC.

According to participants, fair and effective gatekeeping requires a strong level of *self-awareness* and *using clinical skills and judgment* because of the subjectivity inherent in gatekeeping and the consequences of gatekeeping decisions. This counselor educator participant with 7 years of experience said, "...I can conceptualize a lot of gatekeeping issues with clinical skills." While this participant, a program coordinator, added "...my gut, maybe my clinical sense is saying there is a problem here." Participants exhibited *practicing self-awareness and introspection* by continually examining their thoughts,

feelings and other reactions and often by seeking consultation, as this participant, a long-time counselor educator, explained:

I have to look inwards first. Is this pattern something that's a trigger for me? So, I'll do my self-exploration... first. Then I... try to observe whether that student is impacting other people that way. Or, if it seems to be me. So, I want to make that distinction I think that's critical first is that I'm willing to look at me, and check myself a little bit.

These two interrelated processes of introspection and as-needed consultation were noted very often by participants. This participant, a counselor educator with 7 years in the field, shed light on why this self-awareness and consultation are important:

...we're people, we're not robots and we're going to have some... affinities for some students, and... the opposite... for other students. I try to be aware of it just like in our work with clients, if I'm having a strong reaction... towards a student, I want to sit and think about why. I might talk with colleagues about it.

In particular, participants tried to maintain awareness of particular behaviors or student presentations that might challenge them (e.g. disrespect from a student). For some participants, identity issues (differences between participants and students on race, ethnicity, age, gender, etc.) might have been part of the potential PPC being perceived and in these cases, consultation with colleagues was even more crucial. More research is needed to explore this phenomenon for faculty of color and female counselor educators, in particular, as these interactions were both the direct experiences and observations of a few participants.

Participants were *practicing discernment* by *recognizing the need for collegial feedback* to help them discern the potential PPC they were observing and/or experiencing. This program director and associate professor of 7 years said:

I feel comfortable bringing that to my colleagues and... they're very helpful if they're saying, "Oh, yeah I'm noticing something similar" or

“Here’s my take on it.” Or perhaps it’s just me, that’s my bias and I’m seeing something that’s just based on my reaction, so that’s helpful.

When participants were able to enact a high level of *practicing discernment* they felt capable and effective as a gatekeeper thus enhancing their sense of *striving to be an effective gatekeeper*. Conversely, low levels of *practicing discernment* contributed to lower levels of *striving to be an effective gatekeeper*.

Managing Challenging Emotions

Managing challenging emotions is the significant internal process by which participants experience and manage the wide variety of feelings throughout the gatekeeping process which includes dealing with the emotional consequences of gatekeeping outcomes. Because of the serious consequences of gatekeeping, their desires to be helpful and positive towards students and perhaps due to the investment made with students, participants experienced a wide range of difficult emotions involving the student with PPC. Additionally, participants contended with strong emotions towards themselves, their colleagues, and the larger system; which they endeavored to manage successfully. Participants also had to adapt to handling the emotional consequences of gatekeeping. Experiencing all of these emotions seemed to have an impact on participants that took its toll and felt like a heavy burden.

Participants experienced gatekeeping as an emotionally difficult task with one of the primary emotions being anxiety. As this program director with 7 years in the field stated, “But just the idea that you’re essentially holding someone’s potential career in your hands is quite anxiety-provoking for a number of reasons.” Along with anxiety, participants also shared feelings of self-doubt, dread, and worry about the upcoming process they were anticipating or the possible effects on them.

Participants also reported feeling anger, disappointment, frustration, disbelief, guilt and sadness as stated by this participant, a counselor educator with 4 years in the field, "... you want[ed] them in your program... you are invested in their training and... in their success and ultimately to become counselors. And then something happens, right? So, you have to deal with that, context is important in terms of emotions."

Disappointment also sometimes led to feelings of betrayal or anger, especially if the student's actions were egregious and a relationship with the student had been established, as evidenced by participants' experiences. This participant, a counselor educator of 2 years, highlighted another common internal reaction, "But I think initially, gosh! I feel really bad because this person is not cutting it and I am going to have to be the one to hold that person accountable."

Participants also felt empathy for students who were trying hard but unable to meet program expectations, as this counselor educator of 7 years said, "Yeah, so it's frustrating also it's heart- breaking. Because he wants this so bad, he wants to be a therapist so much and he is just not, at this point anyway." These emotions may especially loom large after numerous unsuccessful remediation attempts, leading to perhaps the most emotionally difficult times in the gatekeeping process.

Two of the most emotionally difficult tasks in a gatekeeping process were reported to be: giving a student *negative feedback* about their poor performance, as previously mentioned and the even more difficult but rare instance of dismissing a student from the program. As this participant, a counselor educator and program director with 7 years in the field, stated:

I am the one that has to tell the student ultimately the news. And deliver this message that it's either not going well or there is a remediation plan or ultimately... this isn't going to be a fit and we are going to have to, basically not allow you to continue. I have dreaded those meetings, I have dreaded those conversations. I think that's to me the worst part, to be honest.

Participants experience emotional pain and difficulty because they perceive themselves to be *hurting the student* in some way- by delivering *bad news* and thwarting their aspirations. In short, participants want their students to succeed. This participant, a program coordinator with over 12 years of experience, described this as "... the most disruptive and painful experience [is] to remove a student against their will." Another participant with 7 years in the field provided further detail:

The hardest part is when... it clearly is hurting them to hear the information you're giving them- the feedback about their performance or their behavior, their academic success or not. When they're sitting in your office and they're crying because of the information you've delivered. They hear it and they're like, "I get it, I suck," or whatever they're thinking. There's shame, there's guilt, there's remorse. There is grief and there is a part of me that just wants somehow to fix it.

Participants cope with these difficult emotions and the empathy they have for students in these situations by different processes and associated thoughts and feelings. Oftentimes, participants took comfort in knowing that they acted in concert with their colleagues, as best as possible, in fulfilling a difficult but necessary ethical responsibility. Participants reassured themselves as this participant stated, "The fact of the matter is, it is not fully my decision... I just have to deliver the news and again at the end of the day, should this person be counseling vulnerable populations and if the answer is no, then what we are doing is correct." Additionally, participants sought to reframe the experience for themselves and for the student with PPC, as this veteran counselor educator described:

I hope, my hope when I'm sitting there, like yeah, this person is really miserable right now. But since they're leaving that means now they have the opportunity to find the thing that they're going to be able to do well. Because this isn't it, but there is something out there, now they're not wasting their time here anymore.

On the other end of the gatekeeping outcome spectrum, participants admitted to allowing students to graduate who should have been gatekept and reported feeling disappointment or regret. They also hoped that other forces would intercede as this experienced program coordinator and tenured counselor educator explained:

I also kind of trust something bigger than us, that people won't get employed or that they won't be successful and they will go find another job or something, that they won't pass licensure, who knows... But when I haven't been successful, I hope that that comes in to play... That's one of those where I hope that something larger than us prevails.

If participants manage the emotionally challenging aspects of gatekeeping, it helps them to sustain as gatekeepers and counselor educators and leads to higher *striving to be an effective gatekeeper*. Conversely, if they have difficulty managing these challenging emotions it negatively impacts their *striving to be an effective gatekeeper*, especially over time.

Managing these emotions seems to involve personal coping and resilience, but the sense of cohesion (see *perceiving cohesion* below) that participants felt with their colleagues also strongly influenced how well they coped with the emotional consequences, as this counselor educator with over 25 years in the field stated, "One of the things with our gatekeeping, we never do it by ourselves..." In the next section, the theory illustrates how one's colleagues can help or hinder counselor educators in effectively managing the challenging emotions associated with gatekeeping.

Perceiving Cohesion and Capability in Colleagues

Perceiving cohesion and capability in colleagues is the affective and cognitive process whereby participants perceive qualities within their counselor educator colleagues based on past experiences with them. Participants reported perceiving such qualities as trust, support, mutual respect, shared motivation, and gatekeeping competence which then informs further individual and collaborative gatekeeping actions.

We conceptualized *perceiving cohesion* to include *trust, mutual respect, support* and *shared motivation/investment* that participants perceive in their faculty colleagues. Because gatekeeping is an interpersonal and collegial endeavor, participants reported needing to trust and rely on their colleagues to carry out their gatekeeping responsibilities. Appropriately evaluating students and giving colleagues valued feedback is essential to the gatekeeping process, as this participant with 7 years of experience illustrated:

Gatekeeping is the hardest part of our job... and to work as a team with people where gatekeeping is part of all of our jobs; I have to be able to trust that everyone else is holding students to a high standard, that everyone else kind of has eyes on in the way that we are supposed to.

This same participant also described their team as "... probably the most collaborative team I've ever worked on.... we know each other well and we've worked together well for several years.... it's a tight team and we trust each other, too." The influential role of having trust and respect among colleagues seems evident.

Trust was also important to another participant, with over 20 years in the field, who said, "... if I think I'm over-identified with a student... I have to trust my colleague[s] that they're not going to think less of me or take advantage of me if I'm sharing that. And that they will be respectful..." Most participants felt this level of trust

with at least some of their colleagues which facilitated collaborating with them. However, low trust can impede collaboration as this participant, another experienced counselor educator stated, "... if you don't trust that you will be incorporated in the process, you won't be in the process..."

Similarly, participants perceived varying levels of support, mutual respect, and shared motivation for gatekeeping. On the positive side, a high level of trust, respect, support and shared motivation can be very encouraging and supportive to participants as this counselor educator and program director noted, "Our faculty dynamics quite frankly are amazing. I mean I consider myself really blessed. I think we all are always thinking about our students. We are very student-focused..."

However, some participants perceived both a lack of interpersonal trust and a lack of gatekeeping competence and motivation as this counselor educator of 5 years observed:

I think what makes it hard is when there is no trust and confidence, and I think... it is the cumulative residual effects of other things that happened in the program, that led me... to say... can I really trust this person if I have a gatekeeping issue? Do I trust that this person... will: a) support me, have my back, or b) do something about it?

Oftentimes, when participants perceived low gatekeeping motivation they also associated that with less investment in the quality of the program, as this counselor educator with 12 years in the field stated:

But to be very honest there's only a few of us that are that invested... in the gatekeeping process.... There are different professional motivations for being... in this position. The ones who are here expressly to educate future counselors vs. do personal research or work their way up the ladder or prepare them for something else.... It becomes clear the people who are passionate about the field of counseling and preparing people to be effective in the field. I think those folks who are passionate about it tend to be a little more invested in the gatekeeping function.

Perceiving capability includes perceptions of colleagues' gatekeeping *competence* and *capacity*. Some participants perceived their colleagues' gatekeeping competence to be low, as this counselor educator with over 12 years in the field noted, "I don't perceive them to be capable of discerning those students' needs and helping them identify and work through them..." Other participants perceived a much higher level of competence, like this counselor educator of 7 years:

If _____ comes and says, "You know what, I'm really worried about student X." I'm like, "Me too then, I'm totally worried too. I trust your judgment absolutely.".... There's some credibility, yeah because I've seen her judgment before. I've seen her in the past say "I'm worried about this student" and she's right.

Another aspect of *perceiving capability* involves evaluating the colleagues' *capacity*, namely having adequate time and energy, because participants know how time-consuming gatekeeping can be. Participants recognize that their colleagues are busy, but they believed that those colleagues who are motivated for gatekeeping would make the time to carry it out, as this experienced counselor educator and program coordinator explained, "In a faculty group, I think it has to do with who has enough energy to follow it through and unfortunately or fortunately, however you see it, that means that the people who are most passionate about it, will be the one to follow it through."

As we have seen, how participants perceived and experienced their colleagues throughout gatekeeping strongly affected their sense of *striving to be an effective gatekeeper*. High *perceived cohesion* seems to lead to the collaborative relationships and actions that help participants feel like they're sharing the gatekeeping work and the emotional consequences that often follow. Lastly, high *perceived cohesion* combined

with strong *perceived capability* strongly supports a high level of *striving to be an effective gatekeeper*.

On the other hand, participants who are motivated gatekeepers may have been thwarted in their *striving to be effective gatekeepers* by perceptions of a lack of *cohesion* and/or a lack of *capability* among their colleagues. Although high motivation may, to some degree, offset a lack of *perceiving cohesion*, it will eventually take its toll, as this counselor educator of 10 years who is also a program director admitted:

Personally, it's exhausted me, that's how it's personally has affected... it has exhausted me, it has worn me out, it's given me lots of opportunities to reflect if this is the right field for me. If I'm meeting so much resistance with what I'm trying to do, is it me or is it the field? Or the environment of where I'm at?

Discussion

The theory of *striving to be an effective gatekeeper* – *avoiding, struggling, striving* and the related internal processes answer the research question by providing a richer understanding and an organizing model for the internal experiences of participants during gatekeeping. These results highlight the challenging internal and interpersonal aspects of gatekeeping, how participants integrate possibly conflicting values and roles, and the emotional burden that gatekeeping can become.

Most of the gatekeeping literature focuses on what counselor educators should do and much less on how gatekeeping is actually conducted or its effects on faculty. Thus far, no researcher has advanced a model or theory of counselor educators' internal experiences of gatekeeping, but the theory's four internal sub-processes seem to be supported by the available literature on these aspects of gatekeeping.

The challenges inherent in *integrating identities and balancing responsibilities*, which in large part involve reconciling the different values, goals and related tasks between being a counselor/clinician and being a counselor educator, support the observations of researchers who noted this same dilemma of counselor educators who “...may place too much responsibility on themselves to help or change students...” (Kerl, Garcia, McCullough, & Maxwell, 2002, p.323). Other researchers have also pointed to this challenge in social work and psychology training programs (Johnson et al., 2008; Rust et al., 2013; Sowbel, 2012). Another aspect of this internal process involves the process of becoming a gatekeeper with half of the participants not having prior training which concurs with the call for increased training regarding gatekeeping (Homrich, 2009; Jacobs et al., 2011; Russell, Dupree, Beggs, Peterson, & Anderson, 2007).

Practicing discernment arose as a part of participants’ internal experience which supports prior research that emphasizes the importance of “... introspection, self-knowledge, and self-awareness...” to fulfill “... the need for trainers to look carefully at themselves when engaging in a difficult conversation” (Jacobs et al., 2011, p. 178). This critical internal aspect of gatekeeping is also well supported by specific recommendations for counselor educators addressing PPC (Rust et al., 2013).

The difficulties around *managing challenging emotions* have been mentioned by previous authors who have noted the inherent emotional conflicts and the potential consequences of having painful conversations whereby difficult feedback is conveyed to students with PPC (Gizara & Forrest, 2004; Jacobs et al., 2011; Johnson et al., 2008; Kerl & Eichler, 2007). Findings from this study corroborate and expand on these previous findings largely drawn from research on gatekeeping challenges in psychology training

programs. The intensity and frequent reporting of difficult emotions by participants matches similar terms reported by training supervisors in Gizara & Forrest (2004) and the emotional consequences that participants describe echo findings from Kerl & Eichler (2007) that these emotions are often minimized or unattended. Lastly, the numerous intrapersonal and interpersonal challenges that participants noted strongly correspond to the “personal barriers” such as “... competency set, avoidance, resentment and fear, empathy for the parties involved, and fear of legal action...” put forth by Jacobs et al. (2011) as significant barriers for doctoral psychology trainers during gatekeeping (p. 178-179). The extent to which their findings overlap with the results from this study is encouraging.

The issues and challenges that counselor educators face with their colleagues that was captured in the concept of *perceiving cohesion and capability in colleagues* is well supported in the literature. For example, Gizara and Forrest (2004) noted some of the ranges of experience in supervisors having collegial consultations and meeting in supervision groups. Subsequent research (see Forrest et al., 2013; Jacobs et al, 2011; Johnson et al., 2008) supports the central idea of the interactive nature of gatekeeping and the strengths and challenges inherent in conducting such a complex and important task with one’s colleagues, within a training program and embedded in a university. An interesting note is that previous researchers found evidence that *over-identifying* with a trainee could perhaps impair gatekeeping competence or skew gatekeeping decisions but this phenomenon was only weakly supported in the current study (Gizara & Forrest, 2004). Overall, the results strongly fit the existing literature and the theory of *striving to*

be an effective gatekeeper captures and conceptualizes disparate internal experiences into a coherent and holistic model.

The results contribute to the counselor education gatekeeping literature by increasing our awareness of the internal experiences of counselor educators within the context of gatekeeping processes for PPC. The results increase our understanding of how the internal experiences of gatekeeping are related to the faculty microsystem of the counselor educator. The results strongly align with and expand on a body of qualitative gatekeeping research focused on psychology training programs (Forrest et al., 2013; Jacobs et al., 2011; Johnson et al., 2008) and contribute to the qualitative gatekeeping literature specific to counselor education. Lastly, by illuminating the internal experiences of counselor educator participants during gatekeeping, more evidence of the need for continued improvements, training, and support focused on improving faculty collaboration and other aspects of gatekeeping competence and process has been accrued, which echoes past researchers' recommendations (Forrest et al., 2013; Homrich, 2009; Jacobs et al., 2011; Johnson et al., 2008; Russell & Peterson, 2003; Rust et al., 2013).

Implications for Counselor Education

The implications for gatekeeping in counselor education programs focus on training and supporting counselor educators throughout their professional life cycle. Much more should be done to equip, support, and sustain counselor educators, as they undertake a consequential and difficult counselor education responsibility.

Implications for doctoral training programs are clear. Half of the participants report not receiving any training on gatekeeping, whether from their doctoral program or other professional development opportunities. Doctoral programs can better prepare

future counselor educators for gatekeeping's challenges, however, as this participant and newer counselor educator points out, "Emotional preparation and... academic theoretical preparation [are] two different things, they can't prepare you for the emotional part."

However, frank discussions of the internal processes of gatekeeping and inherent challenges may increase competencies in gatekeeping-specific discernment, emotional management, and collegial consultation.

The implications for counselor education programs include enhancing professional development and nurturing counselor educator wellness, job satisfaction and preventing burnout. Junior faculty can benefit from formal training, initial and ongoing support, and gatekeeping-specific mentoring within their counselor education program. Secondly, those counselor education programs that assign the program coordinators and directors or other faculty with an outsized proportion of gatekeeping responsibility risk burning out those counselor educators. Counselor education programs should seek to spread out the gatekeeping responsibility among their faculty while also bolstering support and resources for those counselor educators who bear the brunt of those duties. As this study has clearly demonstrated, the emotional consequences of gatekeeping if not adequately supported or mitigated can have a significant impact on gatekeepers.

Lastly, practices that seek to improve aspects of faculty cohesion would augment gatekeeping collaboration as well as individual counselor educator efficacy. One recommendation is for counselor education programs to periodically review their gatekeeping, in terms of both process and outcomes. This self-evaluative practice would enhance both gatekeeping competence and aspects of faculty cohesion which according to this study's theory would enhance *striving to be an effective gatekeeper*.

Limitations

These grounded theory results should be considered with the potential for limitations arising from errors during the data analysis, other primary researcher errors, or possibly due to participant demographics. This research was conducted with counselor educators who self-selected to be part of this study, therefore those who were reluctant or unable to participate were not included and it is possible that those non-respondents might have different experiences of gatekeeping. Also related to participants, although the pool of participants seems diverse and potentially representative in many ways (e.g. gender, race/ethnicity, geographic region, type of program, tenure status, etc.), there exist many more variations among counselor educators than were presented in this study.

Interestingly, eight of the 12 participants identified themselves as holding some sort of leadership position within their counselor education program, most often, that of program director or coordinator, clinical or training coordinator, or chair or assistant chair of the department. Perhaps the experiences of tenure-track counselor educators who do not hold leadership/administrative positions within their programs have different gatekeeping experiences than their colleagues in those leadership positions. On the other hand, it could be that counselor educators in such leadership positions have a better perspective on gatekeeping in their program because they are much more involved in gatekeeping, in general, than their peers.

Other limitations might arise from how the research was conducted and possible errors may be by omission or commission. Despite rigorous attention to qualitative research standards and grounded theory techniques, this study represents the first grounded theory study conducted by the primary researcher (first author), thus researcher

inexperience might be a limitation. All interviews were conducted by the primary researcher as was the majority of the data analysis and theory building. Therefore, the results should be viewed within that context. Lastly, although practices to promote trustworthiness were conducted, an unintentional lack of researcher reflexivity might contribute to unintended bias in the results.

Future Research

Further research on such factors as tenure status, having a leadership position such as program coordinator or clinical coordinator, and professional identity (counselor, psychologist, etc.) could shed more light on whether these (or other) counselor educator attributes/factors might affect one's internal experience of gatekeeping. Different types of counselor education programs such as rehabilitation counseling or addiction counseling might also be studied. And since this study only researched the experiences of counselor educators at CACREP-accredited programs, further research with counselor educators from non-accredited programs is warranted. Further research replicating or augmenting this study would be beneficial to ascertain whether other aspects of counselor educators' internal experiences of gatekeeping were overlooked or whether the proposed theory and its components coalesce and operate in different ways.

An important line of future research would further examine how identity and diversity issues impact gatekeeping. Counselor educators need to know more about how the intersectional identities of both student and counselor educators affects gatekeeping processes and outcomes. Only one prior study (Shen-Miller et al., 2012) has examined in-depth the contextual influences of diversity issues in gatekeeping. A few study participants who identify as faculty of color did mention possible instances of implicit

bias or microaggressions (towards them, as faculty) as part of gatekeeping which is a phenomenon that urgently warrants further research and which mirrors other experiences of faculty of color (Shen-Miller et al., 2012).

The theory of *striving to be an effective gatekeeper – avoiding/struggling/striving* sheds light on a sample of counselor educators' internal experiences during gatekeeping for PPC. It is hoped that this knowledge will lead to better understanding and more recognition and support/resources for counselor educators performing gatekeeping, whether from colleagues or the university. Lastly, the role of faculty cohesion cannot be understated, not just for sustaining motivation during gatekeeping over time, but for the sustainability of counselor educators themselves. With this knowledge and awareness, hopefully more attention will be brought to bear on the experiences of counselor educators during gatekeeping in order to reduce the number of avoiding and struggling gatekeepers and to increase the number of striving gatekeepers in the counselor education field.

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Chapter 3

A Grounded Theory Study on Counselor Educators' Experiences within the Faculty
Microsystem during Gatekeeping in Counselor Education Programs

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Abstract

Counselor educators have an ethical responsibility to serve as effective gatekeepers to the counseling profession by graduating only those counselors personally and professionally prepared to serve counseling clients. However, the literature reveals that students with problems of professional competence (PPC) regularly matriculate and graduate from counselor education programs and despite its importance; the gatekeeping process is still poorly understood and inconsistently applied. Gatekeeping is a difficult process that involves subjective evaluation and consequential decision-making that is influenced by a myriad of pedagogical, administrative, ethical and legal concerns. Adapting Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1979, 1986), this grounded theory study approaches gatekeeping as a process-in-context with a focus on the microsystem of the counselor educator. This study explored 12 counselor educators' perspectives on their experiences of the faculty microsystem and the associated contextual conditions and processes of gatekeeping. A gatekeeping theory of *Collaboration – sharing the burden* is proposed along with a preliminary model of the Faculty Microsystem for Gatekeeping in Counselor Education Programs to provide a better understanding of the complex internal/interpersonal dynamics experienced by counselor educators during gatekeeping for PPC.

Keywords: gatekeeping, problems of professional competence, counselor educators, decision-making, ecological model

Introduction

Counseling is a challenging profession that requires competent and ethical counselors to perform the myriad roles of a professional counselor. Besides counseling knowledge and skills, research on therapeutic alliance asserts that the personhood and the interpersonal effectiveness of the counselor are fundamental to effective counseling (Bemak, Epp, & Keys, 1999; Hubble, Duncan, & Miller, 1999). Additionally, unethical and incompetent counselors can harm clients, thus counselor education programs bear a crucial ethical responsibility to the public to graduate competent and ethical counselors. Clients assume not only that professional counselors will be competent and skilled, but that they will also manifest the personal and professional demeanor fitting to be an effective helper. Therefore, counselor educators have a responsibility to serve as diligent gatekeepers when encountering counseling students with problems of professional competence (PPC), an obligation that is reinforced in the profession's code of ethics and educational training standards (American Counseling Association, 2014; CACREP, 2015).

Despite gatekeeping's importance, ongoing research, and recommended practices, it remains a challenging endeavor for counselor education programs to effectively perform. Every year, programs admit, retain, and graduate students whose emotional, psychological, or interpersonal difficulties are so potentially serious that they may become liabilities once in counseling practice (Brear & Dorrian, 2010; Crawford & Gilroy, 2013; de Vries & Valadez, 2005; White & Franzoni, 1990). Practicing effective gatekeeping is paramount in the counseling profession because counseling students display more psychological disturbance than the general population (White & Franzoni,

1990; Brear, Dorrian, & Lusci, 2008; de Vries & Valadez, 2005). Crawford, Mikal & Gilroy (2013) showed that 92% of the 112 master's level programs responding had at least one student who was professionally impaired.

Brear et al. (2008) proposed a definition of gatekeeping that remains flexibly broad yet specific enough to ensure consensus:

Gatekeeping is the evaluation of student suitability for professional practice. It is a mechanism that aims to ensure the health of the profession by controlling access to it. It involves the identification of evaluative criteria and process, and the accountability of the gatekeeper to apply the criteria and take responsibility for the evaluative decisions. (Brear et al., 2008, 93-94)

The sole addition to this definition is the understanding that ultimately, gatekeeping's primary purpose is to protect and safeguard future counseling clients.

Though many versions of gatekeeping in counselor education programs exist, gatekeeping practice is still fraught with challenge: from the subjective nature of student behavior, to the humanistic perspective of many counselor educators, to the legal rights of students, as well as the multiple potential liabilities of faculty and universities (Bernard, 1975; Hutchens et al., 2013; McAdams III et al., 2007). McAdams III and Foster (2007) note that legal liability has become a particularly daunting factor that influences decision making in the gatekeeping process. Though ACA's Code of Ethics and CACREP accreditation guidelines outline some clear ethical standards and duties, actual gatekeeping practices seem to vary significantly across counseling programs (McAdams III & Foster, 2007). Homrich (2009) reiterated that many counseling programs continue to ineffectively carry out their gatekeeping responsibilities and that inconsistency in gatekeeping procedures occurs across the profession.

Research has sought to bring objectivity and clarity to terminology, constructs, and what observable dispositions or behaviors are problematic, and therefore, in need of remediation or gatekeeping. Elman and Forrest (2007) discussed the varied uses of gatekeeping terminology and recommend moving away from the use of “impairment” towards “problems of professional competence” (p. 508). Gaubatz and Vera (2006) used the term “professionally deficient” to mean “trainees thought to be poorly or marginally suited for the field due to interpersonal, emotional, skills-based or other professional fitness reasons” (p. 32), while Foster and McAdams (2009) referred to nonacademic professional performance deficiencies. Most recently, researchers have defined deficiencies as “behaviors and dispositions that might be contradictory to the qualities of effective counselors (e.g. emotional maturity, empathy, and the ability to give and receive feedback)” (Swank & Smith-Adcock, 2013, p. 38). Henderson and Dufrene (2012) identified eight categories of non-academic behaviors that warranted gatekeeping most frequently: 1) ethical behaviors, 2) symptoms of a mental health diagnosis, 3) intrinsic characteristics, 4) counseling skills, 5) feedback, 6) self-reflective abilities, 7) personal difficulties, and 8) procedural compliance.

Ziomek-Daigle and Christensen (2010) proposed a four-phase model of gatekeeping in their grounded theory study and noted that the field was just beginning to develop theory on gatekeeping practices (rather than simply presenting a growing body of program-specific gatekeeping policies and practices). From the beginning, researchers have described gatekeeping as including sets of actions that both individual counselor educators and program faculty, as a unit, undertake in response to PPC (Frame & Stevens-Smith, 1995). Soon thereafter, other writers sought to strengthen and clarify

procedures as well as highlight the necessity for gatekeeping to be administered by an entire faculty or faculty committee rather than a singular faculty member (Baldo & Softas-Nall, 1997). These authors noted the benefits of a stronger rationale for decision-making and enhanced protection of faculty members for a more robust faculty approach. Subsequently, others have concurred that gatekeeping is better practiced as a program or department unit (especially remediation and dismissal decisions) with strong and widely understood policies, expectations and procedures in place (Dugger & Francis, 2014; Gaubatz & Vera, 2002; Henderson & Dufrene, 2011; Homrich, 2009; McAdams III & Foster, 2007; Rust et al., 2013).

Although faculty discussions, actions, and decisions are frequently mentioned, there is little research on how contextual factors such as faculty group dynamics, interpersonal relationships, and group decision-making may influence gatekeeping processes or outcomes. In regards to faculty, Homrich (2009) notes that effective gatekeeping may be hindered by “interpersonal or political dynamics” or that consensus might be difficult to reach due to differences in “values, training philosophy, and personal experiences” (p. 14). Jacobs, Huprich, and Grus (2011) note that gatekeeping involves difficult conversations that bring up many emotions and potential for interpersonal conflicts and thus it’s not surprising that faculty might be prone to avoidance. Additionally, Forrest et al. (2013) surveyed psychology training directors on their perspectives of faculty behaviors that help or hinder the program’s effectiveness in intervening with problematic students. They found sub-themes of ineffective faculty behaviors including: culture of avoidance, individualistic attitudes, and concerns about

multicultural competence. However, further research is warranted in how these relational/collegial and systemic influences affect gatekeeping.

Ecological/Systemic Approach

One fitting approach to comprehending the complex process of gatekeeping includes utilizing a contextual or systemic framework or theory to conceptualize gatekeeping. Forrest, Elman, and Shen Miller (2008) adapted Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model to highlight the multiple players and levels, reciprocal interactions, and overall complexity of gatekeeping and showed how using this ecological model can help inform better gatekeeping practices. They applied Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of nested systems: individual, microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem to intervening with trainee competence problems. Similarly, Goodrich and Shin (2013) utilized group systems theory adapted from Connors and Caple (2005) to explicate four levels operating in gatekeeping: intrapersonal, interpersonal, group as a whole, and supragroup. Lastly, researchers proposed a tentative model of contextual influences on faculty deliberations in addressing trainee competence with an intentional focus on diversity issues and cultural competence (Shen-Miller et al., 2012). They found that existing, unresolved conflicts regarding diversity within the faculty can negatively influence the process in a variety of ways. Interestingly and not coincidentally, Goodrich and Shin's (2013) research also was primarily focused on cultural competence in gatekeeping. These evolving models highlight that the individual/group actors, processes, and contexts are interdependent and require analysis with a systemic framework. It is hoped that considering gatekeeping as a complex 'process-in-context' will enhance the

profession's understanding of exactly how counselor educators engage in their gatekeeping role and responsibilities.

A meta-theory of gatekeeping using an ecological or systemic perspective is beyond the scope of this study, although I will analyze and contextualize data that points to meso-, exo-, and macro-system influences as they are disclosed by participants. Although the current study may inform an ecological model of gatekeeping, I will suggest a potential conceptualization of gatekeeping using the ecological model with the counselor educator as the individual, drawing from Forrest et al. (2008) and (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986). The microsystem would consist of the counselor educator's world of work and thus includes students, staff, faculty, adjunct instructors and supervisors. The microsystem would also incorporate the program's policies and practices for evaluation, remediation, and gatekeeping. Mesosystem influences could include: the larger department housing the counselor education program, the college or university (including legal counsel and upper administration) and its policies, other colleagues or departments on campus; internship/practicum agency sites and supervisors, alumni, and other personal/professional contacts. The exosystem might include: licensure/licensing boards; accreditation (CACREP) bodies; counselor education literature, standards, and culture; professional competency standards; ethical codes and professional association policies (ACA); media (mainstream, higher education-specific, and social); and legislation and court decisions. The macrosystem might encompass: cultural beliefs about counselors and counseling; attitudes about race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, mental health issues, and disability; consumer beliefs about education and "contracting" with an educational institution for a degree; and other

societal and environmental factors. Indeed, as already mentioned, macrosystem influences (e.g. diversity issues and multicultural competence) may play a larger-than-expected and crucial role in effective gatekeeping. Lastly, the chronosystem includes both the longitudinal perspective of a counselor educator's career and also the changes in society over time that affect all of the preceding systemic levels.

Faculty Dynamics and Decision-Making

Focusing on the microsystem of the counselor educator, this study seeks to use grounded theory to explore counselor educators' perspectives and experiences of the faculty/program-level influences on gatekeeping such as the existing interpersonal dynamics among faculty and how the faculty unit approaches decision-making. The data analysis may suggest a theory as to how interpersonal dynamics within the faculty microsystem influence the gatekeeping process. Specifically, this research study seeks to gather qualitative data from counselor educators about their perceptions of interpersonal and relational practices and dynamics they experience and engage in within a faculty group during gatekeeping, with the goal of establishing a grounded theory of how counselor educator microsystem influences affect gatekeeping. It is imperative to determine what counselor educators actually experience and do, and what factors impede or support them in fulfilling their gatekeeping responsibilities, in order to prevent the inappropriate graduation of unsuitable counseling trainees, i.e. "gateslipping" (Gaubatz, & Vera, 2002). The research literature is nascent in examining what actually occurs in faculty group processes of gatekeeping. After a brief examination of related literature in faculty decision-making, this paper will address the central research question.

A survey of the literature in faculty group decision-making reveals articles primarily focused on four areas: faculty governance, peer review, admissions, evaluation for promotion and tenure, and decision-making related to research and teaching. The limited research on faculty interactions and decision-making regarding admissions into master's and doctoral programs seems most relevant. Nagpal and Ritchie (2002) found that although counselor education faculty had consensus on admissions criteria they differed in their individual and group decision-making processes by using subjective and objective information differently and by moderating group input to either validate or change their individual decision. Posselt (2015) examined doctoral admissions in different disciplines (economics, philosophy, physics) and found that faculty decision-making and evaluative criteria followed the epistemology and “disciplinary logic” of the department; e.g. economists valued quantitative data, were more black/white in their rationale, and sought risk aversion vs. philosophers who valued writing samples, subjectivity, and inquiry. These findings contribute to the body of knowledge that different academic disciplines “define and even determine” (Posselt, 2015, p. 808) faculty evaluation and decision-making, while also highlighting their “macro-micro” (p. 825) and contextual influences. This research corroborates anecdotal data from psychology and counselor educators that the helping professional fields’ humanistic values (i.e. considering the humanity of each student) contributes to gatekeeping being especially difficult for faculty (Jacobs et al., 2011; Johnson et al., 2008; Sowbel, 2012; Vacha-Haase et al., 2004).

While a review of the research on group dynamics and decision-making is beyond this study, an expert on decision-making in academia notes that it can be difficult because

faculty fear “looking stupid, alienating colleagues, losing trust, being displaced, hurting someone, burning bridges, and increasing our workload” (Cook, 2012, p. 17). The literature also includes descriptions of how stressful academia is and that gatekeeping might be further burdensome on faculty (Johnson et al., 2008; Kerl & Eichler, 2007; Vacha-Haase et al., 2004). Tenure status is another influential variable in groups of counseling faculty and studies have found that being untenured is associated with increased occupational stress, which may negatively impact performance (Hill, 2009) and that more gateslipping occurs with untenured faculty (Gaubatz & Vera, 2002). This finding may, in part, be due to increased fears of retribution in the form of poor evaluations, complaints, or even legal action from unhappy students (Frame & Stevens-Smith, 1995; Johnson et al., 2008; Kerl & Eichler, 2007).

Research reveals that group decision-making continues to lead to better outcomes than individual decision-making but that a ‘suboptimality’ exists in that group decision-making does not lead to optimal results and some processes lead to both good and bad outcomes (Kerr & Tindale, 2004). For example, the practice of ‘majority rules’ can lead to both good and bad outcomes and research has considered this longstanding practice from an evolutionary standpoint as “fast and frugal”; however, this mindset and weighing efficiency over process can also lead to groupthink. Other lines of study include the salience of information sharing or processing in group decision-making (Bento, 1996; Kerr & Tindale, 2004) and the strong influence of biases or attitudes in decision-making (Bento, 1996; Kerr & Tindale, 2004; Medeiros et al., 2014; Posselt, 2015). Lastly, Cottone (2001) notes that most ethical decision-making theories are focused on the individual, but ethical decision-making should be conceived of as more of a relational

practice that seeks levels of consensus as an “ongoing interactive process” (p. 42). This focus on bias and attitudes dovetails with the recent interest in how cultural competence and diversity issues affect gatekeeping, as previously mentioned.

As this review of the literature demonstrates, many gaps exist in understanding how counselor educators function as a group when carrying out gatekeeping responsibilities. The purpose of this grounded theory study is to more fully understand how faculty dynamics and group decision-making, as experienced by counselor educators, affect the gatekeeping process. The gatekeeping process is defined as how counselor educators and counseling programs identify, remediate, and/or dismiss students with PPC. It is hoped that the theory generated from the data will not only explain how faculty decision-making affects the gatekeeping process but also inform the growing literature that applies a systemic or contextual perspective towards gatekeeping and, finally, continue to shed light on counselor educators’ lived experiences of gatekeeping. Counselor educators, supervisors, counseling students, future clients, and the public will benefit from the development of a grounded theory of this aspect of the gatekeeping process because this new knowledge will increase the field’s understanding of the gatekeeping process and thus increase gatekeeping efficacy.

The central research question is: How do counselor educators experience microsystemic dynamics in the context of gatekeeping for PPC in counselor education programs? A secondary question is: how do these group/microsystem processes interact with their related contexts to affect the gatekeeping process? Relevant sub-questions include:

- 1) What is the interpersonal experience of counselor educators implementing gatekeeping for a student with PPC?
- 2) What external factors influence a counselor educator's decision-making process?
- 3) What microsystem dynamics might interfere with a counselor educator following established gatekeeping policies and procedures?
- 4) How do counselor educators work and interact with their faculty colleagues when a gatekeeping situation arises?
- 5) Who takes leadership and responsibility for initiating and carrying out gatekeeping duties within the CE program?
- 6) What is the group decision-making process in a gatekeeping situation?
- 7) What factors of the group decision-making process influence the counselor educator's participation and decision-making in the gatekeeping process?

Methods

Grounded theory research examines a process by collecting data from relevant participants and then developing a theory grounded in the collected data (Creswell, 2013). The counselor education field has only a preliminary grounded theory on the entirety of the gatekeeping process (from pre-admission to remediation outcome, see Ziomek-Daigle & Christensen, 2010). This grounded theory study seeks to create an explanatory theory of what happens in the gatekeeping process at the individual counselor educator and program levels by gathering data on a number of factors that may influence the gatekeeping process (especially at the microsystem level). Using grounded theory data analysis and inductive reasoning, this study will build a theory of gatekeeping

grounded in counselor educators' experiences of their gatekeeping role within the context of their counselor education program or department. The growing appreciation for the complex nature of gatekeeping – namely, that individual actions/interactions, group/systemic processes, and the broader context (cultural, historical, environmental, etc.) are all interwoven and interdependent – necessitates a qualitative approach solely capable of delving deeply into this subjective and complex phenomena. Since an explanatory theory emanating from the data is sought, grounded theory is the most appropriate approach for the research question at hand (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 2013).

My research worldview/paradigm is constructivist in that I acknowledge that there are few universal truths; reality is relative and subjective, and that knowledge is constructed/co-constructed. The other philosophical paradigm that influences this study is pragmatism because research should be practical to the field. Researcher reflexivity requires that I acknowledge that this research study arises from both personal and professional interest as a former master's student, counselor, adjunct faculty, doctoral student, director of counseling, clinical supervisor and public citizen and that I likely carry many assumptions and biases. Over the last 18 years, I have witnessed students and counselors who did not seem appropriate for the counseling field and I have wondered how they were able to graduate from a counselor education program. More recently, I have observed, consulted on, and been involved with gatekeeping situations as an adjunct instructor, an internship supervisor, and as a director/clinician of the counseling services at a university that has a counselor education program. I strongly believe in our field's ethical duty to protect the public by effectively fulfilling our gatekeeping role and I am

hopeful about making a contribution to the counseling field. While the developing literature on applying an ecological or systemic perspective on gatekeeping has resonated with me, I will follow established qualitative research practices to endeavor to only draw conclusions and generate theory from the data provided by participants and not my own beliefs.

Participants and Procedures

This study collected data from a sample of counselor educators who have been directly involved with multiple gatekeeping situations for counseling students with PPC. Thus, purposive sampling included this important criterion. Volunteer/opportunity and snowball sampling were also used to recruit participants. Adjunct faculty was not included because they have a more limited role in gatekeeping. Inclusion criteria included: current tenure-track or core faculty in a CACREP-accredited counselor education program in the United States, involvement in at least two gatekeeping situations for PPC, and the ability to commit to in-depth interviews. Exclusion criteria included: not willing to fully participate, adjunct faculty, faculty from a mental health discipline besides counseling, faculty who have not been involved in gatekeeping, and counselor educators unfamiliar with gatekeeping in their counselor education program.

Considerations regarding trust and rapport were necessary because participants provided data that might reflect poorly on their particular programs, colleagues, or themselves, and since the counselor education world is small and interconnected, participants may have some initial reluctance to venture fully into this research study. Besides a thorough informed consent process, strong confidentiality guarantees, and the

IRB approval, I spent time building sufficient rapport with participants in order to gain their confidence, establish trust, and generate a rich and robust data collection.

After gaining approval from the Oregon State University IRB, participant recruitment occurred in the form of electronic outreach to prospective participants. Modes of data collection included in-person, online/video-conferenced, email and/or phone interview responses. An online Qualtrics survey collected participant demographic information and salient characteristics of participants' counselor education programs in order to better understand the participants' context. Participants were interviewed twice (in-person or via technology) with interviews ranging from 45 minutes to 1.25 hours. After transcription of each interview, data analysis commenced, which then informed further data collection as needed. Using this recursive loop of data collection and data analysis, theoretical sampling was followed until data saturation was reached (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Of the 12 participants, seven identified as female and five as male. Eight identified as white, one as Black or African-American, one as Hispanic or Latino/a, one as Asian and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and one as Multiple. Six participants are tenured and six are not yet tenured (or not on the tenure-track) and likewise, six have been a counselor educator between 0 – 11 years and six have been a counselor educator for more than 12 years. Participants hailed from all over the United States and using the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) regions, six participants were from the Western region, one from the North Central region, two from the Southern region, and three from the North Atlantic region.

Participants represent a number of different CACREP specialty areas with the predominant two being clinical mental health counseling and school counseling.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted by the primary researcher with each participant. These are a few of the interview questions (see Appendices for both sets of interview questions):

- 1) Tell me about your experiences implementing gatekeeping for students in your program?
- 2) What internal or external factors influence your decision-making process?
- 3) How do faculty or program dynamics influence the gatekeeping process?
- 4) How do you and your faculty colleagues work together during the gatekeeping process?
- 5) Any other thoughts on your experiences with gatekeeping?

Data Analysis

Creswell (2013) depicts data analysis in a grounded theory study as a continual loop of data collection, analysis, checking, revising, and often, further data collection, until saturation is reached. The researcher used Corbin and Strauss' (2008) updated systematic model of grounded theory analysis and techniques such as collecting rich data, constant comparison, theoretical sampling, continual/concurrent data collection and data analysis, open/axial/selective coding, memo writing, and continuous theory development from the data to insure that the developed theory truly reflected the data. After the first round of interviews, open coding was done on all transcripts by the primary author. Preliminary axial coding began as categories were constructed from the developed codes. Initial memoing helped to clarify the emerging categories and concepts. Second round

interview questions were developed to address gaps in the emerging concepts and related conceptual structure (the faculty microsystem). Second round interviews were partially open coded and then selectively coded to fill in gaps and achieve theoretical saturation. Theoretical memos articulated the connections between main categories, the developing theory, and the emerging model of the Faculty Microsystem.

Trustworthiness

We followed the following strategies taken from Creswell (2013), Lincoln and Guba (1985), and Morrow (2005) to maximize the trustworthiness/credibility of the research study. Prolonged engagement was accomplished by learning the counselor educator culture, increasing trust with participants, and knowing the context in order to obtain the best data with the least distortions possible. Peer debriefing with informed, disinterested, and understanding colleagues helped to insure quality, fairness, and accuracy of the research process. Researcher reflexivity or acknowledging one's perspective, framework, biases, and experiences and how they might influence the current research study was accomplished via keeping a journal throughout the study, which is important for establishing credibility. Member checking – where the researcher returns to the participants systematically with ongoing portions of the research study such as initial data analyses, interpretation, theories, and the final written product in order for participants to comment on the accuracy and validity of the findings based on the data they supplied – is seen by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as the “most crucial” of all techniques in the body of qualitative research methodology to insure credibility.

Member checking was performed by providing participants an opportunity to review their interview transcripts for errors or clarifications and then to review the

emerging grounded theory. 8 of 12 participants provided feedback that they strongly agreed with the resulting theory of collaboration and the model of the Faculty Microsystem which they thought accurately represented their experiences of gatekeeping.

Results

A core category of *collaboration – sharing the burden* emerged from participants' rich and varied descriptions of their perceptions of faculty dynamics during gatekeeping. Participants experienced this occurring as a result of the interactions between two microsystemic conditions and two microsystemic processes. The two microsystemic conditions are: *faculty cohesion* and *faculty capability*. The two main processes are: *individual CE actions – engaging/avoiding gatekeeping* and *collective CE actions – helping/hindering collaboration*. Figure 3.1 illustrates the complex interactions between the proposed conditions and processes within a “conditional/consequential matrix” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p.90) which we have conceptualized as the Faculty Microsystem for Gatekeeping in Counselor Education Programs.

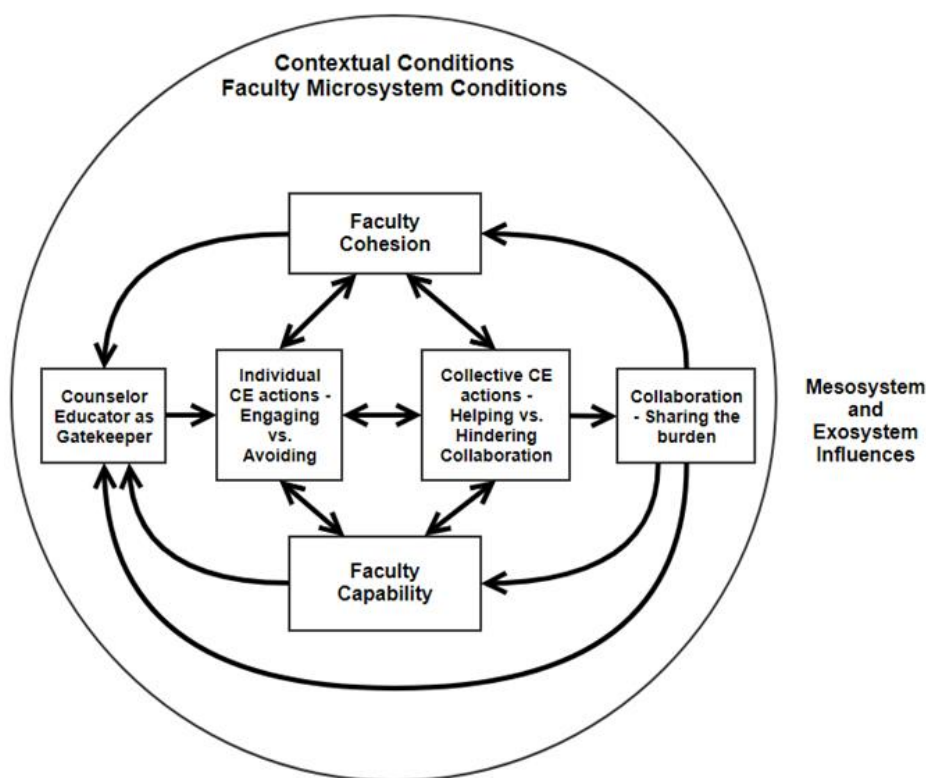


Figure 3. The Faculty Microsystem for Gatekeeping in Counselor Education Programs

Faculty Microsystemic Condition: Faculty Cohesion

Faculty cohesion is a central experience of participants that also seems to be an essential microsystemic condition influencing *collaboration – sharing the burden*. Participants perceived, influenced and experienced *faculty cohesion* as an evolving contextual condition within their counselor education program. It is a felt sense and experience of closeness and working well with their colleagues which ranges from low to high. *Faculty cohesion* is comprised of trust, support, respecting competence and shared motivation for gatekeeping. Each underlying quality varies and they often overlap and interact with one another. Participants often perceive these qualities in clusters, noting that the colleagues they trust the most are also the most supportive; or the colleagues

whose competence they respect, they also regard as having a shared (high) level of motivation for gatekeeping.

Trust vs. lack of trust.

The importance of having trust with colleagues arose repeatedly from participants. As this participant with over 20 years in the field said, "... if I think I'm over-identified with a student... I have to trust my colleague that they're not going to think less of me... if I'm sharing that. And that they will be respectful of what I'm sharing about my perception". Since gatekeeping involves numerous interactive processes, trust seems to be essential. Another experienced participant noted, "I think that goes back to the trust, feeling like you are safe and that there won't be retaliation or gossip." And this third participant with 12 years in the field added:

The colleagues that I have professional and healthy relationships with, they listen, they are sounding boards, they help to brainstorm. They provide a *safe forum* [emphasis added] to talk about a situation and really kind of flesh it out, and make sure that there isn't personal bias and it is objective...

Trust does not seem to be equally felt for all colleagues. This participant with 5 years of experience gave this example, "I really find that there is [*sic*] only three of us who I can really trust, myself and two others. I can't say that the other three are bad people, but I count on them for different things." Low trust can significantly inhibit participants from engaging in gatekeeping processes as this counselor educator of 20 years stated:

Colleagues who were like banging on tables and slamming doors... I'm not going to be in that process.... I don't trust that. I don't trust that I'd be heard; I don't trust that I wouldn't then get really a lot of negativity directed my way...

Consequently, the trust a participant feels for their colleagues can vary greatly and negatively or positively affect the condition of *faculty cohesion* and the sense of *collaboration – sharing the burden*. Having sufficient trust seems very important for gatekeeping collaboration.

Support from colleagues.

Support from colleagues can manifest in different ways and is important in sustaining participants through the difficult work and emotional challenges of gatekeeping. One participant, a 7-year counselor educator, noted, “Our faculty dynamics quite frankly are amazing. I mean I consider myself really blessed.” Another participant, a counselor educator with over 25 years of experience, noted how the emotional difficulties of gatekeeping are mediated by sharing the burden with colleagues:

So, the emotional part... is I know that I'm not making someone feel good; I'm making them feel bad. It takes some guts to do... that's why it's good that there's three of us... because it's easy to fold sort of and [say] “well, it's not that bad” or something. But when we have three of us there, it goes better...

This collegiality and mutual support seems to have a positive effect on individual participants and the overall gatekeeping process. The inverse of having these aspects of faculty cohesion also seems to be true, as evidenced below.

Insufficient support from colleagues can have deleterious effects on gatekeepers as this counselor educator and coordinator with over 12 years in the field illustrated:

I don't always have the sense of... complete support from them... after... we make a decision... for them to kind of circle back and say, ‘Hey, how did that go? Are you okay? Do you want to talk about this?’

Respecting gatekeeping competence.

Participants reported that *respecting gatekeeping competence* in their colleagues facilitates valuable consultation and feedback. This participant with 10 years in the field observed, “We are able to move through it... quickly because people do have that background and expertise and experience.” Along with respecting colleagues’ competence, some participants acknowledged and appreciated the diversity of perspectives among their colleagues, as this program director and associate professor of 7 years stated:

We all really respect each other and I think we all value each other’s opinions, [it] really helps. I count myself really lucky to be able to work with 3 other individuals whose opinion I really value... It’s nice to be able to have conversations about it, “Yeah I don’t see that, but help me understand where this is coming from for you.”

By respecting their competence and taking their colleagues’ concerns seriously, further action may be taken whereas if a concern is minimized, further action seems less likely. This hindering of the next appropriate gatekeeping action would seem to hinder the overall gatekeeping process.

Participants also perceived a lack of respect for colleagues’ gatekeeping competence for reasons such as lacking self-awareness as this new counselor educator said, “It’s very challenging when my peers can’t separate their counselor role from their educator role... when they empathize too much with the individual and... don’t have the self-awareness around their own issues.” Other participants perceived a general lack of understanding about gatekeeping, as this counselor educator of over 10 years observed:

But the other folks that are in the program don’t... understand gatekeeping... They don’t have a solid understanding of what supervision is. They don’t know that there are supervision theories and models.

Thus, a level of *respect for gatekeeping competence* within one's colleagues is important toward further gatekeeping actions, especially the collective actions that counselor education program faculty undertake collaboratively. Each aspect of faculty cohesion seems to impact both individual counselor educator gatekeeping actions as well as the collective actions that programs undertake.

Shared motivation for gatekeeping.

A sense of camaraderie was reported by participants who experienced a shared motivation for gatekeeping with their colleagues. Participants associated this shared level of motivation with a shared sense of workload or responsibility for gatekeeping. These two related concepts affect both *faculty cohesion* and *faculty capability* with shared motivation part of *faculty cohesion* and shared workload part of *faculty capability*.

This counselor educator of over 25 years said, "We absolutely share the gatekeeping because nobody does it [alone].... Our gatekeeping thing is shared, yeah it's equally distributed." Another participant, a counselor educator of 20 years stated, "So it becomes the whole clinical faculty. Then we feel strongly that the student needs to know that this isn't just one faculty member. That all faculty have these concerns. We present a united front..." The importance of a sense of faculty cohesion in doing gatekeeping seems evident.

Some participants also associated motivation for gatekeeping with being invested in the quality of the counselor education program, as this counselor educator of 15 years noted, "I think it reflects the same kind of emotional investment... why I'm here is to strive for quality.... I feel that similarity among the colleagues where I feel the support for gatekeeping issues."

At its worst, participants who lacked this shared motivation with their colleagues also experienced a much lower sense of *faculty cohesion*, as this counselor educator of 5 years posed, “Are you still a counselor educator, do you still care about counseling or do you care more about the minimum that you have to do to teach a class, and go home and get paid?” This low level of shared motivation leads to less-than-ideal gatekeeping experiences which over time further deteriorate *faculty cohesion*, until a sense of isolation is experienced, as this counselor educator of 9 years stated:

I am the only one who understands the importance of gatekeeping. I am the only one that puts any effort and specific attention to gatekeeping. I’m completely isolated and this includes efforts to try to get buy-in and support from faculty, as well as the department chair, as well as upper administration. They, none of them want anything to do with this.

Taken together – trust, support, respect, and shared motivation are key ingredients to the crucial microsystemic condition of *faculty cohesion*, which is very influential on counselor educators’ experience of *collaboration – sharing the burden*.

Faculty Microsystemic Condition: Faculty Capability

Participants reported numerous observations about their colleagues that we conceptualized as gatekeeping *capability*; a concept which can be applied to a single counselor educator and to a group of faculty within a counselor education program. Capability ebbs and flows over time due to the influences on its constituent components of having competence, having capacity, and having effective leadership and effective policies and procedures.

Having competence.

As previously discussed, counselor educators may or may not possess gatekeeping competence. Participants who perceived their colleagues as having

competence reported seeking them out for support and consultation. This counselor educator of 15 years noted:

When we do our initial gatekeeping, we have enough professional respect for one another that if a faculty member has a really strong negative reaction to a student and persists with that even if others didn't have the same reaction, we'll honor that person's perception, does that make sense?

Participants who did not perceive gatekeeping competence in their colleagues did not seek them out for consultation as readily. They perceived their colleagues as lacking in competence when their colleagues had difficulty separating the counselor role from the counselor educator role, were unaware of their own limitations, did not understand gatekeeping, or otherwise were not able to effectively and consistently implement gatekeeping actions. These perceptions of colleagues' competence or incompetence seemed to accrue over time as participants experienced various gatekeeping situations with their colleagues.

Having capacity.

Capacity encompasses having the time, energy and resources to undertake gatekeeping. Participants were all busy as this counselor educator with 15 years in the field said, "The challenges of being a faculty member are that you have 27 hours in your day and that's all. You decide how you use it, so it's really the squeaky wheel sometimes." This counselor educator with over 20 years in the field explained, "We take a look at the resources available at any given time, by clinical faculty... There may just not be the time, energy, support and resources to do [gatekeeping]."

Some participants found that gatekeeping may be difficult in a program that prioritizes other needs such as producing scholarship or maintaining enrollment and tuition revenue. A counselor educator may have adequate gatekeeping motivation and

competence but other demands may diminish their *capacity* for gatekeeping. A program with strong *faculty cohesion* and *capability* may weather individual fluctuations in *capacity*. However, the opposite may not be true- even the highest levels of individual counselor educator *capacity* could be negatively impacted by low *faculty cohesion* or low *faculty capability* conditions, which would weaken collaboration.

Having effective leadership and effective policies and procedures.

The last two key components of *faculty capability* are *having effective leadership & effective policies and procedures*. Counselor educators seem to engage in gatekeeping when this aspect of *faculty capability* was present as noted by this counselor educator with over 25 years in the field, “The clearer we got about... knowing what we were going to do, how we were going to do it, the process, who is going to do what, what’s the timeline, all of those things I think has really helped in the process.” Additionally, participants reported that having program leadership that takes gatekeeping seriously enhances *faculty capability* and sometimes this improvement came about due to participants’ direct influence, as this counselor educator of 7 years explained, “So, following some of those earlier decisions and earlier experiences, I subsequently became the program director and because of that our policies and procedures have tightened up.” Another participant, a counselor educator and program coordinator with 15 years in the field, echoed this experience of having a hand in improving their program’s gatekeeping practices through their leadership role:

So, I’ve helped to develop a remediation policy, I have helped to refine some practices and processes. I’ve been program coordinator off and on, a couple of times over the last decade and in that role have refined documents or have led faculty discussions in ways that made it more clear what we were doing and what we were not.

Faculty Microsystemic Process: Individual CE Actions – Engaging vs. Avoiding

The two faculty microsystemic processes: *Individual CE actions – engaging vs. avoiding* and *Collective CE actions – helping vs. hindering collaboration* are grounded in participants' reported perceptions and experiences of themselves and their colleagues during gatekeeping and were conceptualized by the researchers as the two main processes occurring in the faculty microsystem during gatekeeping.

Individual CE actions are those gatekeeping actions that counselor educators undertake, either well or poorly or not at all which lead to *engaging or avoiding gatekeeping*. *Individual CE actions* include effectively monitoring and evaluating students, following established practices, and having consistency. Counselor educators monitor and evaluate students' performance as this counselor educator of 12 years and coordinator stated, "I think it's really important that we develop folks to... make it through that gate... Lots of feedback to the students and... being transparent with them." Participants perceived a need for counselor educators to get involved with their students as this counselor educator with 9 years in the field stated,

Part of the gatekeeping responsibility is to also have an active level of involvement as a counselor educator with the students that are presenting with problematic behaviors or concerns. And really make sure that you as the counselor educator have given all of the time and energy and effort that you can to really understand as much as possible about what's going on for that student related to their training.

Lastly, all participants noted the importance of intervening appropriately when they perceive PPC, but some participants also noticed variability in their colleagues' perception of PPC (and thus the likelihood of any intervention). This variability has implications for microsystemic conditions (e.g. *faculty cohesion* and *capability*) and on subsequent individual processes (such as giving a student feedback) and subsequent

collective processes (such as contributing in a faculty meeting) and thus on the overall sense of collaboration. This counselor educator of 2 years described:

I think some faculty have a greater threshold for what they would consider a questionable behavior or incompetence or distress or impairment.... I think there's a kind of a range in what we feel rises to the level that we need to maybe intervene in some way.

Participants reported observing their colleagues avoiding gatekeeping by the following means: passing students along, ignoring potential PPC, avoiding taking action, actively refusing to perform gatekeeping and avoiding conflict. For participants invested in gatekeeping, these avoiding actions (or lack of appropriate actions) were frustrating, as this counselor educator of 5 years stated:

We have people who like to talk like that, and when it comes down to... fill[ing] out the paperwork and... need[ing] to have that meeting, then everybody kind of retreats. I think in theory... everybody... has these hardline expectations, dispositions and benchmarks, etc.... But when... we need some documentation, then they say, "Well, you know, the person... did good on the last exam, so [I] can't see anything." And we're like, ugh, so it does make it hard.

Participants perceived that passing students along was a major way that their colleagues avoided gatekeeping. Participants observed colleagues rationalizing this behavior as recounted by this participant:

One of the professors told me, "You know what, I think the profession will weed the students out, so, let's just get them out of our program, let's graduate them and the profession will take care of it for us.... If they are not fit for the job, then they won't get a job and we say, let's not worry about it."

Another example of avoiding gatekeeping occurs when colleagues ignored potential PPC as this counselor educator of over 20 years pointed out, "They really didn't want to have to go into those struggles. So... it's sort of like 'let's just ignore that problem' vs. 'great let's take a look at it.'" Lastly, participants perceived their colleagues

to be avoiding gatekeeping at times due to their overall avoidant tendencies, as this participant with 7 years' experience commented about a colleague:

[She is] all about the path of least resistance, like whatever it takes in this moment to avoid conflict.... She will just say, "Okay, _____ whatever you say, whatever you think is right, I agree with whatever you say." Even though you know she doesn't. She'll still back me, but it's like... what is she really doing? She's really just trying not to deal with this at all.

Clearly, the *individual CE actions* of *engaging* vs. *avoiding gatekeeping* have direct implications for collaboration and also seem to influence levels of *faculty cohesion* and *faculty capability*.

The other component of *individual CE actions* is the extent to which participants engage their colleagues in consultation; a mechanism whose importance has previously been discussed. Relying on colleagues for critical feedback or validation seems to depend on having sufficient *faculty cohesion* (especially trust, respect, shared motivation) and *faculty capability* (especially capacity and competence). Counselor educators seem to seek consultation and feedback as a check against their individual perspectives which might be flawed or inaccurate, as this participant, a counselor educator with 2 years in the field stated:

The first thing I would always do is... consult with a trusted peer to say, "Hey, I have this student and this is my reaction, what do you think?" And sometimes it's like, "yeah, I don't see it," and sometimes it's like, "yeah, me too."

Participants' perceived such consultation not only improves the quality of gatekeeping but it also benefits the consultee, as this counselor educator of 12 years noted, "It leads me closer to collaboration with colleagues in gatekeeping.... I rely on my colleagues sometimes for their objectivity in particular. Some of my colleagues... are like counterpoints for me." By reinforcing the interactive and collegial aspects of

gatekeeping, a greater sense of collaboration can be developed. In this way, *individual CE actions* of *engaging gatekeeping* strengthen aspects of *faculty cohesion* and the reverse is also true: strong *faculty cohesion* enhances *individual CE actions* and as this next section elucidates, has an even stronger effect on *collective CE actions*.

Faculty Microsystemic Process: Collective CE Actions – Helping vs. Hindering Collaboration

Collective CE actions are those gatekeeping actions that counselor educators undertake with one another as a group and range from *hindering collaboration* to *helping collaboration*. *Collective CE actions – helping vs. hindering collaboration* is the most comprehensive category and the most important set of processes that leads to *collaboration – sharing the burden* and consists of these four sub-processes: *interactive and inclusive group process*, *thoughtful decision making processes*, *sharing the workload*, and *following effective policies and procedures*.

Interactive and inclusive group process.

One of the mainstays of gatekeeping in counselor education programs is the collective approach that involves counselor educators meeting regularly to discuss gatekeeping issues. All participants' reported following some version of this practice, therefore the quality of this aspect of gatekeeping would seem to have an effect on a program's overall gatekeeping process. Participants reported having "a group process and place for collaboration that [is] really open to new ideas and suggestions and strategies." However, this counselor educator and coordinator with 15 years of experience noted, "Even if we are all in agreement, it's not an easy process and it can be long, drawn-out, contentious- difficult in a lot of ways."

Counselor educators undergo a substantial amount of discussion in gatekeeping meetings, with one challenge being how well or poorly the group handles the inevitable differences in perspectives. Participants, for the most part, appreciated the diversity of professional backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives that gave rise to the differing perceptions and opinions offered during gatekeeping discussions. Some counselor education programs seemed to handle these differences well by respecting, valuing, and listening to the various opinions, and working towards an appropriate next step. Other programs did not conduct themselves as cooperatively, as reported by participants.

Fruitful discussions can occur when a participant who holds a diverging view can state “that I [feel] listened to and also that I can listen to them... we don’t get into fighting or argument... If we have a difference that we can recognize that there must be some valid reason for those differences and really try and explore those.” Working through differences via healthy challenging of colleagues seemed to be valued in some counselor education programs, but in order to achieve this high level of *interactive and inclusive group process*, a strong level of *faculty cohesion* (mainly trust) must be part of the faculty microsystem, as this counselor educator of 7 years noted:

I think it’s super important to challenge and be challenged by your colleagues [when] gatekeeping.... I don’t know exactly how [another team] works. But... people on that team seem to be very much more careful with each other.... They work more in their little silos on that team, and I see how it would be very easy for student issues to slip through... I’ve seen it happen where faculty... do what they want and there is no check...

Colleagues provide important validation, feedback and support through this collaborative process as this participant, a counselor educator of 15 years, noted:

If I feel super strongly about [a student situation] and say that, I feel like my colleagues would support... a big strong reaction to something... Even

if I can't quite name it, usually somebody else is able to. But even if they're not, they'll say 'I picked up this, saw that and saw the other'; so that's usually enough to validate each other's experience."

Sometimes, participants implicitly believe the perspectives of some of their colleagues as this counselor educator with 7 years in the field stated:

If _____ comes and says, "You know what, I'm really worried about student X." I'm like, "Me too then, I'm totally worried too. I trust your judgment absolutely."....There's some credibility, yeah because I've seen her judgment before. I've seen her in the past say, "I'm worried about this student" and she's right.

This level of trust and respect in a colleague's competence leads to further gatekeeping action. At other times, participants observed the opposite reaction from their colleagues who seemingly minimized or rejected the perspective of another colleague as this counselor educator of over 20 years observed:

It would go like this, Professor X, is saying that they are having a problem with the student. Okay, if Professor Y, or Professor Z weren't having a problem with the student, then they would say, "Well, I am not having a problem with that student," and that would be the end of the story.

These two perspectives represented the wide range of how a diverging opinion might be handled by their colleagues and demonstrate how the contextual conditions of *faculty cohesion* and *faculty capability* affect the potential for collaboration. Instances of encouraging interaction and inclusive dialogue promote *collaboration*, whereas inhibited dialogue negatively affects the group process, thereby hindering *collaboration*.

Another example of hindering interaction occurs when participants perceive their colleagues to be delaying the process or stalling. These colleagues, perhaps due to their own lack of gatekeeping competence, motivation or capacity seemed to be thwarting effective *collective CE actions*, as this counselor educator of 9 years described:

The ones who are not as helpful, those are the folks that are going to... block the process using whatever skills and tools they can think of, which is unfortunate. Because... they are just so outwardly delay tactics.... It's a lot of... "Well, this is just a lot... I don't think that we should be rushing decisions... I think we should wait until the next meeting so we can all have a chance to think about this."

Participants stated that they can usually perceive the difference between appropriate waiting and observing which reportedly happened often vs. outright stalling or unnecessary delay which seemed more indicative of avoiding gatekeeping and hindering collaboration.

Thoughtful decision making processes.

A thoughtful decision making process includes accounting for the various kinds of interpersonal dynamics such as differences in seniority and power. Taking into account how seniority, whether represented by differences in position, tenure/rank, experience, etc., affected the decision making process led to a more thoughtful process whereas unaddressed and unhealthy faculty dynamics (most often arising from unchecked or unaddressed power/seniority issues) seemed to hinder the decision making process. As this counselor educator of 15 years observed, many participants perceived seniority as both an asset and a challenge during gatekeeping because "there were faculty members in senior positions who were carrying the water... so I felt supported there. But... a junior colleague might wonder if they should say or not say [their opinion] based on their own security professionally." Clearly, the weight of a senior faculty member's opinion is a factor that needs to be taken into account during deliberation and decision making.

At its worst, multiple participants experienced how unchecked power thwarted thoughtful decision making, as described by this counselor educator with over 25 years in the field:

So, if a faculty member had more power... they would have more influence on decisions about a person... continuing on in the program whether they defined something as a problem or not. Those of us who had less power, kind of went... along ... it was very hard to stand up and to challenge a more senior or more powerful faculty member when they maybe didn't get along with a particular student.

Interrupting this unhealthy dynamic would be difficult requiring intentional actions well supported by high levels of *faculty cohesion* and *faculty capability*. The existence of power/seniority issues in decision making also seemed to affect the perception of the value of consensus as either a validating measure or a possible avoidance of *thoughtful decision making*.

Participants reported often striving for consensus in decision making regarding gatekeeping as this counselor educator with over 25 years of experience observed, "all of us see it the same way" whether that consensus was easily reached or not. Other noted some difficulty regarding reaching consensus, "We strive for consensus in almost everything we do... I think that almost gets in our way in a lot of things, frankly." However, participants reported that they and their colleagues also move forward without consensus, taking note of the opposing opinion. If time and energy allowed (*faculty capability*) and *faculty cohesion* promoted sufficient interaction, then a thoughtful decision making process could occur, which this counselor educator described as "the faculty were able to work out compromises and to articulate things that we all agreed with." Arriving at a healthy consensus especially when diverging opinions and perspectives exist at the start seems to require adequate time, trust and motivation (all aspects of *faculty conditions*).

Consensus can be a powerful reinforcing mechanism but it may also promote less than thoughtful decision making processes as participants sometimes found "It's easier

just to go along for the sake of group cohesion rather than to have open conflict.”

Another experienced counselor educator expanded on that thought:

And this isn't right because I think faculty cohesion is... real important... it's something that... oftentimes motivates people to try and get along but that can also create problems because then you don't confront people who have a different perspective about a student. Students sometimes get trounced in that.

Perhaps the least thoughtful decision making processes occur when false or hurried consensus occurs as a result of unchecked power dynamics. Participants observed that, at times, individual counselor educators have been able to move forcibly to remove students who perhaps should not have been gatekept, as this counselor educator with over 25 years in the field described:

Sadly I think a lot of gatekeeping can be vindictive... and I've had faculty like that that would have brought people in.... it's their own ego.... especially when you got a bad faculty member and... then that faculty member is out to get that student. That's a mess, that's not gatekeeping, that's something else.

It is evident that when aspects of *faculty cohesion* and *collective CE processes* go awry, something that is “not gatekeeping” can occur, to the detriment of students and arguably all stakeholders involved. Fortunately, this is not the norm but it is highlighted here as the antithesis of thoughtful decision making processes.

Sharing the workload.

Sharing the workload, in a way that feels sustainable and equitable and importantly, that fits the resources and expectations of counselor educators, is an important *collective CE action* that promotes *collaboration - sharing the burden* of gatekeeping. The sharing of the gatekeeping workload seemed to vary from: programs that shared responsibility as equitably as possible, to programs where it was understood

certain faculty, such as the program coordinator took on more of the work, to programs where the burden on the program leadership seemed unsustainable because other colleagues were not pulling their weight.

In many programs, the program leadership (e.g. the program director/coordinator or a clinical coordinator) took on a large share of the gatekeeping workload. This participant, a counselor educator of 4 years said, "... as program director, there were some things that were expected to be done and that work she would be responsible for..." Most often this work was shared collaboratively although program coordinators also felt that their colleagues were often putting too much on them or shirking some gatekeeping responsibility as this program director reportedly was told, "... 'Well, you're the program director so it's really on you to deal with it.'" In those cases, participants tried to involve the appropriate colleagues, as this coordinator and counselor educator of 12 years stated:

I try to confront them as well not in a harsh or aggressive way, but just
 "Oh! You noticed this in your class; did you say anything to the student?
 Could you meet with the student, give them feedback?"

The extent to which sharing the workload was accomplished and understood by participants seemed to affect the sense of *faculty cohesion*. When the *sharing of the workload* seemed fair and sustainable, participants felt more *faculty cohesion* and when the *sharing of the workload* was perceived as inequitable, it led program leaders to feel "the energy that folks are really okay and prefer to have the program coordinator be the person holding that bag."

Participants understood the sharing of the gatekeeping workload as being similar to the sharing of workload for other program responsibilities, as this counselor educator of 5 years noted:

It is no different than any other program responsibility in the sense [that] the people who are working hard at gatekeeping are the same people who are working hard on program development, curriculum development, attending outside meetings with the college or university or community-based meetings, writing additional scholarship work and policy papers...

Another participant, with 15 years in the field, agreed that “people who are super-invested do the lion’s share of the work and other people do what’s needed to be done and pass off the rest or they just don’t do it.” Experiencing this inequity in workload tends to diminish the sense of shared investment/motivation which is a key factor in *faculty cohesion*, thus inequity in workload that is not well understood or accepted by participants can potentially erode *faculty cohesion*.

Following effective policies and procedures.

The last major component of the category of *collective CE actions – helping vs. hindering collaboration* is following effective policies and procedures which most programs accomplish with varying degrees of success. A key ingredient seems to be having at least one colleague who is very consistent and knowledgeable about gatekeeping which relates to *competence* and *faculty capability*. One experienced counselor educator participant noted that their colleague served as “a very pragmatic and concrete thinker when it comes to gatekeeping issues. She’s very much... let’s look at the policy.... ‘these are the rules, this is what needs to happen’ and that can be really helpful sometimes.” Having a consistent colleague helps to uphold the already established gatekeeping policies and procedures of the program.

Interactive Effects of Faculty Microsystem Conditions and Processes

It is evident that the quality and sufficiency of the two main processes of *individual CE actions – engaging vs. avoiding gatekeeping* and *collective CE actions-*

helping vs. hindering collaboration affect the core category of *collaboration – sharing the burden* by their cumulative effect of sufficient or insufficient gatekeeping actions. Furthermore, the complex interactions between these two processes and the wide range of the faculty microsystemic conditions of *faculty cohesion* and *faculty capability* seem to further enhance or inhibit the overall experience of *collaboration – sharing the burden*, which is portrayed in the model of the Faculty Microsystem for Gatekeeping in Counselor Education Programs (see Figure 3.1).

A multitude of interactive effects exist between *faculty cohesion* and *faculty capability* and *individual CE actions* and *collective CE actions* with the strongest interactive effects between *faculty cohesion* and *collective CE actions*. Such *faculty cohesion* factors as trust, support, and shared motivation strongly promote sufficient *collective CE actions*, which strengthens and enhances collaboration. Secondly, *faculty capability* factors such as competence and capacity enhance both *individual CE actions* and *collective CE actions*. Gatekeeping motivation, whether manifested as shared motivation in *faculty cohesion* or as sharing the workload in *collective CE actions* is instrumental in affecting these processes towards either enhanced or inhibited *collaboration – sharing the burden*. In these ways, *faculty cohesion* and *faculty capability* are both necessary at sufficient levels to positively affect *individual CE actions* of engaging gatekeeping and *collective CE actions* of helping collaboration in order to strongly promote *collaboration – sharing the burden*.

Discussion

The theory and associated model of the faculty microsystem adequately answer the central research question of: How do counselor educators experience microsystemic

dynamics in the context of gatekeeping for PPC in counselor education programs?

Participant data demonstrate “thick description” (Ponterotto, 2006) of the microsystemic dynamics that participants experienced during gatekeeping. Furthermore, results support the proposed ecological model that has counselor educators’ colleagues as a very influential part of counselor educators’ gatekeeping microsystem. Lastly, adhering to grounded theory techniques led to the creation of substantial theory and a potentially viable model of gatekeeping in counselor education programs.

The secondary question was: How do these group/microsystem processes interact with their related contexts to affect the gatekeeping process? The proposed model of the Faculty Microsystem for Gatekeeping in Counselor Education Programs (see Figure 3.1) theorizes that the contextual conditions of *faculty cohesion* and *faculty capability* interact with the two main processes of *individual CE actions – engaging vs. avoiding gatekeeping* and *collective CE actions – helping vs. hindering collaboration* to influence the experience of *collaboration – sharing the burden* and in so doing, addresses this question very directly with substantial theory.

The theory and related concepts are supported by the existing literature on gatekeeping within mental health professional training programs while also contributing to the knowledge base, filling in gaps, and augmenting or enhancing the research literature. The literature on how counselor educators work together during gatekeeping is scant and this research is a new contribution to this aspect of the gatekeeping literature. Research from Jacobs et al. (2011) identified training setting/system barriers in addressing PPC in doctoral psychology programs and aspects of the “... training setting factors and program culture” that overlap with the concepts of *faculty cohesion* and the

avoiding gatekeeping actions found in *individual CE actions* and hindering collaboration actions found in *collective CE actions* (p.179). For example, their call for “... communication and self-examination” as “... keys to effectively managing a program’s culture to influence the quality of difficult conversations...” is similar to the findings on the importance of *having competence* (part of *faculty capability*) and *inclusive and interactive group process* (part of *collective CE actions*) (Jacobs et al., 2011, p.179)

Examples of low *faculty cohesion* and unproductive/unhealthy *individual and collective CE actions* that coincides with colleagues’ uncooperative or disruptive behaviors, while only mentioned by a few participants, might point to the existence of counselor educators’ own unaddressed PPC. Researchers have found PPC among counselor educators to be a significant and impactful part of counselor educators’ working environment (Brown-Rice & Furr, 2015).

This study expands on previous findings on the potential interpersonal and systemic difficulties that might make gatekeeping challenging and further contextualizes and organizes these factors within a faculty microsystem of gatekeeping in counselor education programs (Linda Forrest et al., 2013; Homrich, 2009; Jacobs et al., 2011). Specific aspects of hindering collaboration such as avoiding gatekeeping or unchecked power dynamics matches prior research on ineffective gatekeeping strategies such as “faculty avoidance” and “individualistic faculty attitudes” found by Forrest et al. (2013). The results also align with broader research on counselor educators’ satisfaction and professional development. Aspects of *faculty cohesion* align with the literature on what certain groups of counselor educators have advocated for, especially pre-tenured faculty who are most challenged by “time constraints for multiple demands” and “lack of

collegial support” (Hill, 2009, p.58). Aspects of *faculty cohesion* such as support and shared responsibility reflect similar findings of a phenomenology done with counselor educators participants (Wissel, 2011). Similarly, Magnuson, Norem, & Lonneman-doroff (2009) found that counselor educators are challenged by, among other things, inequitable workloads, power dynamics and non-supportive collegial relationships, all of which have a negative effect on productivity and satisfaction. The similarities in counselor educators’ lived experiences seem to transcend the gatekeeping experience.

Looking more broadly, results on gatekeeping collaboration and decision making are supported by broader research on faculty decision making, faculty group process, and faculty peer collaboration. For example, Massy, Wilgar and Colbeck (1994) in Quinlan & Akerlind (2000) list these characteristics of faculty departments that are supportive of teaching: “valuing teaching, interacting frequently, tolerating differences about the theory, methods and direction of the discipline, enjoying equity among different generations of faculty and in the distribution of workload, making decisions by consensus, being led by an effective chair...” (p.26). This list corresponds very highly to aspects of *faculty cohesion* and *collective CE actions – helping collaboration*. In a study examining biases in faculty ethical decision making, Medeiros et al. (2014) found that the most common biases had to do with three different categories of *lack of responsibility* which included, “(1) refusing to take responsibility, (2) relinquishing responsibility, and (3) a lack of awareness of responsibility” (p. 236). These correspond very well with the various ways by which participants colleagues’ avoid gatekeeping: by refusing to do it, shirking responsibility or by lacking competence.

Lastly, the general finding that group cohesiveness positively affects group performance has been found in this faculty peer group process study (van Arensbergen, van der Weijden, & van den Besselaar, 2014). However, this author and others in the broader fields of industrial/organization psychology, communication, and management, while pointing to the advantages of group cohesiveness, also make clear that the relationship is not that simple, i.e. too much cohesiveness (especially in the face of other constraints) can lead to *groupthink*, as group members value relationship (or expediency and conflict avoidance) over making the best decisions as a group (Kerr & Tindale, 2004; Kozlowski & Bell, 2003; Pavitt, 2014; van Arensbergen et al., 2014). This strongly established finding on the equivocal nature of group cohesion as it relates to group decision making mirrors the experience of some participants around consensus. Obviously, the research on team/group performance and decision making is too broad for the purposes of this article, but it is encouraging to see the results of the current study align with some of the literature from this much broader field of research.

As mentioned, the proposed model of the Faculty Microsystem for Gatekeeping in Counselor Education is a new finding which could contribute to the evolution of our understanding of counselor educators' experiences during gatekeeping. The use of Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1986) ecological model as a starting point to conceptualize the layers of context/environment/processes within the counselor educator gatekeeping environment mirrors the use of the ecological model to explain the student trainee environment/context for counselor education students (Lau & Ng, 2014) and also how Forrest, Elman, & Shen Miller (2008) conceptualized the training environment for psychology students with PPC. Clearly, a systemic/contextual/environmental perspective

on counselor educators is a valuable tool with which to conceptualize the multisystemic interactions and complex processes of gatekeeping.

Implications for Counselor Education

This deeper understanding of the complexities of gatekeeping has implications for doctoral students, counselor educators, and program coordinators and directors. The implications for counselor education include further impetus for improved gatekeeping processes and practices for individual counselor educators and counselor education programs. The results may also enhance efforts to garner more respect and resources for gatekeeping in counselor education programs with university administrators and department chairs. Such advocacy would be enhanced when the additional research on the mesosystem and exosystem influences on gatekeeping is completed.

Implications for doctoral training programs are clear. Counselor education programs can do more to prepare future counselor educators as most felt unprepared for the gatekeeping in their first assistant professor role. However, it should be noted that there's no substitute for experience, as this participant notes, "Emotional preparation and... academic theoretical preparation [are] two different things, they can't prepare you for the emotional part."

Although new counselor educators acculturate and learn by observation and experience about gatekeeping (as they do other program responsibilities and informal processes), as others have noted, junior faculty would benefit from explicit training, support, and mentoring on gatekeeping. The implications for the professional development, well-being, and satisfaction of all counselor educators would include increasing collegial support, trust, equitably shared workload and other faculty

cohesion/capability factors. Such improvements would help promote gatekeeping competence, shared motivation and faculty cohesion, and thereby improve collaboration. Some counselor educators are overly tasked with their program's gatekeeping responsibilities and feeling very stressed, and perhaps on the verge of burnout. Programs would be well-advised to examine how their gatekeeping responsibilities are delegated and carried out, especially in those programs where an outsized proportion of the work falls to a few whether by design or by default.

Hopefully, the clearest implication for all counselor educators is that they use these findings to further cultivate deep empathy for themselves and for their colleagues because of the very challenging nature of gatekeeping.

Limitations

These results should be considered with the potential for limitations arising from either errors of omission or commission during the data analysis and theory-building processes or possibly due to certain participant demographics. This research was conducted with counselor educators who self-selected to be part of this study, therefore those who were reluctant or unable to participate were not included and it is possible that those non-respondents might have different experiences of gatekeeping. Also related to participants, although the pool of participants seems diverse and potentially representative in many ways (e.g. gender, race/ethnicity, geographic region, type of program, tenure status, etc.), there exist many more variations among counselor educators than were presented in this study. Lastly, eight of the 12 participants identified themselves as holding some sort of leadership position within their counselor education program, most often, that of program director or coordinator, clinical or training

coordinator, or chair or assistant chair of the department. Perhaps counselor educators who do not hold such leadership/administrative positions have different gatekeeping experiences than their colleagues in those leadership positions. On the other hand, it could be that counselor educators in such leadership positions have a better perspective on gatekeeping than their colleagues because of their extensive involvement in gatekeeping.

Other limitations might possibly arise from how the research was conducted. Though qualitative research standards and grounded theory techniques were dutifully followed, this study represents the first grounded theory study conducted by the primary researcher (first author), thus researcher inexperience might be a limitation. All interviews were conducted by the primary researcher as was the majority of the data analysis and theory building. Despite conducting practices to promote trustworthiness, an unintentional lack of researcher reflexivity might contribute to unintended bias in the results. Furthermore, while not necessarily a limitation (it could be an asset), this study used data that also served as data for a related study on the internal experiences of counselor educators during gatekeeping. As such, the initial coding and subsequent concepts and categories influenced one another across studies. However, this interaction of data and theorizing between the studies may have strengthened both studies by enhancing the comprehensiveness of each which is helpful because of the complex nature of gatekeeping.

Future research

This study has shed light on the faculty microsystemic influences on participants during gatekeeping, primarily focused on the conditions and processes in the faculty

microsystem related to their colleagues. Further research is necessary to fill in potential gaps in the proposed ecological model for gatekeeping in counselor education programs. Other aspects of the faculty microsystem that might affect gatekeeping should be explored such as: the role of adjunct faculty, the role of program directors and coordinators, differences between masters-only and masters-programs alongside doctoral programs, programs of various sizes and offerings, and the differing professional identities of counselor educators. As this research focused on CACREP programs, further research with programs that are not CACREP-accredited should be pursued. Another aspect of faculty cohesion that should be explored involves how the diverse cultural identities of counselor educators affect aspects of the faculty microsystem and the process of gatekeeping.

Preliminary data was gathered on aspects of both the mesosystem (e.g. the role of practicum and internship sites/agencies, adjunct faculty, and university and department administrators) and the exosystem (e.g. the potential influence of CACREP and state licensing bodies), although further research is necessary in order to fully integrate these components into an ecological model of gatekeeping in counselor education.

Lastly, this research does not explore gatekeeping outcomes or efficacy nor the relationship, if any, between gatekeeping processes and gatekeeping outcomes. Further research might seek to link this body of research with research on gatekeeping efficacy or outcomes although it is noted that outcome research in gatekeeping is challenging.

This study sought to explicate participants' experiences of their faculty microsystem during gatekeeping processes for PPC and found that multiple conditions and processes interact to create the overall experience of *collaboration – sharing the*

burden. Gatekeeping is a challenging task for counselor educators whose burden should ideally be shared by all. The author hopes that this study will inform and inspire counselor educators to become better gatekeepers as individuals and as collaborative colleagues for the benefit of the counseling profession, counseling students, and most importantly, the future clients they will soon serve.

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Chapter 4

Chapter 4: General Conclusions

Gatekeeping in counselor education programs is a vital and challenging responsibility that counselor educators seek to carry out effectively for the good of counseling students, the counseling profession and most importantly, for future clients and the public welfare. Gatekeeping has multiple challenges and counselor educators struggle to perform gatekeeping effectively when looking at it from process and outcome standpoints. In terms of process, as these studies have demonstrated, the internal reactions, collegial interactions, collaborative processes, and consequences of each that counselor educators experience are extensive and complicated. While in terms of outcomes, participants confirmed that *gateslipping* still occurs and therefore gatekeeping efficacy still needs improvement (Gaubatz & Vera, 2002; Homrich, 2009). Therefore, the continued study of counselor educators' experiences with gatekeeping and the processes that they undertake is crucial to deepening our understanding of gatekeeping, and ultimately, to improving the quality of gatekeeping in counselor education programs.

These two studies have increased knowledge and understanding of the experiences of counselor educators undertaking gatekeeping within their programs. Manuscript #1 in Chapter 2 elucidated how the internal experiences of counselor educators during gatekeeping can be separated into four main processes which together are conceptualized as the theory of *striving to be an effective gatekeeper*. This theory proposes that counselor educators experience multiple simultaneous internal processes during gatekeeping and that these internal processes also interact significantly with their immediate environment, the faculty microsystem of their colleagues. Manuscript #2 in Chapter 3 explicates crucial aspects of the faculty microsystem and the interwoven

contextual conditions and sets of individual and collective processes that lead to an overall sense of *collaboration – sharing the burden*. I will first briefly review the key findings from each chapter and then discuss how these results are interrelated. Lastly, I will discuss how these findings may inform an evolving ecological model of gatekeeping in counselor education.

Key Findings from Manuscript #1: A Grounded Theory Study of Counselor Educators' Internal Experiences of Gatekeeping for Problems of Professional Competence

This study on the internal experiences of counselor educators illuminated a variety of interrelated internal processes and reactions that counselor educators experience during gatekeeping for PPC in counselor education programs. The four main categories of internal reactions and processes together affect and comprise the core category of *striving to be an effective gatekeeper – avoiding, struggling, striving*. These four categories are: *integrating identities and balancing responsibilities, practicing discernment, managing challenging emotions, and perceiving cohesion and capability in colleagues and across systems*. The interactive and contextual components of gatekeeping are represented by the thoughts and feelings that counselor educators have about their colleagues and other stakeholders within the faculty microsystem, which we conceptualized as *perceiving cohesion and capability in colleagues and across systems*.

The core concept of *striving to be an effective gatekeeper* is proposed to range from low to high, with the lower end represented by *avoiding*, the middle/moderate levels being represented by *struggling*, and the upper/higher level represented by *striving*. Most counselor educators seem to be experiencing striving while some are struggling (barely at times) and some fewer are avoiding as far as gatekeeping as a counselor educator is

concerned. *Striving to be an effective gatekeeper* is the core internal process and central experience that counselor educators undergo while involved in gatekeeping for PPC within their counselor education programs.

The category of *integrating identities and balancing responsibilities* serves as an internal context and set of processes for counselor educators as they take on the gatekeeping role and seek to balance the potential conflicting duties and values of a counselor, a counselor educator and a gatekeeper. An inherent conflict that counselor educators face, as one participant stated, is “As counselors we accept people as they are, where they are, and they can take as long as they want to change... [but] as counselor educators we are putting other people at risk by doing so... we have a different... investment and a different responsibility.” Counselor educators also take stock of their capacity and motivation to perform gatekeeping within the context of their other duties. Counselor educators who successfully *integrate identities and balance responsibilities* are more able to successfully *strive as a gatekeeper*.

Counselor educators *practice discernment* by using their clinical skills and judgment, practicing self-awareness and introspection, noticing challenging issues, and recognizing the importance of collegial feedback in order to appropriately initiate and carry out gatekeeping processes for a student with PPC. Counselor educators who are *striving to be effective gatekeepers* face a key internal (and interactive) process of practicing self-awareness and as-needed they also “...feel comfortable bringing that to my colleagues and... they’re very helpful if they’re saying, ‘Oh, yeah I’m noticing something similar’ or ‘here’s my take on it’. Or perhaps it’s just me, that’s my bias and I’m seeing something that’s just based on my reaction, so that’s helpful.” When counselor

educators are able to enact a high level of *practicing discernment* they increase their competence and effectiveness as a gatekeeper thus enhancing their sense of *striving to be an effective gatekeeper*.

Counselor educators are challenged to effectively manage not just the many initial and ongoing complex emotions that are provoked, including emotions towards self, students, and colleagues, but also the emotional consequences of gatekeeping. Counselor educators experience a host of emotions that pertain to the student with PPC such as: anger, disappointment, frustration, disbelief, sadness, and betrayal. Counselor educators experience painful emotions when they have to deliver ‘bad news’ or enact difficult decisions and consequences for students with PPC, especially if dismissal becomes a necessary action. Counselor educators must successfully *manage these challenging emotions* in their *striving to be an effective gatekeeper* which is made easier when they perceive a high level of cohesion with their colleagues.

The category of *perceiving cohesion and capability in colleagues and across the system* is the myriad collection of internal reactions, perceptions, and lived experiences that counselor educators experience internally, that play a crucial role for how gatekeeping is approached and experienced by individual counselor educators and ultimately, the entire counselor education program. For example, the success of *practicing discernment* or *managing challenging emotions* hinges to a fair degree upon having motivated and competent colleagues whom you trust and feel supported by. Therefore the extent to which counselor educators perceive aspects of faculty cohesion, namely trust, respect, support and shared motivation/investment, is crucial to how gatekeeping proceeds and how counselor educators are able to withstand the burdens of

gatekeeping. The importance of trust and shared motivation (and shared gatekeeping workload) is evident to this participant, “Gatekeeping is the hardest part of our job... and to work as a team with people where gatekeeping is part of all of our jobs; I have to be able to trust that everyone else is holding students to a high standard, that everyone else kind of has eyes on in the way that we are supposed to.”

Counselor educators have similar thoughts about other external factors such as university administration, department leadership or practicum/internship sites, but most of their outwardly-focused thoughts and feelings (besides towards students) involve the immediate contextual environment (i.e. faculty microsystem) of their fellow colleagues. The necessity of having sufficient faculty cohesion and capability to facilitate collaboration during gatekeeping was clear to this counselor educator who states, “One of the things with our gatekeeping, we never do it by ourselves...”

Low levels of most of these categories would seem to point towards a counselor educator who is struggling or on the lower end of striving, although a counselor educator in a low cohesion and low capability environment might still feel fairly successful as a gatekeeper because of their strong motivation and competence. In this way, high motivation/commitment may, to some degree, mitigate negative collegial influences (lack of faculty cohesion), although this may have a negative effect on counselor educators in this position (i.e struggling vs. striving). It seems that high motivation coupled with high cohesion and strong capability (an engaged and collaborative counselor education faculty) would most strongly support a high level of *striving to be an effective gatekeeper*. Most counselor educators experience a mix of these different internal

reactions, which coupled with their actual gatekeeping experiences, leads them to continue to be *striving to be an effective gatekeeper*.

Key Findings from Manuscript #2: A Grounded Theory Study on Counselor Educators' Experiences within the Faculty Microsystem during Gatekeeping in Counselor Education Programs

Drawn from participants' rich and vivid descriptions and conceptualized through grounded theory, we found that the core category and process of *collaboration – sharing the burden* occurs within counselor education programs as a result of the interactions between two contextual/microsystemic conditions and two main processes. The two contextual/microsystem conditions are: *faculty cohesion* and *faculty capability*; while the two main processes are: *individual CE actions – engaging/avoiding gatekeeping* and *collective CE actions – helping/hindering collaboration*. Counselor educators experiencing these microsystemic dynamics during gatekeeping was conceptualized into model of the Faculty Microsystem for Gatekeeping in Counselor Education Programs. This model highlights the complex interactions between conditions, processes, and the counselor educator and how they impact the core experience and process of *collaboration – sharing the burden*.

Faculty Microsystem Conditions

Faculty cohesion is one of the central concepts that emerged from this study along with the awareness that it is the essential contextual condition that is associated with a high level of *collaboration – sharing the burden*. *Faculty cohesion* represents an ever-evolving microsystemic condition that counselor educators perceive, influence and experience within their counselor education program. It describes multiple components and represents a felt sense of cohesion (from weak to strong) with a counselor educator's

faculty colleagues. *Faculty cohesion* is comprised of the elements of trust, support, respecting competence and shared motivation for gatekeeping, which separately and together are crucial microsystemic elements for counselor educators to experience a sense of *collaboration – sharing the burden*.

The concept of gatekeeping *faculty capability* ebbs and flows over time due to the influences on its constituent components of having competence, having capacity, and having effective leadership and policies and procedures. For the purposes of this study, we are focusing on the perceptions and experiences that counselor educators have of their colleagues which are an essential condition of the faculty microsystem.

Faculty Microsystem Processes

We differentiate between policies and procedures and processes for this study. Processes encompass both the official policies and procedures for gatekeeping that a program may have in a handbook or other written materials and the formal and informal, official and unofficial, personal and interpersonal sets of actions/interactions that counselor educators undertake in gatekeeping situations. Additionally the use of the word process or processes is meant to connote that these sets of actions/interactions occur over time, are influenced by conditions and factors and do not necessarily proceed in a linear fashion.

Individual CE actions are those gatekeeping actions or behaviors that individual counselor educators undertake, either well or poorly and consistently or inconsistently/not at all. These *individual CE actions* fall within the range from avoiding gatekeeping to engaging gatekeeping. *Individual CE actions* include effectively monitoring and evaluating students, following established practices, and having

consistency. Influenced by acculturation within the program as well as by experience, counselor educators engage in *individual CE actions* which also stems from some amount of requisite *competence* and *motivation* as a gatekeeper. Clearly, the *individual CE actions* of engaging vs. avoiding gatekeeping have implications for how collaboration will proceed and also seem to greatly affect the faculty microsystem conditions of *faculty cohesion* and to a lesser extent the condition of *faculty capability*.

Collective CE actions are those gatekeeping actions that counselor educators undertake with one another either as a small group or the entire faculty and are conceptualized to range from hindering collaboration to helping collaboration. This category of *collective CE actions – helping vs. hindering collaboration* is the most comprehensive category as it encompasses a variety of subcategories. This category represents the most important set of processes that make up the core process of *collaboration – sharing the burden*. The four main components of *collective CE actions* are interactive and inclusive group process, thoughtful decision making processes, sharing the workload, and following effective policies and procedures. Together, along with *individual CE actions*, these two sets of processes influenced by noticeable interactive effects with the contextual conditions of *faculty cohesion* and *faculty capability*, lead to an overall faculty microsystemic process and counselor educator felt experience of *collaboration – sharing the burden*.

First off, the quality and sufficiency of the two main processes of *individual CE actions – engaging vs. avoiding gatekeeping* and *collective CE actions- helping vs. hindering collaboration* affect the core process of *collaboration – sharing the burden* simply from the cumulative effect of sufficient or insufficient gatekeeping actions.

Sufficient engaging gatekeeping actions and helping collaboration actions will lead to collaboration. A multitude of interactive effects exist between *faculty cohesion* and *faculty capability* and *individual CE actions* and *collective CE actions*.

Although there are interactions between all four categories, the strongest interactive effects are between *faculty cohesion* and *collective CE actions*, whereby such factors as trust, support, and shared motivation strongly promote sufficient *collective CE actions* such as having an interactive and inclusive group process and using thoughtful decision making processes which enhance collaboration. Secondly, *faculty capability* factors such as competence and capacity enhance both *individual CE actions* and *collective CE actions*. Throughout these processes, the factor of motivation for gatekeeping, whether as a part of shared motivation in *faculty cohesion* or as part of sharing the workload in *collective CE actions* is instrumental in how these processes either enhance or inhibit *collaboration – sharing the burden*. In these ways, *faculty cohesion* and *faculty capability* are both necessary at sufficient levels to positively affect *individual CE actions* of engaging gatekeeping and *collective CE actions* of helping collaboration in order to reach a level of *collaboration – sharing the burden* that counselor educators experience during gatekeeping.

Integrating Chapter 2 and Chapter 3: The Counselor Educator within the Faculty Microsystem

In Chapter 2, we learned more about counselor educators' internal experiences during gatekeeping and in chapter 3 we have seen how gatekeeping is a collective and interactive process shared by counselor educators. Findings from both studies point to the reality that a counselor educator's gatekeeping experiences are strongly influenced by the level of faculty cohesion and hence the collaboration that exists within the counselor

educator's faculty microsystem. The microsystemic influence of one's colleagues (levels of collaboration, cohesion, and capability) are manifested in counselor educators' internal thoughts and feelings towards colleagues in Chapter 2 and their actual lived experiences as part of the faculty microsystem in Chapter 3. In the Faculty Microsystem for Gatekeeping in Counselor Education Programs proposed in Chapter 3, we see the reciprocal effects and interactions between *faculty cohesion* and *faculty capability* and the "counselor educator as gatekeeper" as well as how the *collaboration – sharing the burden* iteratively affects the counselor educator as gatekeeper.

Within the faculty microsystem of gatekeeping proposed in Chapter 3, the "counselor educator as gatekeeper" would more accurately be represented by the model of Counselor Educator Internal Experiences of Striving but logistical challenge precludes that. However, in a fully elaborated ecological model of gatekeeping, the internal experience in Figure 2.1 would be embedded within the faculty microsystem of the counselor educator. Another way that these two models interact is the data that reveal that having a high level of striving to be an effective gatekeeper (both in terms of effort and success) is likely to have a positive influence towards more effective gatekeeping as a program by contributing strongly to the *engaging individual CE actions*, the *helping collaboration collective CE actions*, and the overall *faculty cohesion* and *capability*. In turn, it seems that more successful gatekeeping outcomes and more highly collaborative program processes would have an enhancing and sustaining effect on *faculty cohesion* and *capability* and also the motivation and successful *striving to be an effective gatekeeper* of individual counselor educators. In this way, the internal experiences and microsystemic dynamics of gatekeeping can be thought to interact in a continual cycle.

The Evolving Ecological Model of Gatekeeping in Counselor Education

The focus of these two studies has been respectively on the internal experience of counselor educators and then their immediate faculty microsystemic context, mostly composed of their faculty colleagues. The proposed Faculty Microsystem model likely has some gaps and is thus preliminary. One key component that is somewhat missing are the interactions between counselor educators and the student with PPC and the other students in the program. However, the faculty microsystem as applied to counselor educators and their colleagues is very sound. According to the ecological model, these microsystemic processes and conditions occur within a faculty microsystem, which is itself embedded within a larger and more comprehensive ecological model of gatekeeping. Data on significant aspects of the proposed mesosystem and exosystem of gatekeeping for counselor educators (e.g. perceptions and experiences with department chairs, university administrators, university legal counsel, internship and practicum sites and personnel, adjunct faculty, and CACREP as an accreditation body) was collected and analyzed.

However, more data collection and subsequent analysis needs to occur in order to effectively weave these components into the initial proposed ecological model of gatekeeping in counselor education. Thus far, participants' experiences of gatekeeping most firmly support the Faculty Microsystem presented in Chapter 3 which reveals two sets of faculty microsystem conditions (*faculty cohesion* and *faculty capability*) interacting with two sets of counselor educator gatekeeping processes (*individual CE actions* and *collective CE actions*) that leads to the counselor educator gatekeeping experience of *collaboration – sharing the burden*. This experience in turn affects the

counselor educator as gatekeeper, which is well-explained via the model of *striving to be an effective gatekeeper* in Chapter 2.

Clearly, the proposed models from Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 support continuing to use Bronfenbrenner's ecological model as a valuable contextual framework with which to conceptualize the numerous and complex interactions, experiences and processes that constitute gatekeeping as experienced by counselor educators in CACREP-accredited counselor education programs in the US. It is hoped this growing body of knowledge will help counselor education programs to increase their support and efficacy towards gatekeeping in order to better meet their ethical responsibility towards protecting the public by training and graduating ethical and competent counselors.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Email Recruitment Letter to Counselor Educators



Dear Counselor Educator,

My name is Victor Chang and I am a doctoral candidate in Counselor Education and Supervision at Oregon State University. Under the supervision of Dr. Deborah Rubel, I am conducting a research study entitled “Grounded Theory Study of Counselor Educator Gatekeeping Experiences” to fulfill the requirements for completion of my dissertation. This qualitative study will gather in-depth interview data from counselor educators and seeks to examine counselor educators’ internal experiences of gatekeeping and the microsystemic dynamics that influence the gatekeeping process. As you surely know, the counselor education field has an ethical duty to effectively carry out our gatekeeping responsibility for the protection of clients and society.

I am seeking your help in recruiting potential participants, i.e. other counselor educators who might be interested in the research study focus. Participants will be individually interviewed about their experiences of gatekeeping students with problems of professional competence (PPC). Participating in this study is strictly voluntary and the risks are believed to be minimal. The benefits of the study include furthering our knowledge about gatekeeping in counselor education. Participants who complete the study will be compensated for their time.

If you know any colleagues who might like to participate in this study, please forward the study announcement to them and have them contact me directly at changvi@oregonstate.edu or 541-621-4245.

The eligibility requirements state that participants:

- Must be over the age of 18
- Must be a tenure-track or full-time faculty member in a counselor education program or a recently retired (within the last three years) faculty member from a counselor education program
- Must teach or have taught within a CACREP-accredited program in the United States
- Must have experience with gatekeeping students with problems of professional competence (PPC)
- Must be willing to talk about their gatekeeping experiences

- Must be able to participate in up to three (3) interviews of 1 hour duration each, over the course of the study period (6-9 months)
- Must consent to having the study interviews be audio recorded
- Must have access and ability to use an online virtual meeting tool (provided by the researcher) and email

The Principal Investigator for this study is Deborah Rubel, Ph.D. who can be contacted at deborah.rubel@oregonstate.edu or by phone at: 541-737-5973 if you have any questions or concerns about the study. This study has been approved by the Human Subjects Board at Oregon State University.

I appreciate your time and efforts in helping me to complete this study. Once again, if you know someone that may be interested in participating, please forward this request and/or have them contact me directly via email at: changvi@oregonstate.edu or by phone: 541-621-4245.

Sincerely,

Victor Chang
Oregon State University PhD Candidate

APPENDIX B

Email Communication to Potential Participants



Dear (counselor educator name),

My name is Victor Chang and I am a doctoral candidate in Counselor Education and Supervision at Oregon State University. Under the supervision of Dr. Deborah Rubel, I am conducting a research study entitled “Grounded Theory Study of Counselor Educator Gatekeeping Experiences”. Participants will be interviewed individually about their experiences of gatekeeping students with problems of professional competence (PPC). These interviews (either two or three in total) will each run approximately one hour and will be conducted in-person, by phone, or via a secure/HIPAA-compliant virtual meeting tool over the six to nine month study period. The total time commitment will not exceed five hours over the entire study period. Participating in this study is strictly voluntary and the risks are believed to be minimal. The benefits of the study include explicating the internal experiences of counselor educators during gatekeeping and the influence of microsystemic dynamics on the gatekeeping process. Additionally, research participants completing study requirements will be compensated for their time.

If you think you meet eligibility requirements and would like to participate in this study, please contact me, the student researcher, directly. My contact information is at the bottom of this letter.

The eligibility requirements state that you:

- Must be over the age of 18
- Must be a tenure-track or full-time faculty member in a counselor education program or a recently retired (within the last three years) faculty member from a counselor education program
- Must teach or have taught within a CACREP-accredited program in the United States
- Must have experience with gatekeeping students with problems of professional competence (PPC)
- Must be willing to talk about your gatekeeping experiences
- Must be able to participate in up to three (3) interviews of 1 hour duration each, over the course of the study period (6-9 months)
- Must consent to having the study interviews be audio recorded

- Must have access and ability to use an online virtual meeting tool (provided by the researcher) and email

As mentioned previously, your participation is strictly voluntary. Participants who complete the study will be compensated. If you are interested, please contact the student researcher, Victor Chang, directly via email at changvi@oregonstate.edu or by calling me directly at: 541-621-4245. Please include your email or phone contact information so that I might contact you about setting up an initial screening interview. During the initial screening interview, you will have the opportunity to ask questions about the research. You may also contact the Principal Investigator about this study: Deborah Rubel, Ph.D. at deborah.rubel@oregonstate.edu or by phone at: 541-737-5973 if you have any questions or concerns about the study.

I appreciate your time and consideration of this research participation opportunity.

Sincerely,

Victor Chang
Oregon State University PhD Candidate

APPENDIX C

Script for Screening Potential Participants



Script for Screening Potential Participants

To Potential Study Participants:

This initial screening will begin by reviewing the eligibility criteria to participate in this study. In order to be eligible you must:

- Be over the age of 18
- Be a tenure-track or full-time faculty member in a counselor education program or a recently retired faculty member from a counselor education program
- Teach or have taught within a CACREP-accredited program in the United States
- Have experience with gatekeeping students with problems of professional competence (PPC)
- Be willing to talk about your gatekeeping experiences
- Be able to participate in three (3) audio-recorded interviews of 1 hour duration each, over the course of the study period (6-9 months)
- Have access and ability to use an online virtual meeting tool (provided by the researcher) and email

After considering the participation criteria, are you still interested in participating in this study?

If no, thank you for your time and I will destroy what information I have (e.g. name and contact information).

If yes, I will now review the Verbal Consent Guide with you. This document and our discussion will ensure that you are fully informed about participation in this study and that you give your verbal consent to participate. I will now review the criteria again, to establish your eligibility:

- Are you over the age of 18?

- Are you a tenure-track or full-time faculty member in a counselor education program or
- Are you a recently retired (within last 3 years) faculty member from a counselor education program?
- Do you teach or have you taught within a CACREP-accredited counselor education program in the United States?
- Do you have experience with gatekeeping students with problems of professional competence?
- Are you willing to talk about your gatekeeping experiences?
- Are you able to participate in up to three interviews of 1 hour duration each, over the next 6-9 months?
- Are you willing to have those interviews be audio-recorded so that they can be transcribed?
- Do you have ability to access the Internet and email?

If you answered yes to the above questions, we would like your assistance.

Under the supervision of Deborah Rubel, Ph.D., I, Victor Chang, am recruiting counselor educators for the research study “Grounded Theory Study of Counselor Educator Gatekeeping Experiences.”

For this study, you will be asked to participate in two or three rounds of interviews. Each interview will take approximately 45-60 minutes and will take place on a date and time that is convenient for you. These interviews will take place either in-person, by phone, or via an online secure/HIPAA-compliant virtual meeting tool. In addition, you will be asked to participate in “member checking” to see if study data and developing theory are congruent with your experiences at two different times. At the conclusion of the interviews, you will be provided a typed transcript of the interviews and will have a chance to verify this transcript. Secondly, as the grounded theory emerges, you will have a chance to provide feedback as to how the emerging theory or model fits your experience. The total participant time will not exceed five hours over the six to nine month research period.

- At this point, I’d like to ask if you have any questions.
- What questions can I answer for you?
- To make sure you understand what the study and your participation entails, can you please tell me what you think I am asking you to do?
- Lastly, in your own words can you tell me what the biggest risk might be if you enroll in this study?

Please do not hesitate to contact either one of us should you have any questions.

Victor Chang, Student Researcher

Email: changvi@oregonstate.edu

Phone: 541-621-4245

Deborah Rubel, Ph.D., Principal Investigator

Email: deborah.rubel@oregonstate.edu

Phone: 541-737-5973

APPENDIX D

Verbal Consent Guide



Verbal Consent Guide for Gatekeeping in Counselor Education

Purpose: We are conducting this study to learn more about the internal experiences of counselor educators performing gatekeeping and the microsystemic dynamics that may influence counselor educators during the gatekeeping process. We hope that the study results will contribute to a greater understanding of gatekeeping in the counselor education field and that it will help inform more effective gatekeeping practices. The study is being undertaken by a doctoral student for the completion of a dissertation research.

Activities: The study consists of grounded theory qualitative research techniques applied to in-depth interviews with participants who are all tenure-track or full-time counselor educators. You will be emailed a link to a demographic questionnaire to complete via Qualtrics. We will schedule up to three rounds of interviews that will take less than an hour each. In the interviews, you will be asked questions about your experiences with gatekeeping students with problems of professional competence (PPC) in counselor education programs you've worked in. The interviews will take place either in person, by phone, or via a secure/HIPAA-compliant virtual meeting tool on a date and time that is convenient for you. After the last interview has been transcribed, we will send you the interview transcripts and you will have an opportunity to make comments or corrections. You will have seven days to let the student researcher know by email, of any changes or comments you would like to make. The last "member check" will occur towards the latter stages of data analysis as a theory emerges from the data. You will be able to provide feedback on the emerging theory about whether your particular views, feelings, and experiences are represented in the theory and are congruent with the researcher's interpretations. You will have seven days to provide this feedback by email.

Time: We ask for no more than 5 hours of your total time over the entire study period (6-9 months). We expect that the actual time commitment will be less than that, with perhaps approximately three hours spent between interviews with the student researcher and member checking.

Risks: There are no known physical or financial risks to participation. A mild risk with participating in this study involves feeling some discomfort from discussing challenging

gatekeeping situations but not more than what might be expected from other professional, academic, or clinical discussions. If participants experience discomfort they will be asked if they would like to discontinue the interview and reschedule at their convenience and reminded that they can always withdraw from the study entirely. All interviews and associated data will be kept confidential and results will be reported in a de-identified fashion that minimizes risk of you being identified. The security and confidentiality of information collected from participants online cannot be guaranteed. Confidentiality will be kept to the extent permitted by the technology being used. Information collected online can be intercepted, corrupted, lost, destroyed, arrive late or incomplete, or contain viruses.

Benefits: There are no known benefits for study participants. You may find it helpful to discuss your past gatekeeping experiences and your related thoughts and feelings. The benefits will confer to the counselor education field, future counselors and future counseling clients. You will be contributing to strengthening our understanding of gatekeeping in counselor education which may also lead to greater gatekeeping efficacy.

Payment: The researchers will financially compensate study participants for their time. Once a participant has completed their study participation, they will be eligible for a \$20 Amazon gift card and will also be entered into a random drawing for a \$100 Amazon gift card.

Confidentiality: Your identity will be hidden by the use of participant codes which will be applied to all raw and analyzed data. Any participant statements included in any final products of the study will be thoroughly disguised to protect the identity of research participants. Beyond protecting the identity of participants and the security of all data, the researchers reserve the right to use participant raw data to augment any written work based on the data analysis (for example, using quotes from participants to accentuate a point). All information gathered in this study will be confidentially stored at Oregon State University for at least three years post-study termination. For Oregon State University personnel, given the small sample size and unique research question, there is a possibility you could be identified.

Voluntariness: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may leave the study at any time and you are free to skip any questions or activities during the study. If you choose to leave the study before it ends, the researcher may keep information already collected. This information may be included in study reports. If you are an OSU employee, your participation or non-participation will not impact your employment in any way.

Contact Information: If you have any questions about this study, please contact the student researcher, Victor Chang by:

Email: changvi@oregonstate.edu

Phone: 541-621-4245

The Primary Investigator is Deborah Rubel, PhD at Oregon State University who may be reached by:

Email: deborah.rubel@oregonstate.edu

Phone: 541-737-5973

APPENDIX E

Demographics Questionnaire

1. What is your position and title in your current academic setting? (text box)
2. How long have you been working as a faculty member in this counselor education program?
 - a. 0-3 years
 - b. 4-7 years
 - c. 8-11 years
 - d. 12+ years
3. If recently retired, how long did you work as a faculty member in this counselor education program?
 - a. 0-3 years
 - b. 4-7 years
 - c. 8-11 years
 - d. 12+ years
 - e. n/a
4. How long have you been a counselor educator?
 - a. 0-3 years
 - b. 4-7 years
 - c. 8-11 years
 - d. 12+ years
5. What is your academic rank?
 - a. Assistant Professor

- b. Associate Professor
 - c. Professor
 - d. other (text box)
6. Are you tenured?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
7. What CACREP specialty areas does your counselor education program offer?
- a. Addiction Counseling
 - b. Career Counseling
 - c. Clinical Mental Health Counseling
 - d. Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling
 - e. Community Counseling
 - f. Counselor Education and Supervision
 - g. Marriage, Couple and Family Counseling
 - h. Mental Health Counseling
 - i. School Counseling
 - j. Student Affairs & College Counseling
 - k. Other (text box)
8. What state is your program located in? (text box)
9. What is your gender?
- a. male
 - b. female
 - c. transmale

- d. transfemale
- e. gender-queer, gender-nonconforming
- f. prefer not to answer
- g. other (text box)

10. What is your racial and/or ethnic background (choose all that might apply)?

- a. American Indian or Alaska Native
- b. Asian
- c. Black or African American
- d. Hispanic or Latino
- e. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- f. White
- g. Other (text box)
- h. Multiple

11. Do you have a disability (whether apparent to others or not)?

- a. yes
- b. no

12. How much time per week do you spend involved in the gatekeeping process when you are involved in one? (text box)

13. Do you have any training or supervision in gatekeeping for PPC in counselor education programs? If so, what?

- a. yes
- b. no
- c. (text box)

APPENDIX F

First Round Interview Questions

OK, I've started the recording. Just as a reminder and to help us focus, we're talking about gatekeeping for problems of professional/personal competence and not necessarily those student problems that are purely academic. Also, I'd like to focus on gatekeeping from the problem identification stage and onwards, not so much on the admissions or screening end.

1. How would you define gatekeeping in counselor education?
2. Tell me about your experiences implementing gatekeeping for students in your program.
3. Thinking about gatekeeping as a whole or in a particular challenging gatekeeping situation, what particular thoughts, feelings, or other internal reactions did you experience during the gatekeeping process?
4. What internal or external factors influence your decision-making process?
5. How do you and your faculty colleagues work together to enact gatekeeping?
6. How do faculty or program dynamics influence the gatekeeping process?
7. What have been the most challenging aspects of gatekeeping?
8. How have your previous experiences with gatekeeping affected how you have approached subsequent gatekeeping situations?
9. How has performing gatekeeping affected you personally?
10. Any other thoughts on your experiences with gatekeeping?

APPENDIX G

Process Summary for First Round Interviews

Data collection via interviewing proceeded after the process of recruiting and screening potential participants. The first few interviews revealed that, at times, it was difficult to get participants to discuss their feelings regarding gatekeeping situations, for perhaps two reasons: 1) they were not used to thinking about and discussing the emotional aspects of gatekeeping and 2) the lack of rapport/trust and the telephonic interview with participants not previously known to the interviewer could be inhibiting their responsiveness to certain types of questions (e.g. the emotional aspects of gatekeeping). Additionally, the primary researcher began collecting anecdotal evidence and observations regarding the interview question themselves such as: some questions did not seem to get at parts of the heart of participants' gatekeeping experiences, though this also seemed to vary between participants.

One observation that arose during the interviews, even prior to data analysis, was how stressful and emotionally draining gatekeeping can be whether due to frustration with administration and/or colleagues or feelings towards the student or real angst regarding the gatekeeping work. A professional transcriptionist transcribed each interview and then the primary researcher reviewed, compared, and corrected each interview transcript with the original audio of the interview. As 1st round data collection and data analysis were proceeding, some researcher reflexivity and reflection on the interview transcripts looking at the nature and extent of follow-up questions revealed some *preconceived notions and possible biases* and how they might be influencing and

reflected in the data analysis (see Appendix H – Preconceived Notions & Researcher Reflexivity).

Open coding of each of the 12 first-round transcripts proceeded following closely to Corbin and Strauss (2008) description of open coding. Coding charts were created for each of the two studies after the first round. Below I list the early categories and the codes they contain that arose from the 1st round data analysis (open coding and subsequent axial coding). I include some of my thoughts on the categories and some supporting quotes from participants.

Manuscript #1: Internal Experiences (IE) initial categories and concepts

IE: Becoming a gatekeeper

This is meta, over the course of one's career from early experiences as new faculty, learned mostly from observation and then repeated experience within a CE program or programs. A growing sense of responsibility, skills, awareness of how it should be done and/or sense of how well it is or isn't done within one's CE program, and increasingly complex conceptualization of gatekeeping (e.g. as student development, within a program, as an interaction with peers, as a CACREP standard, etc.). An ongoing process and also a set state of knowledge, skills and beliefs that a CE possesses when entering into a new gatekeeping situation. Usually each gatekeeping experience also influences the accumulated body of knowledge, skills and beliefs- thus the reciprocal process over time.

This category currently includes: feeling prepared or level of preparedness, learning about gatekeeping/understanding gatekeeping, taking on the gatekeeper role/responsibility – ethical responsibility, conceptualizing the gatekeeping role in

context of CE program, values, etc., gatekeeping as a developing process over time, and counselor educator assuming leadership role in counselor education program.

P1: It's not an area that I quite frankly felt prepared to deal with, as a new faculty member. While we talk about if perhaps this is part of your research is, we talk about this idea of gatekeeping.... I think as doctoral students but nobody teaches or I wasn't taught how to actually engage in or what the challenges might be

P6: I had no idea how much a part of this job gatekeeping was going to be. ...But you don't know what goes into gatekeeping until you're part of it, until you're doing it. I had no idea how much time it took, like it's a significant portion of my job and I really didn't know. I thought I was just going to show up and teach some classes and maybe go to some meetings and that was it. Yeah, and having advisees would just be like, "Yeah, you should totally take communication and counseling skills next quarter. Absolutely that's a great class, yeah you're going to love that instructor." "Good see you later, great." I didn't know, I'm not sure it would have changed my decision to go into this field. But it is an added challenge I wasn't aware of.

P12: You know I didn't know that being a counselor educator or faculty required this and said, "Why does being a counselor educator and a faculty, why do we have to do things like this?" You know having that... existential crisis almost like I didn't get into higher ed to do this, I got into higher ed to train folks and to inspire and to motivate and to do research.

IE: Influence of professional identity, clinical background and competing roles and priorities

This category is conceptualized to include: using clinical skills, being a clinician/counselor vs. just academic, and professional identity as a counselor vs. another type of mental health professional. For more on this category, I refer you to one of a series of memos on this category (see Appendix I – IE Memo 2- Professional Identity, Discipline, Tenure and Program Role).

P1: All 4 of us come from very different clinical backgrounds. I think that's really valuable. I think we all come from different theoretical perspectives when it comes to thinking about... I mean our students aren't our clients... the way we conceptualize client cases, the way we conceptualize teaching and growth. I think all just allows for different perspective.

IE: Gatekeeping requires self-awareness, introspection and involvement in a peer group process

Fair, ethical, accurate gatekeeping requires a lot of self-awareness, internal thought processes and mechanisms to avoid potential counter-transference and accurately appraise a student with potential PPC. Because of the subjective interpersonal process of gatekeeping, the importance of an effective peer/collegial process to “validate” the CE’s observations of PPC “concerns” is imperative.

This category includes the following codes: self-awareness and introspection to combat countertransference, identifying with student with PPC (for better or worse), cultural identity aspects: particular aspects of students and their behavior that is challenging for CEs (age, gender, openness to learning/feedback, being disrespectful?), challenging and being challenged by colleagues re: potential countertransference, and trusting colleagues perceptions, feedback as being valid vs. not trusting and perceiving as invalid

P4: It’s a conflict because a part of me, my gut maybe my clinical sense is saying there is a problem here. So, the conflict of that and that I want a student to have an opportunity, I want to make sure that it’s not my stuff I’m reacting too. So, there is sort of a, there is a part of me that wants to do a little self-check to make sure I’m not having some kind of countertransference issue with a particular student. I want to confer with other faculty to remove that possibility, but even if we are all in agreement, it’s not an easy process and it can be long, drawn-out, contentious- difficult in a lot of ways.

IE: Gatekeeping is emotionally difficult for a variety of reasons and fraught with conflicting values, priorities, feelings and thoughts (mostly towards students)

This category seems to encompass many different emotions that correspond with different times in the process and are both towards the student with PPC and towards oneself. Feelings towards colleagues and others are considered in a different category. This category includes these concepts: gatekeeping is an emotionally difficult task- anxiety provoking; upset feelings towards students- anger, betrayal, disappointment;

hardest emotions- hurting students, causing pain, giving negative feedback, dismissing a student; managing conflicting feelings, values, priorities- experiencing the conflicts, having feelings about gatekeeping, having doubts; balancing gatekeeping responsibility with empathy and wanting to help students- believing in students, doing the right thing, reassuring self- coping with the conflicts.

P1: The hardest, still the most challenging one for me, still brings me anxiety to think about it... just the idea that you're essentially holding someone's potential career in your hands is quite anxiety-provoking for a number of reasons.

P5: It is the most disruptive and painful experience to remove a student against their will. So, it's unfortunately, it's happened, not a whole bunch of time since I've been at _____. But the few times it has, it's been really... it's painful. And it always feels really undone and unsatisfied like it's not a satisfying situation.

P8: Well, the most challenging is, it's one thing to tell people you need to get better at X, Y and Z. The most challenging is, you haven't gotten better and you are going to have to leave... Yeah, the hardest thing I would say, yeah is telling people and they... don't see it which, a lot of them can't see because they are so well-defended or they're mentally off. Well, I guess it makes it challenging because I don't know because we are in the business we don't like to make people feel bad. They end up feeling bad about themselves and it's and you're telling them they've failed at this endeavor after a year or a year and a half. And I think that's what makes it to me, just because we are not like Donald Trump that gets a big kick out of saying you're fired. You know I mean we get no kick out of that at all.

P10: But then, it's really important for me to take it to a role that I have at the time as a gatekeeper and think, I can handle this. I'm in the role of the educator, I am the person who has to ensure that this, what I am witnessing or observing or experiencing with this particular individual is not going to happen to a client who may be far more vulnerable than me.

IE: Having thoughts and feelings towards colleagues, admin, and outside agencies

This category includes the thoughts and feelings that participants have towards colleagues and those further outside the immediate CE program. The concepts/codes include: positive feelings associated with working with faculty colleagues; negative feelings associated with colleagues- feeling alone; not having enough time, energy, support and resources to do gatekeeping – frustration; dealing with administration –

frustration but also gratitude at times; relationships with sites. See Appendix J – Feelings towards Colleagues.

P1: Our faculty dynamics quite frankly are amazing. I mean I consider myself really blessed. I think we all are always thinking about our students. We are very student-focused and...

P7: I think all the faculty when we present an issue with the student, I think we all are happy that we can bring this up like if we are having a struggle with someone and then we found out that somebody else had a struggle with somebody and then that means we are going to be watching that before they get into the clinical settings. Then I think if there is a problem we all feel kind of supported usually.

P5: If it's more... dispositionally or something else is going on with that student, it becomes really challenging and there is just a lot of second guessing that happens- a lot of doubt. There is a sense of folks separating to protect themselves rather than coming together to support one another. So, no one being able to recognize like "Wow! The system failed this person, we are all part of the system how can we make the system better." It's more, "well I didn't do that, I am totally in the clear here, I think maybe you should question you, or maybe it's because you didn't do this." So, suddenly blame becomes a real, a real piece of the puzzle. Which honestly for me, then equates to real disappointments, some real sense of like naiveté, am I just that naïve, like I kind of thought we were colleagues and now, this doesn't feel collegial. This feels like, you are covering your ass, and you are using my ass to cover your ass. You know you are steering me in front of that bullet, that doesn't feel really helpful at all. Why are we even perceiving that there is a bullet flying around, like what, we did everything we were supposed to do. We followed the policy why is this suddenly becoming an issue.

IE: Gatekeeping pros/cons to CEs and worries about the future

This category seems loosely defined and without much content; perhaps a catch-all and thus less important. It represents some thoughts that participants have about gatekeeping and about students and a bit about the effects of gatekeeping on participants. Codes/concepts include: thoughts on students' issues, their readiness, and the realistic role of a CE program; effects of gatekeeping on CE – ill effects, sustainability?; and effects of gatekeeping on CE – positive effects.

At its best gatekeeping takes a toll on counselor educators though it's congruent with their aspirations around quality of the CE program. At its worst (without adequate resources or support?), gatekeeping can lead to burnout, cynicism and resentment?

Other thoughts and questions on internal experiences of gatekeeping thus far based on participants' experiences:

- Gatekeeping as an unexpected duty/set of tasks vs. "educator" role.
- Hard to "hurt" students vs. nurturing, developmental/humanistic counselor role with primary associated feelings and reactions: anxiety, frustration, dread, avoidance, self-reflection
- Trying to reconcile when dismissing a student and trying to reconcile when gateslipping occurs- both difficult
- The more seriously a CE takes gatekeeping, the more impactful it might be on them?? True?

Need to know more about:

- What are specific thoughts and feelings towards colleagues and students?
- What sustains participants during gatekeeping? What hurts?
- Have participants ever avoided or observed avoidance in their colleagues during gatekeeping?
- How do they feel about gateslipping?
- How does a participant know when their perceptions and reactions to a particular student reveal a valid gatekeeping situation vs. a more personal countertransference reaction to that student?
- How does being or not being a clinician affect gatekeeping?
- When have a participant's own issues kept them from adequately performing their gatekeeping responsibility?

Manuscript #2: Faculty Microsystemic Dynamics (MD) initial categories and concepts

It seems to be getting clearer that although other things influence the faculty microsystem (such as the university administration or internship sites or CACREP accreditation, etc. which can be conceptualized as meso- or exo-system influences), there's not enough cohesive data to be suggesting something coherent there. What's more is that a substantially larger proportion of thoughts and feelings that participants have during the course of gatekeeping have to do with their most immediate colleagues, i.e. the microsystem of the core faculty- counselor educators.

MD: Becoming a gatekeeper by acculturation within CE program and with experience over time

Becoming a gatekeeper is both a learning and experiential process over time (and both an internal and interactive process) but this category highlights the contextual (learning) conditions of the CE program, maybe especially early on... but also the current CE program. Concepts within this category include: learning about gatekeeping within one's program- early career; learning about gatekeeping as part of acculturation to program and department; learning by experience within program over time – from early career to the present; and improving as an individual gatekeeper & improving as a program with experience/over time.

P1: When I first started in the position I sort of learned by watching. Discovered fairly quickly that while gatekeeping is a good idea but it is hard to implement in a lot of different ways, given the makeup of programs and university expectations to graduate certain numbers. But through just continual process and having to actually work with students who I did not feel fit to become counselors we had to have pretty intentional conversations about what are we looking for.

MD: Program factors- faculty microsystem such as structural dynamics, resources, workload

Participants brought up many aspects of their CE program and data analysis revealed that many of them could be organized within this category. These program

factors concepts and sub-categories include: program factors such as smaller size benefitting gatekeeping; sequence, timing and staffing of certain courses affecting gatekeeping (tied to colleague competence/incompetence); workload differences or differing expectations or having different foci as faculty members, e.g. pursuing tenure or not (research vs. teaching/clinical load); interaction with adjunct faculty; structure and interaction with practicum and internship supervisors; lack of time, energy, motivation, i.e. resources.

P4: Right now a colleague who has almost zero interest in gatekeeping from a clinical perspective, wouldn't mind giving a B or C on a research project but is not themselves a clinician and doesn't have a strong counselor identity. So, this person wants to teach the skills class and because they're a full professor they're being allowed to teach the skills class. Even though I said, "This is a gatekeeping issue ..." and.... I don't know if it's interest, its capability, the person is, I don't perceive them to be capable of discerning those students' needs and helping them identify and work through them. I don't perceive the person as being able to recognize and offer to successful remediation attempts to a student before it ever gets to that point.

MD: Roles within the CE program- faculty microsystemic dynamics

This category houses the aspects of counselor educator professional identity, role in the program and other aspects of who the CEs are in relation or comparison to one another. These represent perhaps some of the ways in which they professionally differ, maybe giving rise to some of the different perspectives and opinions they bring to gatekeeping. This category includes these emerging concepts: being a clinician or non-clinician; identifying as a counselor/aligning with CACREP; role of faculty supervisor in practicum/experiential classes; role of faculty advisor; role of program coordinator/director; seniority whether based on academic rank, program chair, tenure status or years of experience. See Appendix K – MD Memo 3 – Role of Program Coordinator for further exploration of this category.

P1: All four of us come from very different clinical backgrounds. I think that's really valuable. I think we all come from different theoretical perspectives when it comes to thinking about... I mean our students aren't our clients... the way we conceptualize client cases, the way we conceptualize teaching and growth. I think all just allows for different perspective.

P7: The point person is, either the clinical coordinator who is now really just doing the school people, but she and I work together really closely. So, it might be the clinical coordinator me as the director of clinical training and the chair will meet...., we informed the advisor but we, the chair and myself basically, met with the student and discussed the situation and also the student and the faculty person who wasn't me and I. I think the 3 of us met to talk to the student initially and then said, we'll have to get back to you about what the process is going to be.

P11: So, but, so in terms of faculty dynamics it's one, supervision and seniority in terms of who is leading the decision-making. Am I agreeing with you totally or am I agreeing with you because you are a senior faculty, those are kind of questions like in the back of my head

MD: Faculty microsystemic process- faculty teamwork-working together well-group cohesion

This category has a lot within and it seems at least some of these concepts are overlapping and/or inter-related. This category seems to be a key component of gatekeeping and a significant area of thoughts/perceptions of participants. There seems to be substantial depth and description from 1st round to support this category which includes these concepts: faculty working together well- being consistent and following good practices; faculty working together well- shared sense of responsibility & shared or delegated responsibility; faculty working together well- team cohesion/quality of interpersonal dynamics; faculty working together well- relying on colleagues for feedback, trusting colleagues- role of consensus in validating the CE; faculty working together well- dealing with differences of opinion. Within this category, we can begin to see what might be conditions/qualities of colleagues or felt/perceived by participants and what might be actions taken or not taken by participants and their colleagues; also the effects (consequences) of some of those conditions or actions. A preliminary table

outlining many of the codes/concepts within this category and some of their dimensions – that all seem to have at least some support (however weak or strong) from the data currently was conceptualized (see Appendix L – MD Memo 4 – Working well together vs. not – a comparative table).

P8: Well, we are always and I think I would say we, meaning the entire faculty. We take it seriously and it's a delicate thing because somebody has devoted their time, money and effort to come into the program. So, it's always a sensitive issue and yes, so I guess that's the feelings, I will answer it that way. Those are the feelings of just being, it's never fun to do but it's something that all counselor ed faculty should do.

P4: shared power divides out very similarly regardless of topic that people who are super invested do the lion's share of the work and other people do what's needed to be done and pass off the rest or they just don't do it. I think it reflects the same kind of emotional investment that we've been talking about maybe not naming it in that same way. But the emotional investment in why I'm here is to strive for quality

P1: Like I said, the fact that there is 4 of us and we all really respect each other and I think we all value each other's opinions, really helps. I count myself really lucky to be able to work with 3 other individuals whose opinion I really value.

P3: So, we were able to work out, I mean the faculty were able to work out compromises and to articulate things that we all agreed with.

MD: Faculty microsystemic process- faculty teamwork- not working together well – poor dynamics

This category is in many ways just the opposite or mirror image of the prior category, although not all concepts are the reverse. This category includes the avoidance of gatekeeping in addition to the ways in which participants reported faculty not working together well. This category includes these concepts: faculty not working together well- some faculty not invested thus unequal burden and workload; faculty avoidance of gatekeeping and related passing along (grades); faculty not working together well- lack of trust or unhealthy imbalance of power; faculty not working together well- poor interpersonal dynamics/lack of cohesion; faculty not working together well- handling differences poorly. Again, refer to Appendix L

P5: But then over time, it's like there is nothing else there. You know it's not, I don't get additional support, from colleagues for that, I don't get additional support from the, you know I don't get a reduced load, or anything else. So, over time it feels like devoting a lot of energy into just a few people that are, kind of fundamentally challenging.

P4: There are lots of reasons that people don't even express but it becomes clear the people who are passionate about the field of counseling and preparing people to be effective in the field. I think those folks who are passionate about it tend to be a little more invested in the gatekeeping function.

P9: I am the only one who understands the importance of gatekeeping. I am the only one that puts any effort and specific attention to gatekeeping. I'm completely isolated and this includes efforts to try to get buy-in and support from faculty as well as the department chair as well as upper administration. They, none of them want anything to do with this.

P12: At one point... one of the professors told me, "You know what, I think the profession will weed the students out, so, let's just get them out of our program, let's graduate them and the profession will take care of it for us." I thought that's not gatekeeping and they are like, "Well, the profession will take care of it for us. If they are not fit for the job, then they won't get a job and we say, 'Let's not worry about it.'" And that was a perspective that a couple of them say, "Yeah, we agree, now let's just graduate them, give them A's or B's or whatever, get them out and they won't find a job even when they graduate." Or, "When they get a job, they will be fired anyway. So, it will take care of itself"

P3: Professionally and developmentally in my career, a lot of the process of gatekeeping when there was a problem had to do with issues between faculty.

P9: They would minimize to the point of dragging out the conversation for multiple weeks or elongating the need for the conversation by minimizing and dismissing. Knowing full well that something is going to have to be done but they were going to draw out the process. Often the language that I hear used in that situation is, "Well, that does sound concerning but I think I need more information about X, Y and Z. So, perhaps we can talk about this at the next meeting or at the next whatever. Before that time I would love to be able to talk to this person or this person or hear what this person has to say." Yes, stalling, minimizing, dismissing or you know, "Are you sure it's not just your class because I have not had a problem with this, that's so shocking to hear. I've never seen that student do X, Y or Z."

MD: Faculty mesosystemic dynamic – dealing with university administration

The mesosystem of the university seems to have some resonance with participants. This category includes: dealing with university administration- feeling frustrated and disempowered; having competing missions; administrators naïve to

professional training gatekeeping responsibility; legal risk and role of legal counsel; and getting help from the university.

P3: Number 1 because it feels like outside forces who don't understand are controlling things and are making decisions that we don't always agree with.

P5: Yeah, it has. I think the other thing to, a matter of time and a matter of attention... I think part of it is, maybe it's not having that opportunity it's that it's lack of time. And a lack of value or investment of the university in terms of the student development.

MD: Other outside influences – mesosystem and exosystem

This category represents a loose amalgamation of considerations, thoughts, concerns that add up to these concepts/sub-categories: agency sites represent a complicated relationship; CACREP accreditation status seems to add rigor to gatekeeping; and concerns about program's reputation tied to gatekeeping. Participants have thoughts and considerations regarding agency sites for practicum and internship. However, this section regarding mesosystem and exosystem influences and factors will need to be perhaps considered for future research as the findings are somewhat scattered and varied. It seems like there is more than enough to focus on within the faculty microsystem. Incorporating elements of the mesosystem and exosystem would require more time, space (length of manuscripts/dissertation), and encompasses a shift in focus (more macro vs. micro) that is at odds with the research question, although some relevant data has been collected.

P7: Also I get anxious about having to deal with the site and the possibility of having to remove the student and one, the situation I just described I had to remove the student and they are not taking our students anymore.... it was kind of a very awkward situation and that's the other thing I feel anxious because it can have repercussions for the program, for other students who might be at the same site.

P10: There are some of us that have a really strong CACREP background and there are some of us that don't and it's interesting because the ones that have the stronger

CACREP background, I think we are really attuned to rigor in the program and holding students more accountable.

P8: Especially some of the stories that we're hearing after graduation, that he's still in the area and this happened and that happened and we think, oh my! Yeah, I hate it whenever I hear any of that...

MD: Macrosystem and chronosystem influences?

Another looser set of some thoughts that seemed to coalesce but the evidence/strength of this category seems to be pretty weak as a category or strong ecological/systemic influence. Nevertheless this category contains concepts: protecting future clients and the profession- macrosystem affecting the counselor educator; chronosystem changes- mental health awareness and stigma reduction, increased mental health needs of students and implications for counselor education programs; questioning the role/scope of a CE program given students' higher needs- chronosystem affecting the macrosystem?; and chronosystem influences- trends with students.

P1: So, I think gatekeeping becomes more crucial because I think the assumption is at some point, every student that goes into a counseling program will either have been in therapy or been potentially been diagnosed with, some sort of mental health issue at some point there in their lifetime. That's not a bad thing but there is also the awareness of... to what level is this person functioning and isn't aware of their own mental health treatment? Because we can't necessarily jump to the conclusion that just because the person has a mental health issue or is dealing with mental health issue that they can't be counselors... I see this more now than perhaps when I first started teaching or even in my own program is that- it's a positive and potentially a complication. I mean it's positive in the sense that people are really talking about their own experiences. But there is also how much of that self-disclosure is really appropriate...

P2: This is also a major gatekeeping issue and increasingly a problem as you know. For, whatever reason, we can blame it on technology or helicopter whatevers or blame it on whatever you want. But across the years, supervisors were the ones who began to point this out to me- that their supervisees were increasingly lacking in any sense of self-awareness. They really had no sense of self... increasingly, the people coming in the program seem less and less psychologically sophisticated, really, fairly numb to their inner world.

P5: It's really like, you know, we're kind of expecting folks to come in at a level of knowledge and development that is unusual probably for the general population. Because

we are not going to be able to spend time developing them to that level in our program, they kind of need to come to the program with it.

As the data and resulting analysis indicate, there is a plethora of overlapping processes, reactions, concepts, influences, etc. involved in the world of gatekeeping beyond the individual counselor educator. Some categories or systemic influences appear too weak to stand on their own (e.g. meso, exo and macrosystem influences). Some need to be further fleshed out (see below) and some can likely be combined or re-conceptualized as further data collection and analysis proceed. It seems there is more than enough data to focus on just considering the faculty microsystem and just focusing on counselor educators' interactions and experiences with their faculty colleagues. It seems that further exploration of anything outside the faculty microsystem or even other components within the microsystem will have to be considered at a later date and with perhaps more data and further analysis, these components might be able to be incorporated into the ecological model.

Some things we need to know more about:

- What helps participants and their colleagues during gatekeeping? What hinders participants?
- How important are collegiality and trust to gatekeeping?
- How important is being able to challenge and be challenged by colleagues to gatekeeping?
- How does faculty culture of sharing/not sharing workload affect gatekeeping duties? Affect group dynamics?
- What about communication styles and avoidance/engagement of conflict (whether with students or colleagues)? How do these individual and group dynamics influence gatekeeping?

- What do colleagues do that helps or hinders in a challenging gatekeeping situation?
- When have a colleague's issues kept them from performing their gatekeeping responsibilities?
- How does the program coordinator/director influence gatekeeping in the CE program?

Additional thoughts: What is gatekeeping? And why is it so challenging? Gatekeeping is:

- a complex intrapersonal, interpersonal and systemic response to a perceived threat to the profession and future clients
- an internal struggle between wanting to help, support and see the good in your students vs. protecting future clients
- an arduous task
- an exercise in observing and judging other human beings; despite efforts and rhetoric to the contrary fairly subjective
- a stressful, long, painful, anxiety-provoking endeavor
- driven by high ideals, love for the profession
- requires self-awareness, discernment, detachment, experience, motivation, ethics, diligence, altruism?, boundaries? support!

What is the motivation behind gatekeeping?

It's clear that gatekeeping requires internal motivation. CE motivation for gatekeeping seems to come from: ethical duty, love of the profession, valuing quality within their CE program.

What are the interpersonal/systemic implications of gatekeeping's challenges?

Because it is so challenging, complex, with such big consequences, and because it requires input from multiple parties, it is or should be an inherently group endeavor not solo. To function well, a majority of the group has to be invested in gatekeeping and you

need the group to have a certain level of cohesion, trust, openness, communication and challenge to make the best decisions. When you have this, the difficult task of gatekeeping goes well/better and it's just a little easier on individual counselor educators. When you don't have this, gatekeeping does not go well and it becomes an unsustainable task on a few CEs and can damage them and their relationships with faculty colleagues. Gatekeeping requires: team work, understanding of roles, expectations, common purpose, ability to consider different points of view.

How does this work when academia seems to promote autonomy and individuality? Is that true for CE faculty? Gatekeeping is one of those few faculty endeavors/processes that requires mutual cooperation, collaboration, effective communication, i.e. strong teamwork... and ideally the conditions that can lead to that like... leadership? collegiality? trust?

There were many directions that the research and a subsequent round of data collection could have followed. After conceptualizing 5 major areas/themes/categories (see Appendix M – CE Internal Experience – Mapping Concepts), the primary researcher initially conceived of many possible follow-up questions (see Appendix N – Potential Second Round Questions).

After further memoing and reflection on all the possible avenues to take further data collection and considering the emerging concepts and theory for both research questions, the following questions with their associated rationale were developed for the 2nd round of interviews to more fully develop the emerging categories (see Appendix O – 2nd Round Interview Questions-Final). The concept/category in question is listed first, then the draft question, and lastly the supporting rationale following the question.

Concept/category: Clinical skills, role, identity – It’s hard with little training, time or resources

1. Please explain how you might use clinical skills, judgment or experience when evaluating students and perceiving problems of professional competence (PPC) or dispositional issues. If you don’t use clinical skills, then what skills are you using?

Some participants have mentioned using clinical skills during the gatekeeping process but upon analysis this behavior/action is not well understood and needs to be further explored. Other participants have offered their perceptions that clinical skills/sense or clinical judgment is valued in gatekeeping and they have made this observation about their peers. I need to know how much participants use their clinical skills during gatekeeping and what using clinical skills really entails. Lastly for those who identify as “non-clinicians” what about their experience? Is there a corollary or similar skill-set that they are using that they’re not labeling clinical skills? Is “clinical skills” a description or euphemism for evaluation or a particular critical component brought to evaluation?

Concept/category: Self-awareness, introspection – it’s hard to perceive it accurately

2. First round analysis seemed to indicate that strong internal personal reactions such as empathy or conversely negative “countertransference” can affect counselor educators’ experiences of gatekeeping. Has this been the case for you? If so, how have you experienced this?

Again, participants with a lot of candor have volunteered some of their own experiences with potential countertransference while gatekeeping students with PPC. Other participants have mentioned observing this phenomenon in their peers, i.e. these are participants’ perceptions although some participants also relate that their colleagues

have admitted to them that they were having countertransference reactions with a student. A theme around the importance of self-awareness when evaluating students with potential PPC due to the subjectiveness of said perception of student PPC was raised to prevent the identification of PPC from really being more about the CE's own issues or difficulties. Further data collection directly from all participants about this complex phenomenon is sought.

Concept/category: Emotional difficulty – it's hard to “hurt” students' feelings

3. Participants have referred to the emotional difficulty of gatekeeping. What is that emotional difficulty? Where does it come from?

More data is needed as many participants mention “it's hard” or “difficult” or “painful” or “not fun” when referring to gatekeeping in general, dismissing a student, or giving student very harsh/negative feedback (for example, after remediation has not worked). However, it's not clear what the emotional difficulty being felt and expressed really is all about. Is it guilt, sadness, anger, worry, etc. etc.? Participants have not been more descriptive or detailed about their internal experience during gatekeeping's most trying times. What is the nature of this emotional difficulty? I seek more descriptions of the lived experience of this emotional difficulty.

Concept/category: Working with colleagues – it's hard to work effectively with colleagues

4. What do your colleagues do that helps or hinders you during challenging gatekeeping discussions and decision-making?

Some participants describe experiencing healthy, open, more interactive, and ultimately better gatekeeping processes within their programs. These participants seem to

cite factors that may have a positive effect on the efficacy and personal CE experience of going through a challenging gatekeeping situation. I would like to hear more about the patterns, behaviors, communication styles, dynamics, etc. that participants encounter from their colleagues and what they experience as either helpful or a hindering as they go through the gatekeeping process. This question feels pretty open-ended.

5. How do you perceive and experience things such as trust, openness, communication style, and approach or avoidance of conflict as an influence on you and your colleagues during gatekeeping discussions?

These factors have been somewhat shared by participants as potentially influencing the communication and decision-making during the gatekeeping process. These might be conceptualized as group dynamics factors that might influence group cohesiveness which has been hypothesized to correlate with group performance. This question seems to be a follow-up to #4, asking about specific possible factors or characteristics of something like group cohesion, a possibly emerging concept.

6. First round data analysis reveals that participants perceive gatekeeping to be a lot of work that is not shared equally among their colleagues. What is your perception of how your program shares the workload of gatekeeping and how does this compare to the sharing of the workload in regard to other program responsibilities? Please explain.

First round data analysis reveals that participants perceive gatekeeping to be a lot of work that is not shared equally among their colleagues. It really varies. Some participants describe a very egalitarian and shared sense of responsibility and workload. Some describe an unequal division of labor that is well understood and accepted, e.g. the

program coordinator doing a lot of heavy lifting. However, other participants describe an unequal division of labor or sense of responsibility. These participants experience this environment as very taxing and demotivating. More needs to be assessed on how participants perceive the workload placed upon them and their peers during gatekeeping.

Concept/category: Other outside influences – it's hard to navigate others' needs and fight the system

7. When a student is exhibiting PPC at a practicum or internship site, how do you think the program attends to the needs of the student, the training site or site supervisor, and the existing relationship with that school or agency?

Perspectives shared by participants on the possible exo- or meso-system influences such as CACREP, university administrators, etc. have been analyzed with a fair amount of consistency and depth (although perhaps a bit more might need to be explored later). Much mention has been made of internship sites and agencies as being fairly integral/involved in gatekeeping, seemingly for multiple reasons such as PPC being skills or site deficits only seen more clearly in that setting or evidence of PPC being cumulative or not seen till later in the student's course of study. Whatever the reason, internship is a time when students manifest PPC and internship sites are involved in addressing those situations. The analysis reveals a paucity of data on what the multiple difficulties, considerations, and needs really are from the perspective of counselor educators. There are assumptions perhaps of knowledge about the important role that internship sites play in the development/training of a particular student and within the structure and curriculum of a counselor education program. The schools and agencies that serve as internship sites are potentially the largest and most influential "outside players" involved

in gatekeeping situations and thus more data is sought on the nature of the relationship and the multiple needs of each entity. Some participants have spoken of these needs somewhat “competing” with one another.

It is hoped that participants’ responses to this 2nd round of interview questions will help to flesh out and saturate the emerging concepts and categories AND that further analysis, memoing, coding, and theorizing will help the categories and concepts coalesce into patterns of influence, action/interaction, reaction/conditions/responses, and other variations of the complex interplay between conditions, processes, and the systems they reside in. The emerging view of the internal experience of the CE during gatekeeping seems to mesh well with the emerging landscape of the CE’s faculty microsystem, i.e. their complex thoughts, feelings, and interactions in dyads and whole groups with their CE colleagues.

APPENDIX H

Memo – Researcher Reflexivity and Preconceived Notions

February 5, 2017

With some reflection after conducting 12 interviews and reading the 12 transcripts, it seems clear that I have some preconceived notions that may influence the course of the data analysis and theory construction. I can surmise from what follow-up and tangential questions I ask what some of these preconceived biases/notions are. However, these preconceived notions are not without their fertile ground and may also represent some amount of theoretical sensitivity and awareness of the field/state of gatekeeping within counselor education.

One notion: some people are just not fit or cut-out to be counselors based on their personalities. Example: trait anxiety or ASD or hostile/angry or narcissistic. This assumption, however, seems to be well-met by participants. There may not be agreement on what characteristics are disqualifiers but most would agree to dispositions that are worthy and necessary for aspiring counselors. Of course, most of these dispositions or traits exist on a spectrum and I'm curious about where on that spectrum might the "cutoff" lie. It's clearer when someone exhibits very extreme behaviors and traits consistently to say they are not a good fit for the profession. It's more subjective and less clear where that line is when the behavior and traits are less extreme. This line of inquiry is less applicable to both research questions.... but the related concept that a few participants have mentioned of some faculty not seeing certain problematic students clearly because of their own issues- this should be explored further. If there is lack of awareness (on any given faculty member's part) or lack of strong consensus (if someone

misses it), or lack of a strong process that will still catch someone (see below), then that is one way a problematic student can get through.

The idea that all faculty members have their blind spots (unvalidated) and that those blind spots could lead to missed opportunities for effective gatekeeping is somewhat supported by the data right now. However, it is all somewhat weak, in that few participants are claiming this for themselves, instead they are making observations or conjectures of their colleagues. This idea seems intuitively to make some sense and yet, I wonder, how prevalent it really is and in the end, how damaging it is, i.e. how much it contributes to gateslipping. Is this an area to inquire more about? I would have to ask participants either to get more specific and concrete about their colleagues or, ask them to give examples for themselves, an inherently tricky notion- how to comment on your own blind spots? This relates to the next concept below: does holding a “minority perspective” either good/bad on a student relate to a potential blind spot for that faculty member? How would you test this out?

Another notion or theme I seem to ask about a fair amount is the experience within the faculty group dynamic of the “minority report”, i.e. when one faculty member is the sole representative of a perspective on a student or situation that is opposite to the rest of the group. The two general conditions or occurrences: when the faculty hold-out has a negative view of the student and everyone else sees them positively or when the sole faculty member has a positive view of the student and everyone else sees them as a problem. I am interested in what happens in both cases- how those differences get resolved. Does it matter who the players are? Their respective power/positionality? The level of conflict avoidance vs. rigorous honest debate the faculty group is used to? How

much groupthink might occur in the name of: collegiality, conflict avoidance, individual faculty not having the energy, time, or self-efficacy to stick to their minority opinions?

Another somewhat preconceived notion, but one that has a fair amount of common-sense reality to it: is that an adequate amount of collegiality, cohesion, healthy group dynamics, and good process in terms of decision-making are required to carry out faculty group processes, of which gatekeeping, is one. It seems like this is being borne out and it seems to really vary across participants. It seems: when faculty group dynamics are below a certain negative threshold (unhealthy), it leads to poor gatekeeping outcomes (in fact, gatekeeping could be said to hardly be taking place). On the other hand, when faculty group dynamics are exemplary/high, gatekeeping outcomes are good and the process is solid (and faculty members feel better about both). It is the great in-between that leads to mixed results (good outcomes mixed with poor outcomes) and more distress both internally and interpersonally for counselor educators. This again makes a lot of sense and seems to be coming from participants, albeit from very different perspectives and the role of the counselor educator as program coordinator (PC) or not and how much the PC carries out gatekeeping is a third mediating variable.

APPENDIX I

IE Memo #2 – Professional Identity, Discipline, Tenure and Program Role

March 5, 2017

Right now, I am not clear on whether these things all go together or not. Certainly the data points to differing expectations and duties depending on one's role. In most programs, it seems there are heightened gatekeeping duties carried out by or overall responsibility delegated to the program coordinator or director. This person does a lot of the work of gatekeeping. Similarly, but less consistently the clinical coordinator or advisor may have roles and responsibilities a bit different or more heightened vs. other faculty. It's not clear if becoming a program coordinator makes one a better gatekeeper or if wanting to become a better gatekeeper (or wanting the program to improve) leads one to become a program coordinator. However, once in that position, most participants describe improving their program's gatekeeping efforts from that position.

Certainly the aspect of tenure and/or seniority affects gatekeeping in a few ways. First off as a new faculty member, a counselor educator has relatively less experience, fewer skills, and less power within the program. They might also be more fearful of open conflict either with a student demonstrating PPC or a colleague they have to convince. They may also be more susceptible to covert and overt pressures from their senior colleagues in the program on any given gatekeeping decision. Similarly, those who differentiate clinical faculty from non-clinical faculty both point to different skill sets (clinicians being more sensitive/aware) and different motivations (with clinical faculty being more motivated to gatekeep). Also current clinicians have a better understanding of the field and its demands and whether students exhibiting PPD in the program might

manifest problems in the real world. Also, being a clinician might make gatekeeping more internally challenging as being a counselor is cited often as holding very humanistic and supportive attitudes towards students which conflicts with having to gatekeep them when necessary. However, counselor educators are mindful of not misusing their clinical background and skills for example, not pathologizing or diagnosing students but at the same time, being aware of the importance of dispositions and interpersonal qualities necessary to become an effective counselor.

The last aspect of professional identity and/or discipline, such as differentiating between counselors/counselor educators and non-counseling counselor educators (could have background in psychology, social work, MFT or other) has an unclear relationship to gatekeeping. Some counselor educators seem to suggest that CE-identified faculty are more invested in gatekeeping (and possibly more skilled) than some of their non-CE colleagues. There is some overlap with using clinical/counseling skills or sense/awareness- especially in identifying problems or being sensitive to possible dispositional issues. There is also some overlap with some of these CE-identified folks perhaps being newer to the field and/or more affiliated or aligned with CACREP. So, they are more strict or wanting to bring higher standards to the counselor education program which would include taking gatekeeping more seriously. One participant noted that because counseling is the newest mental health profession to be recognized, perhaps the field (through some counselor educators) feels an extra level of motivation to scrutinize new counselors in an effort to promote the reputation of the counseling profession.

Some CEs note that having different clinical backgrounds is a strength... perhaps a multidisciplinary clinical background is better than a non-clinical background among a program faculty. Will memo separately on the concept of “using clinical skills” during gatekeeping.

APPENDIX J

IE Memo #5 – Feelings towards Colleagues

March 5, 2017

As already clearly seen, gatekeeping is both an internal process with lots of internal reactions and also an interpersonal endeavor with many systemic influences, a primary one being one's immediate program faculty colleagues. As gatekeeping whether successfully or unsuccessfully carried out, is such a program endeavor requiring counselor educators to work as a team with their colleagues, it is natural that counselor educators would have a multitude of experiences, thoughts and feelings about and towards their colleagues.

Some counselor educators report positive feelings including feeling happy, supported, grateful, trusting, respected which speaks to their experience of a "healthy" and cohesive faculty environment. These counselor educators are more often than not in smaller programs where they know their colleagues well and feel a strong sense of camaraderie and mutuality with their colleagues. Counselor educators enjoy when they get along well with their colleagues and appreciate this dynamic. They share how these respectful, open, egalitarian and trusting relationships allow for more honest sharing, healthier challenge, more discussion and collaboration and a greater sense of teamwork that all support better gatekeeping outcomes.

On the other hand, some counselor educators report feeling frustrated, isolated, ignored, and bullied by their peers during gatekeeping situations. It is not clear how much these feelings about interactions with colleagues are contained to just gatekeeping situations or whether they extend to their colleagues in more generalized ways. Certainly,

in these team settings the dynamics appear to be a bit different with either a less open, less respectful and less egalitarian process, or less engagement with gatekeeping or more abuse of power situations; what one counselor educator called “unhealthy dynamics”.

At other times feelings of frustration or anger come up when counselor educators perceive their colleagues either shirking their duties or not appropriately intervening or not having their back in a particular situation. When a counselor educator does not work within a collegial environment, a sense of dread can precede taking action in potential gatekeeping situations as they anticipate the arduous interpersonal work in holding colleagues accountable within the gatekeeping process. In fact, three main phases of challenge seem to have emerged: the intrapersonal challenges, the challenges of carrying out gatekeeping tasks with the student as a program, and the challenges of working with university administration.

APPENDIX K

MD Memo #3 – Role of Program Coordinator/Director

March 31, 2017

Of the roles within a counselor education program, the leadership role of program coordinator/director seems to be particularly involved in gatekeeping processes within counselor education programs. Whether by design or default, these counselor educators are often very central to all phases of gatekeeping for students with problems of professional competence (PPC). The leadership nomenclature and actual roles vary by program and often the work is shared with the department chair and/or the student's faculty advisor. Also the work is shared very much with clinical coordinator/directors who are often the point person with practicum or internship supervisors. While the clinical coordinator or director often is a first point of contact for site supervisors, it is most often the program coordinator or director who bears the most responsibility, especially as they often hold a longer-term and often more holistic view of the students and their issues. They are often the aggregator of student information from multiple sources. At times, programs have delegated this responsibility to the faculty advisor but in most programs the program coordinator/director.

The participants who've become program coordinators report using that opportunity to endeavor to improve their program's gatekeeping processes. What's not clear is the causal/correlational aspect of this, i.e. do counselor educators want to improve their program and thus seek out program leadership? Or, do counselor educators once they attain program leadership then set out to improve their program? Either way, it does

seem true for participants that once in a program coordinator position, they were able to institute or effectively utilize improved gatekeeping processes.

However this comes at quite a cost. Program coordinators (and also clinical coordinators) do a lot of the gatekeeping work in most counselor education programs. When by design and agreed to by colleagues and the coordinator, it is still a lot of work. What seems to make that workload more emotionally burdensome is when a program coordinator feels like they are shouldering more than their fair share of the gatekeeping workload or process. In fact, there is a risk that gatekeeping falls by default onto the program coordinator thereby contributing to some colleagues shirking their gatekeeping responsibilities and increasing the workload and risk of burnout for some program coordinators. In fact, the most over-burdened program coordinators seem at risk for burnout from the counselor education profession.

APPENDIX L

MD Memo #4 – Working Together – A Comparative Table

April 2, 2017

A table to compare characteristics/descriptors for when programs seem to work well together and when they don't – of course we can't make inferences or comments on the efficacy of these faculty experiences- whether one or the other leads to better gatekeeping outcomes. That's for another study. But we can detail the various experiences of counselor educators working within their program. These are my judgments and sometimes participants' judgments of working well together or not working well together. In many instances, it is implied from participants' but not overtly stated; thus this is very much derived from my analysis of the data. Also, it's very likely not this black & white or dichotomous.

Table 1 Working Together Well vs. Not Working Together Well

Concept for study Characteristic of CE program	What it might look like in a program where faculty are working together well	What it might look like in a program where faculty are not working together well
Taking gatekeeping seriously – correlates with passing students along undeservedly?	All or almost all seem to take gatekeeping seriously	Only a few or even just one counselor educator seems to be taking gatekeeping seriously
Respect for colleagues	Inherent, felt, acknowledged. Lots of mutual respect.	Not a lot of respect for colleagues and their perceptions or opinions.
Overall sense of camaraderie	High	Low
Workload	High, shared, also diversified	Uneven, not shared, too burdensome on a few
Quality of communication	Open, spontaneous, timely; also enough time given	Closed, delayed, truncated.
Trust & reliance	High level of trust where colleagues are not afraid to voice their opinion. Counselor educators trust that they can rely on their colleagues.	Low levels of trust. Faculty are guarded. Counselor educators do not feel that they can rely on their colleagues.
Handling different opinions	Valuing and listening to all perspectives, even those in the	Avoidance, dismissal, minimizing or stalling of

	minority. Also, healthy challenging of minority opinions. Seeking to understand the minority opinion (part 1 and 6)	minority opinions. Fear of challenging others. Overriding the minority opinion without much process or consideration (part 2, 9, 12)
Consensus vs. compromises	Striving towards consensus but also able to act without it. Consensus sought through vigorous dialogue, often takes longer. Compromise is OK after some amount of process. Sometimes majority rules, sometimes minority rules (with sense that outcomes are pretty good).	"False" consensus is OK within program. Often arrived at by colleagues giving in "going along to get along" prematurely to avoid conflict or save time. Compromise happens but doesn't feel as good? Sometimes majority rules, sometimes minority rules (sense that outcomes are not as good).
Cooperation and power	Fairly strong. More cooperation than competition. Gatekeeping differences are genuine vs. power/control issues. Gatekeeping more objective and student-focused.	Cooperation generally lower. Perhaps more individualist than collectivist. More antagonism or power plays as part of gatekeeping process. Gatekeeping less objective and more faculty-focused.
Collegiality	High	Lower or much more mixed/varied
Leadership	Stronger overall?	Poorer leadership?
Avoidance of student issues	Low.	High
Avoidance of conflict	Low. Safe to challenge and be challenged by colleagues.	High. Unsafe to challenge or be challenged.
Feelings towards colleagues	Gratitude Strong sense of mutual support	Resentment Feeling more isolated
Power	Power acknowledged, attempts to counter-balance power imbalances; power whether through leadership position or seniority does not adversely affect working together	Power imbalances curtail healthy dialogue especially through contentious or conflictual issues. Deferring to power happens more often?
Protocols	Have good protocols and try to apply them consistently. Faculty bought into and using the protocols.	Have protocols (may be good) but are applied inconsistently, i.e. by some faculty but not by others.
Sense of burden	Shared	Not shared or shared unequally
Isolation	Less likely to be experienced	More likely to be experienced

APPENDIX M

CE Internal Experiences – Mapping Concepts

Coming to understand and accept one's gatekeeping role and responsibility over time – becoming a gatekeeper



1. Feeling prepared or level of preparedness
2. Learning about gatekeeping/understanding gatekeeping
3. Taking on the gatekeeper role/responsibility – ethical responsibility
4. Conceptualizing the gatekeeping role in context of CE program, values, etc.
5. GK as a developing process over time
6. CE assuming leadership role in CE program

The influence of professional identity, clinical background and competing roles and priorities



1. Using clinical skills
2. Being a clinician/counselor vs. just academic
3. Professional identity as a counselor vs. another mental health professional

Fair and ethical gatekeeping requires self-awareness, introspection and involvement in a peer group process.



1. Self-awareness and introspection to combat countertransference.
2. Identifying with student with PPC (for better or worse)
3. Cultural identity aspects: Particular aspects of student and their behavior that is challenging for CEs (age, gender, openness to learning/feedback, being disrespectful or not humble enough?)
4. Challenging and being challenged by colleagues re: potential CT
5. Trusting colleagues perceptions, feedback as being valid vs. not trusting and invalid

Gatekeeping is emotionally difficult for a variety of reasons and fraught with conflicting values, priorities, feelings and thoughts towards students.



- 1. Gatekeeping is an emotionally difficult task – anxiety provoking**
- 2. Upset feelings towards students – anger, betrayal, disappointment**
- 3. Hardest emotions – hurting students, causing pain, giving negative feedback, dismissing a student**
- 4. Managing conflicting feelings, values, priorities- experiencing the conflicts, having feelings about gatekeeping, having doubts**
- 5. Balancing gatekeeping responsibility with empathy and wanting to help students- believing in students, doing the right thing, reassuring self – coping with the conflicts**

Thoughts and feelings towards colleagues, university administration, and outside agencies range from gratitude to frustration.



- 1. Positive feelings associated with working with faculty colleagues**
- 2. Negative feelings associated with colleagues - feeling alone**
- 3. Not having enough time, energy, support and resources to do gatekeeping - frustration**
- 4. Dealing with administration – frustration but also gratitude at times**
- 5. Relationships with sites**

Gatekeeping is both positive and detrimental to counselor educators and they have worries about the future of gatekeeping.

- 1. Thoughts on students' issues, their readiness and the realistic role of a CE program**
- 2. Effects of gatekeeping on CE- ill effects; sustainability?**
- 3. Effects of gatekeeping on CE – positive effects**

APPENDIX N

Potential Second Round Questions

I will need to reduce this list to 5-9 questions total. But some preliminary thoughts/questions for each identified category thus far:

Concept/category: Clinical skills, role, identity – It’s hard with little training, time or resources

1. What knowledge, background, skills, etc. are counselor educators using when they are using their “clinical skills” or “clinical sense” at any point during gatekeeping? OR
2. If clinical sense or clinical experience is important to gatekeeping then what are the differences between clinicians and non-clinicians?
3. Do different counselor educators with differing professional identities (i.e. counselors, psychologists, social workers, etc.) approach gatekeeping differently?
4. How does being closely aligned or identified with CACREP affect gatekeeping motivation or competence in you and your colleagues?
5. How does having the program or clinical coordinator perform their gatekeeping role help or hinder the sense of teamwork and shared responsibility for gatekeeping?

Concept/category: Self-awareness, introspection – it’s hard to perceive it accurately

6. When has having strong empathy for a student or identifying strongly with a student’s struggles deeply affected you? OR
7. Recall a gatekeeping situation that was most difficult for you internally – what about that student or that situation caused such strong internal reactions? OR

8. Have you ever practiced avoidance when encountering a student with potential PPC? OR
9. When have your own issues kept you from adequately handling a gatekeeping situation?

Concept/category: Emotional difficulty – it's hard to "hurt" students' feelings

10. Please describe the "hard" or "never fun" emotions related to gatekeeping, especially during gatekeeping meetings with students or when having to dismiss a student?
11. What sustains you or keeps you going through difficult gatekeeping situations?
12. What are the similarities, if any, between the practice of not failing students and "looking the other way" with potential gatekeeping situations? (a bit tangential)

Concept/category: Working with colleagues – it's hard to work effectively with colleagues

13. What do your colleagues do that helps or hinders you and the process during challenging gatekeeping situations?
14. How would you define healthy group dynamics within your program and how does having healthy group dynamics benefit gatekeeping?
15. How does level of conflict avoidance vs. productive confrontation among your program faculty affect gatekeeping in your program?
16. How do issues of faculty workload or tenure expectations (such as research) affect gatekeeping in your program?
17. Who is the most influential person in your program in terms of gatekeeping? Is that a matter of personality or role/position?

Concept/category: Other outside influences – it's hard to navigate others' needs and fight the system

18. How do internship site supervisors and their agencies' priorities interact with how your program conducts gatekeeping?
19. How does the fact that university administrators do not have doctorates from professional training programs affect how they help or hinder your program's gatekeeping efforts?
20. How would you characterize the communication between university administrators such as Deans or Provosts and program faculty during gatekeeping situations?
21. What authority or decision-making power do university administrators have over dismissals from your program?

APPENDIX O

Second Round Interview Questions – Final

First-round data analysis has led to the development of concepts, categories and themes that necessitate additional data from participants to further refine and saturate the emerging categories and concepts. Towards this end, we have crafted the following 2nd round questions:

1. Please explain how you might use your own clinical skills, judgment or experience when evaluating students for problems of professional competence (PPC). If you don't use clinical skills, then what skills are you using? (How does a clinical perspective inform gatekeeping?)
2. First round analysis seems to indicate that strong internal personal reactions to students such as empathy or negative "countertransference" can affect counselor educators during gatekeeping. Has this been the case for you? If so, how have you experienced this?
3. Participants have referred to the emotional difficulty of gatekeeping. What is that emotional difficulty and where does it come from?
4. What do your colleagues do that helps or hinders you during challenging gatekeeping discussions and decision-making?
5. How do you perceive and experience issues of trust, communication styles, and approach or avoidance of conflict as an influence on you and your colleagues during gatekeeping discussions?
6. First round data analysis reveals that participants perceive gatekeeping to be a lot of work that is not shared equally among their colleagues. What is your perception of

how your program shares the workload of gatekeeping and how does this compare to the sharing of the workload in regard to other program responsibilities? Please explain.

7. When a student is exhibiting PPC at a practicum or internship site, how do you think the program attends to the needs of the student, the training site or site supervisor, and the existing relationship with that school or agency?

APPENDIX P

Process Summary for Second Round Interviews

2nd round interviews were conducted, transcribed and reviewed/checked for errors by the primary researcher. Then, further selective coding and data analysis resumed in a loop whereby transcripts were coded to the code set from the 1st round (emerging categories and concepts) and also coded in terms of emerging processes and emerging interactions. In the study on faculty microsystemic dynamics, what began to emerge were categories that seemed like conditions with colleagues or within the program/faculty microsystem and then processes of gatekeeping that occurred within the system (and with the individual counselor educator). An emerging model or cycle of interacting processes began to emerge and further evidence for this was sought within the participants' experiences and data analysis from both 1st round and 2nd round interview data.

The concepts, core categories and processes, and emerging theory borne of the coalescing, memoing and theorizing that occurred through the data analysis after the 2nd round of interviews are outlined below. Further artifacts highlighting the data analysis process and progression will be referred to as examples contained within the Appendices section.

The interaction of these two research questions

Complicating yet inform one another. Much more detail as 2 studies. Probably more depth and more holistic/interactive than if just one study at a time. Trying to conceptualize how these two interrelate: one possible way as two sets of interacting processes (one internal/individual and one collaborative/collective). See Appendix R – Diagram – Two Interlinked Gatekeeping Processes. This conceptualization was dismissed

though as being too focused on the actual gatekeeping practice/cycle and outcomes and not focused enough on counselor educators' experiences and dynamics. This evolved into the process of internal experience for study #1 and the faculty microsystem for study #2.

Manuscript #1: Internal Experiences (IE) emerging core and supporting processes

After 2nd round analysis, the different internal reactions and experiences coalesced into 4 main internal processes with one: integrating identities & balancing responsibilities serving as somewhat of the internal counselor educator identity and context that was continually engaged throughout participants' gatekeeping experiences. This context then served as the interactive background for the other two main internal processes of practicing discernment and managing challenging emotions and incorporated much of the data from the first 2 previous categories (becoming a gatekeeper and influence of professional identity, clinical background and competing roles and priorities). The two internal processes of practicing discernment and managing challenging emotions became saturated with additional data and took stronger shape as internal processes. They also incorporated all of the data listed in similar two previous categories. of gatekeeping requires self-awareness, introspection and involvement in a group process.

Counselor educators perceive the gatekeeping role as an essential function and ethical responsibility of every counselor educator and as a difficult role to fulfill. Results suggest that the difficulties entail both internal/intrapersonal and external (interpersonal and systemic) processes each of which contain complex challenges. Participants strive to be effective gatekeepers amidst these many inherent intrapersonal and interpersonal/systemic processes and perform this role with an evolving and contextualized understanding of themselves as a gatekeeper. The predominant context

for the counselor educator is the complex multisystemic context of their counselor education program and their counselor educator colleagues with other systems such as accreditation, university administration and internship/practicum sites as other factors. Study #2 will delve further into the rich interplay of these contextual factors.

In trying to fulfill the gatekeeping role, counselor educators experience multiple internal dialectics or potential conflicts that they have to work through in order to effectively fulfill their gatekeeping responsibility. The four primary internal experiences that counselor educators experience are: integrating the gatekeeper role and the counselor educator role; being thoughtful, self-aware and intentional; navigating the emotional challenges and consequences associated with gatekeeping; and balancing other demands and contextual factors.

Counselor educators come to this role with some level of preparation and then embark on a continual experiential and developmental process of becoming a gatekeeper. Inherent in this process is the integration of the gatekeeper role in the ongoing dialectical experience of the counselor vs. the counselor educator. Participants note their inherent inclinations and initial training as counselors, i.e. people who choose to help people, strive to support them, see them holistically, and be “on their side”. Although counselor educators understand their role to train, to evaluate, to protect the public and thus the need to gatekeep- the counselor and humanistic lens is impossible to put aside which makes it difficult to perceive, intervene, and carry out gatekeeping for PPC, due to the perspectives, values, and intentions that flow from having a counselor identity or background. Here, the term counselor can stand for any helping discipline (school counselor, mental health counselor, psychologist, etc.) Throughout a gatekeeping process

or situation, the extent to which a counselor educator can embrace the role of gatekeeper helps CEs reconcile and integrate the counselor-counselor educator dialectic and its associated difficulties.

Another dialectic that CEs navigate involves a process of perception/self-reflection/introspection and consideration of initiating a related interpersonal process of communicating one's perceptions to a trusted colleague or colleagues and seeking feedback to inform a CEs perceptions. This process is mediated a great deal by the contextual dynamics of how much trust, support, respect, resources, and motivation they perceive in their colleagues. The full extent of this interpersonal process will be explored in study #2. Most participants report having at least one colleague that they trust emotionally, whose opinion they respect, and who they perceive to be invested in gatekeeping, that they can seek feedback from. From when CEs first perceive a potential PPC with a student to the eventual resolution, CEs are engaged in a continual loop of self-reflection regarding their thoughts and feelings pertaining to the situation and its stakeholders. This process involves self-awareness and introspection to rule out any possible countertransference or bias such that the gatekeeping process is fair and intentional and objective as possible from the faculty perspective.

Concurrent with this process, the CE is continually feeling various emotions and reflecting upon and processing through those emotions whether: guilt, sadness, anger, disappointment, frustration, relief, gratitude, etc. Counselor educators experience a wide multitude of emotions in many gatekeeping situations and although some counselor educators have received doctoral training in gatekeeping, as one participant put it, "Emotional preparation and... more academic theoretical preparation [are] two different

things, they can't prepare you for the emotional part." (11,2,3). As mentioned, not only are counselor educators loathe to possibly "hurt" students might applying rigorous gatekeeping, but they've also become quite invested in these students and experience many emotions when it doesn't seem to work out. Counselor educators rely on a range of available internal and interpersonal strategies to mitigate the emotional consequences of difficult gatekeeping situations (especially when remediation fails and dismissal or other severe consequences are necessary).

Besides undergoing these two internal processes that are mostly centered on their thoughts and feelings about each gatekeeping situation, counselor educators are experiencing a myriad of thoughts and feelings about their own competing demands and resources, perceptions and thoughts about their colleagues within this process, and the macrosystemic factors that might come to bear (potential university administration involvement or risk of litigation or other possible retaliatory actions by unhappy students). Counselor educators are continually weighing all of their professional demands against the anticipated time and effort required of any potential gatekeeping situation. They are also continually assessing and perceiving their colleagues efforts as part of the program's collective gatekeeping response. The thoughts and feelings towards a counselor educator's colleagues can vary quite widely from gratitude for trust, support and mutual investment in gatekeeping to many negative thoughts and feelings of resentment, isolation, and distrust.

As counselor educators experience these internal dialectics and cognitive and emotional experiences, they concurrently are continually communicating with and working with their faculty colleagues in terms of multiple mutual programmatic efforts to

include gatekeeping which has a reciprocal effect on counselor educators' internal experiences.

Counselor educators who take gatekeeping seriously experience and engage deeply in affective, cognitive and interpersonal processes in order to sustain themselves, seek excellence and meaning as a counselor educator, and to fulfill their responsibilities to their students, their colleagues, their counselor education program and the future clients of their students. Their gatekeeping experiences (internally, interpersonally and systemically) are then internalized, at times not fully consciously, into an evolving understanding of oneself as a gatekeeper and counselor educator.

These thoughts and additional memoing and continued axial/selective coding have made clearer how the core category of striving and the 4 main categories.

Core Category: Striving to be an effective gatekeeper

Further axial and selective coding (see Appendix S – IE Selective Coding- Categories and Concepts- Internal Experiences) and further memoing (see Appendix T – IE Summary Memo – Core Concept Striving and) has led to the core category of striving to be an effective gatekeeper as the core internal process and experience that counselors educators experience within the context of gatekeeping for PPC. This core internal process is supported by four sub-processes which will be explained a bit below.

Integrating identities & balancing responsibilities

This category is comprised of the different concepts having to do with becoming a gatekeeper including learning about gatekeeping, taking on the ethical responsibility and contextualizing one's gatekeeping role with one's counselor education program. The other part of this category and internal context/process has to do with balancing the roles,

values, and responsibilities of a counselor, gatekeeper and counselor educator which participants see as essential but difficult. Also, counselor educators must evaluate their own current capacity and motivation for gatekeeping, given all their other responsibilities. This is a combination of two previously separate categories because they are so interrelated.

Practicing discernment

This seems to be an important and continual internal process that includes self-awareness and introspection, using clinical skills, and recognizing the importance of feedback from colleagues. This is a refinement of previous category that proposed that fair and ethical gatekeeping requires self-awareness, introspection and involvement in a group process. The processes that comprise practicing discernment seem to be practicing self-awareness, being thoughtful and intentional and valuing feedback from colleagues. This was a well-supported commonality among participants- their belief that they can't do gatekeeping alone in part because they depend on their colleagues' perceptions in addition to their own.

Managing challenging emotions

Gatekeeping is emotionally difficult for a variety of reasons and fraught with conflicting values, priorities, feelings and thoughts. Emotions can include: anxiety, dread, disappointment, anger, betrayal, sadness, guilt, etc. Counselor educators empathize a lot with students in gatekeeping situations. Besides just experiencing these emotions, participants have to cope with them, manage them and not let them overwhelm or damage them in some way. Having the support, trust, and shared responsibility/motivation of colleagues (e.g. faculty cohesion conditions) seems to really

mitigate the sense of stress and emotional burden that gatekeeping can be. In the absence of faculty cohesion, gatekeepers seem to be at risk for burnout, resentment, cynicism and isolation from their colleagues. Therefore, this is one of the central processes and experiences of counselor educators during gatekeeping and certainly contributes to a sense of striving (or not) as a gatekeeper.

Perceiving cohesion and capability in colleagues

As mentioned above, participants experience various positive and negative thoughts and feelings regarding their colleagues during gatekeeping situations (based on past and present interactions and experiences) which can be very impactful on their internal process of striving to be an effective gatekeeper. These thoughts and feelings were further questioned, analyzed and conceptualized as basically being helpful and supportive of collaboration and gatekeeping or being unhelpful and unsupportive. The qualities or conditions that seem most salient and influential with participants have to do with their perceiving trust, motivation, support, and competence among their colleagues. This internal process and interactive experience affects how gatekeeping proceeds and also affects the participant's striving to be an effective gatekeeper.

Taken together these 4 internal processes comprise the internal experiences of counselor educators during gatekeeping and all coalesce towards the core category of striving to be an effective gatekeeper. See Appendix V – IE Theoretical Memo- Striving to show the evolution of the theory since the initial thoughts above.

Manuscript #2: Faculty Microsystemic Dynamics (MD) emerging faculty conditions and processes

As already mentioned, the primary researcher decided to maintain the focus of this study and data analysis and theory generation to the scope of the research question which centers on the microsystemic dynamics experience by counselor educators. For sure, there are other influences such as university administration, CACREP and agency (practicum and internship sites) that can be conceptualized using the ecological model as inhabiting the mesosystem and exosystem of the counselor educator during gatekeeping. Relevant data has been collected on these influences and future further data collection, analysis and theory generation (perhaps prior to publishing on the faculty microsystem) may be able to incorporate these ecological components into a more fully developed ecological model of gatekeeping in counselor education.

Further data analysis consisting of more axial and selective coding and more memoing (see Appendix X Summary Memo – Emerging Theory: Conditions and Processes) led to the creation of the theory of collaboration – sharing the burden and the proposed model of the faculty microsystem that contains 2 main processes and 2 main contextual conditions.

[Reference MD Selective coding for core category- collaboration for participant quotes as needed]

[reference Appendix W – Selective Coding for Theory – Conditions and Processes]

Faculty cohesion (as perceived by participants)

Perceived faculty cohesion includes perceiving trust, support and respect for and from colleagues. Also, feeling a shared sense of motivation and responsibility for gatekeeping with colleagues. Some examples of high/strong perceived cohesion follow:

P6: Gatekeeping is the hardest part of our job... and to work as a team with people where gatekeeping is part of all of our jobs; I have to be able to trust that everyone else is holding students to a high standard, that everyone else kind of has eyes on in the way that we are supposed to.

P1: Our faculty dynamics quite frankly are amazing. I mean I consider myself really blessed. I think we all are always thinking about our students. We are very student-focused and all 4 of us come from very different clinical backgrounds. I think that's really valuable.

Faculty cohesion seems very important towards gatekeeping processes and effects of gatekeeping on counselor educators. This is explored further in a memo on cohesion (see Appendix Y MD Theoretical Memo – Cohesion).

Faculty capability (as perceived by participants)

Participants also perceive capability in their colleagues which includes perceiving colleagues' gatekeeping competence, their capacity (time, resources, and energy) and having leadership and effective policies and procedures. These also seem to be necessary conditions within the faculty microsystem that enhances or inhibits collaboration – sharing the burden. Examples of perceived competence or incompetence follow.

Differences in competence occur for many reasons according to participants and also seem to be related to motivation (prioritizing gatekeeping or not to some extent).

P6: If _____ comes and says, "You know what, I'm really worried about student X." I'm like, "Me too then, I'm totally worried too. I trust your judgment absolutely."...There's some credibility, yeah because I've seen her judgment before. I've seen her in the past say I'm worried about this student and she's right.

P9: But the other folks... say that they understand gatekeeping but they actually don't. They don't have a solid understanding of what supervision is. They don't know that there are supervision theories and models.

P10: [I]t's very challenging when my peers can't separate their counselor role from their educator role... when they empathize too much with the individual and... don't have the self-awareness around their own issues... those are the things that get in the way.

It seems evident that if you don't perceive gatekeeping competence in your colleagues then that will impede collaboration with those same colleagues or at least collaboration that participants find valuable or effective. Sometimes participants have to devote energy to strategize how to "work around" a colleague they perceive as incompetent or otherwise ineffective in the gatekeeping realm. Thus there are direct implications for gatekeeping actions.

Individual counselor educator gatekeeping actions

This category of gatekeeping actions was conceptualized to include all the gatekeeping actions that individual counselor educators can take (or not take) in carrying out their gatekeeping responsibility. Basically, there are a myriad of specific actions or behaviors that were organized into *engaging gatekeeping actions* such as following gatekeeping practices or evaluating students or addressing PPC. There were also lots of participant reports about the opposite of engaging gatekeeping actions which I termed avoiding gatekeeping actions from ignoring potential PPC to passing students along to stalling tactics. Some examples from the data:

P12: So, more personal professional dispositions and not just academic standards. So, we've implemented that in the last year. So, that's been helpful. Where now we have a

formal checklist that... we have agreed as a program to do this, the end of the first semester for every student and then again at the end of the 3rd semester

P9: You never know what their personal challenges are, but part of the gatekeeping responsibility is to also have an active level of involvement as a counselor educator with the students that are presenting with problematic behaviors or concerns.

And really make sure that you as the counselor educator have given all of the time and energy and effort that you can to really understand as much as possible about what's going on for that student related to their training.

P10: I do think there's a range of investment in that with our faculty, I think some faculty have a greater threshold for what they would consider a questionable behavior or incompetence or distress or impairment.... I think there's a kind of a range in what we feel rises to the level that we need to maybe intervene in some way.

P6: So, she will just say, "Well, let's just pass them." Or she won't even fail them in the class to start with right. Well, they didn't turn in their final paper and other things they did turn in were terrible, and they missed too many classes. But its way easier to pass them than to fail them and deal with the consequences so she's likely, unless it's just grievous; she will pass people that probably shouldn't pass classes.

Obviously, effective gatekeeping collaboration and gatekeeping itself to a large extent succeeds or fails based on the actions of individual counselor educators as these participants illustrate. The other major way that gatekeeping collaboration proceeds or doesn't proceed is via the collective actions of counselor educators.

Collective counselor educator gatekeeping actions

This category and second main process within the faculty microsystem for gatekeeping includes how faculty work together (or not) to address PPC, to make good decisions, to consider aspects of group dynamics and how they share the workload/responsibility of gatekeeping. Specifically the subcategories include: *interactive and inclusive group process, thoughtful decision making processes and sharing the workload*. To me, these are some of the key processes and collaborative (or not) experiences for counselor educators in the context of gatekeeping. As will be explored further- this seems to be the key process for collaboration and really depends upon the necessary/contextual conditions of sufficient faculty cohesion and capability (as perceived by participants). Some participant quotes that highlight these points:

P2: [W]e are pretty good with our conflict nowadays. I actually support divergent opinions that I'm not a believer in consensus, in terms of we are all going to be thinking the same way, that ain't never going to happen. We will get to a point where we just agree that we going to go forward this way even though there's two people who just don't see it that way.... But they trust the process, that they've been heard, they weren't shouted down, they weren't called names, they weren't shut down, they were heard, everyone got heard.

P8: [W]e never do it by ourselves..., we bring it up in a faculty meeting, discuss the student and then we see if there's sort of a consensus. Like if one person had some reaction to a student but two faculty people said no... then we wouldn't do much gatekeeping... we would talk about it... [S]o we check ourselves that way... We have three people there to make sure there's sort of checks and balances...

P1: [O]ne faculty member will... talk about a problem... the rest of us...are not experiencing the same type of problem. So, then we... talk about it, like okay so what could this be? ...why might a student be having... more challenging in one professor's class than another? So, we kind of looked at both perspectives...

P6: I think it's super important to challenge and be challenged by your colleagues to gatekeeping, I think it's incredibly important... I don't know exactly how [other teams] work. But... people on that team seem to be very much more careful with each other.... They work more in their little silos on that team, and I see how it would be very easy for student issues to slip through... I've seen it happen where faculty... do what they want and there is no check...

P3: I think what happens in a situation like that is then the person, the faculty member kind of gives up. If they get overwhelmed by other people, who go "oh no, that's not an issue", and then you get your perception discounted, and then you kind of fall back.

P4: But the student really should have been gatekept. There were some clear issues in my opinion and some omission of things that were actually potentially harmful. But the faculty member wasn't supported and it never came to the group

P9: The ones who are not as helpful, those are the folks that are going to... block the process using whatever skills and tools they can think of which is unfortunate. Because... they are just so outwardly delay tactics.... [I]t's a lot of... "Well, this is just a lot... I don't think that we should be rushing decisions... I think we should wait until the next meeting so we can all have a chance to think about this."

Clearly, participants have and observe different experiences of respecting colleagues, inclusiveness, cooperation, coordination, healthy challenging, valuing

different perspectives, etc. or alternately: handling differences poorly, shutting colleagues down, delaying/stalling, disrespecting colleagues, etc. which have differing implications and influences on collaboration.

Also as part of group dynamics and decision making, participants report experiencing varying ways that issues of power dynamics (especially from seniority or leadership position) were handled well or not well. The benign aspects of seniority were not mentioned as much but the unhealthy aspects of seniority/leadership based power and influences were evident. This would seem to have direct implications for decision making and sense of collaboration as evidenced below:

P3: So, if a faculty member had more power... they would have more influence on decisions about a person... continuing on in the program whether they defined something as a problem or not. Those of us who had less power, kind of went... along ... it was very hard to stand up and to challenge a more senior or more powerful faculty member. When they maybe didn't get along with a particular student.

P8: The thing that's good is the mental health of our faculty. Because sadly I think a lot of gatekeeping can be vindictive or people are pissed off or people who've got weird ideas and I've had faculty like that that would have brought people in.... some of it it's their own ego.... especially when you got a bad faculty member and the student... just doesn't respect the faculty member, then that faculty member is out to get that student. That's a mess, that's not gatekeeping, that's something else.

P9: So... if a faculty member for whatever the reason is, has a subjective opinion of that specific [problematic] student and... the faculty member who is bringing up a concern, is someone who they view as either an enemy or an ally that absolutely will have an effect

on whether or not they can maintain an objective perspective as a gatekeeper. So, I think the interpersonal dynamics of the faculty are part of what can contribute to gatekeeping not being objective... or potentially even not even happening and it gets blocked and becomes an incredibly different tool that isn't necessarily focused on the best interest of the trainee or the best interest of the field.

It seems like these instances come about because of a failure in collaboration, a failure in the appropriate collective CE processes and actions which might be due to having inadequate cohesion and capability. As an example, it would be hard to challenge unchecked power without significant perceived trust and support from one's colleagues. Or, perhaps, if everyone is less than fully competent in gatekeeping or is less motivated for gatekeeping, such unchecked power can take hold. These situations seem to represent the antithesis of collaboration and appropriate gatekeeping.

The last part of collective CE actions is sharing the workload, which is highly correlated with shared motivation/responsibility and those aspects of faculty cohesion. It would seem that the gatekeeping workload needs to be shared sustainably (not necessarily equitably – as leadership seems to take more of the responsibility in many programs) for the sake of effective gatekeeping as well as the well-being of gatekeepers.

P2: So it becomes the whole clinical faculty. Then we feel strongly that, the student needs to know that, this isn't just one faculty member. That all faculty have these concerns. We present a united front...

P8: We absolutely share the gatekeeping because nobody does it [alone].... [O]ur gatekeeping thing is shared, yeah it's equally distributed.

P1: I'm going to shy away from having this or I'm going to put all the conflict on that person who has more power and then I avoid dealing with it completely, I have felt that too. It's like, "well, you're the program director so it's really on you to deal with it."

P5: You know as the program coordinator now, I kind of get a sense of, the energy that folks are really okay and prefer to have the program coordinator be the person holding that bag, if that makes sense.

P4: [S]hared power divides out very similarly regardless of topic that people who are super invested do the lion's share of the work and other people do what's needed to be done and pass off the rest or they just don't do it.

P12: It is no different than any other program responsibility in the sense of; the people who are working hard at gatekeeping are the same people who are working hard on program development, curriculum development, attending outside meetings with the college or university or community-based meetings, writing additional scholarship work and policy papers, [etc.]...

Cohesion and Motivation

It seems how the gatekeeping workload is understood and accepted to be shared or not among colleagues affects more than actual collaboration itself, it seems to affect morale which is how it's related to shared motivation and a faculty cohesion factor, a microsystemic condition.

Faculty cohesion encompasses concepts/experiences such as mutual trust, support, and respect between counselor educators. These emotion-based experiences of colleagues are important to gatekeeping because along with capability, they tend to promote

gatekeeping collaboration, the collective and coordinated actions/processes that the program faculty engages in together.

As discussed separately, motivation for gatekeeping is a key component of capability- and when combined with capacity (possessing essential resources like time, energy) and competence (having the skills to be an effective gatekeeper) leads to a counselor educator having a higher level of gatekeeping capability. Increased capability seems to promote or enhance the performance of gatekeeping actions whether individual actions or collective actions, i.e. those performed within the faculty microsystem, i.e. efforts towards collaboration. The crucial element of motivation seems to be clearly implicated in these individual and group processes.

What is less clear is how much motivation or more specifically, a shared sense of motivation which I would define as perceiving one's colleagues to have a similar level of gatekeeping motivation as oneself, plays a part in faculty cohesion. As part of strong faculty cohesion (i.e. feeling supported and trusting their colleagues), participants noted their similarities with their colleagues in "taking [gatekeeping] seriously" or "being on the same page". In some programs this feeling extends to the entire program faculty. In others, it is not universal at all and participants spoke to essentially finding allies or sub-groups among their colleagues who they perceived to be as motivated for gatekeeping as the counselor educator themselves. This "being on the same page" can almost be thought of as an "esprit de corps" or perhaps "camaraderie".

After this reflection and writing, it seems clear that motivation is involved in both cohesion and capability. Indeed, a counselor educator has to have some degree of motivation as a gatekeeper to have capability as a gatekeeper and thus to perform

individual and collegial actions that are part of gatekeeping processes within the faculty microsystem. Also, when counselor educators perceive a shared sense of responsibility and motivation towards gatekeeping, it enhances the sense of faculty cohesion and mutuality among colleagues.

Also, when counselor educators who are all strapped in terms of capacity (time, energy, etc.) perceive their similarly-strapped colleagues continuing to do the hard gatekeeping work (whether as individual actions or collective actions), they are motivated to continue to prioritize gatekeeping and sustain their capacity. Thus strong motivation and strong gatekeeping actions witnessed among one's colleagues also promote cohesion (trust, respect, support, esprit de corps) and likely sustains individual counselor educator motivation (data?)

Collaboration – Sharing the Burden

These aspects of the two faculty microsystemic conditions and the two faculty microsystemic processes which lead (or don't lead) to a sense of collaboration – sharing the burden is the theory and model that seem to be coming together. Some thoughts about how these conditions and processes interact to enhance or inhibit collaboration.

Counselor education programs with a high level of individual actions, i.e. strong engaging of gatekeeping, if coupled with strong faculty cohesion seem to have a high level of helpful collective gatekeeping actions (as a program faculty) which would increase counselor educators' sense of collaboration within the program regarding gatekeeping.

If it's all high, then leads to strong sense of collaboration – sharing the responsibility. Which in turn increases faculty cohesion, especially trust, respect, shared

motivation/sense of responsibility, etc. which in turn enhances collective action. In so far as cohesion also enhances individual actions. Thus, the processes and conditions are mutually reinforcing if they are going well.

Is the opposite true? If cohesion is weak and capability is mixed or insufficient, then individual actions suffer (more avoidance, less engagement) and collective actions suffer (hindering interactions predominate vs. helpful interactions) which leads to much lower sense of collaboration. This in turn leads to more fatigue/stress (less capacity), lowered motivation (what's the point? gateslipping is easier) and thus lowered capability. Weakened sense of collaboration over time can also sap faculty cohesion as the rift between those trying to gatekeep adequately and those who are avoidant or incompetent or flat out refuse takes its toll. This gap/rift can lead to decreased trust, respect, support and camaraderie with colleagues, which unfortunately would lead to decreased helpful collective actions/interactions. Without significant change within such low collaboration environment, a counselor education program would need a significant new and intentional input into the system (new faculty, new leadership, new expectations, perhaps a change in the exo- or meso-system something like CACREP accreditation perhaps or new direction from upper administration, etc.) to change the experience of gatekeeping within the program for the faculty and very likely the students as well.

The Story of CEs Experiences of Gatekeeping within their faculty microsystem

Another way to analyze all of this is to ask “What is the story of CEs experiences of trying to do gatekeeping within their faculty microsystem, i.e. their colleagues in the CE program and the CE program processes and policies?”

Counselor educator gatekeeping experiences can be: personal (internal thoughts and feelings), professional (identity, role, career, expectations, demands), interpersonal (with students, colleagues) and systemic (the department, the university, larger systems). It's very much a personally tough process- demanding emotionally, energetically, time-wise. And the fact that it's so important (high-stakes) and so demanding- emotionally, pedagogically, legally, etc., good support, teamwork and collaboration are so necessary.

However, CEs experience varying levels of the necessary components of support, teamwork and collaboration which really influences their ability to sustain themselves in their roles as gatekeepers and CEs. It makes it hard to do effective gatekeeping without these necessary components. Effective gatekeeping cannot be a solitary process carried out by only one or a couple CEs. Although a program having multiple gatekeepers does not insure that effective gatekeeping exists, having too few CEs involved in gatekeeping would almost guarantee that ineffective gatekeeping is taking place. In short, effective gatekeeping necessitates faculty involvement and collaboration.

CEs experience conditions that have to do with their program (e.g. having adequate time and good procedures) and with their colleagues (a level of trust, respect, support, motivation) that are necessary to do the hard work of gatekeeping. Having higher levels of these conditions allows CEs to engage in processes they perceive to be helpful for gatekeeping. Without sufficient collegial conditions, CEs are more likely to experience processes that either hinder or avoid gatekeeping efforts. Lastly, all of it... I think amounts to a burden, an emotional burden perhaps more than any other kind of burden... but also time, stress, energy, workload, interpersonal challenges, intrapersonal

challenges, ethics, identity, due process, laws/rules, university admin and legal--- it's all such hard work and burdensome; hence: sharing the burden.

The Emerging Theories and Models

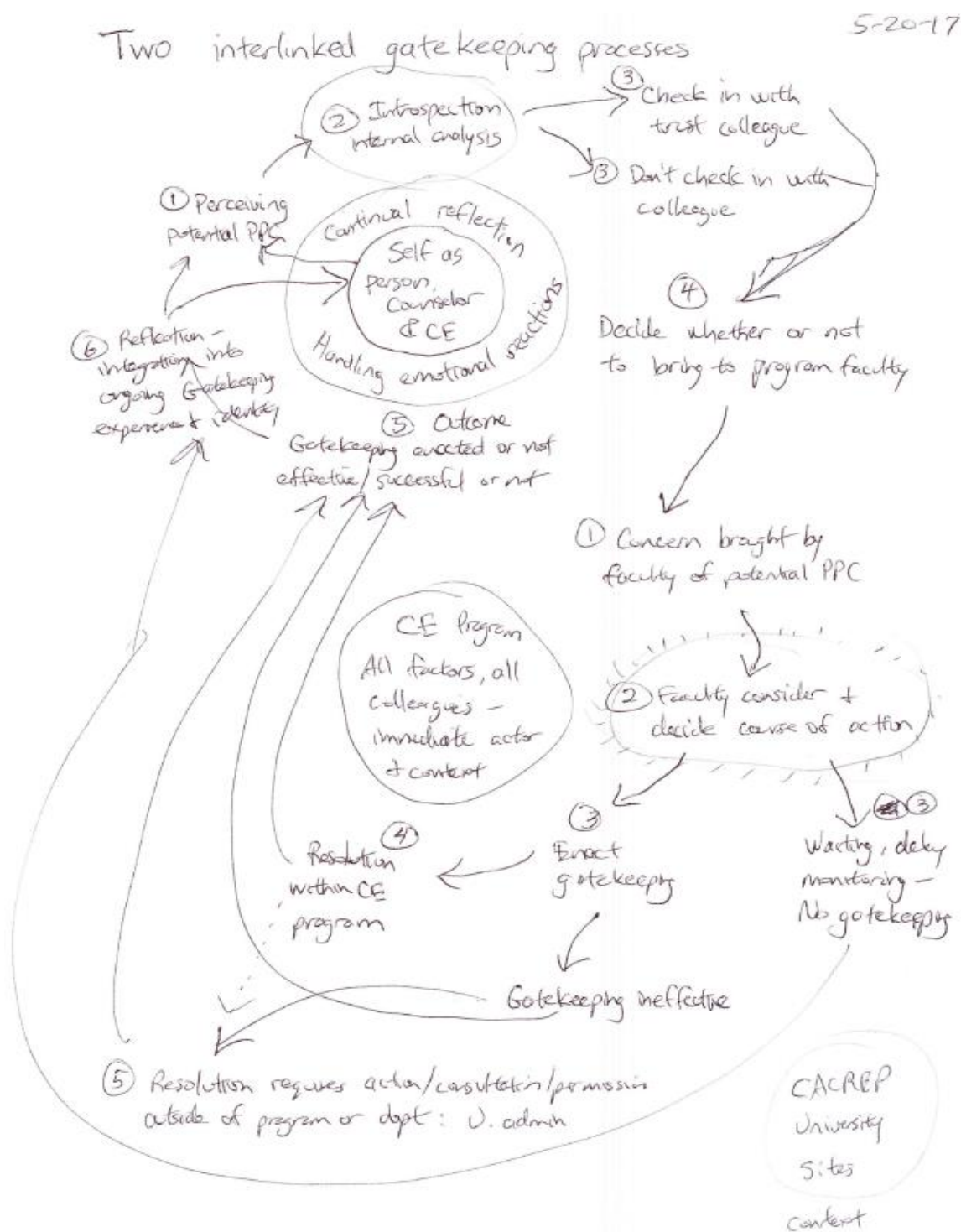
Two examples of the different ways in which I'm trying to visually conceptualize these inter-related conditions and processes are the Conditions x Processes diagram (see Appendix Y MD – Conditions x Processes diagram and Appendix Z Diagram – Faculty Microsystem). The latter diagram (Appendix Z) seems to be more systemic, more in line with the ecological model and a bit more holistic and comprehensive.

It seems the developed grounded theory of collaboration – sharing the burden and the proposed model of the Faculty Microsystem for Gatekeeping in Counselor Education have really come together as a result of the 2nd round interviews and a lot of iterative GT data analysis (memoing, modeling, coding, reflecting, etc.)

Likewise the theory of the internal experiences of counselor educators during gatekeeping – of striving to be an effective gatekeeper is well-established and rich with data. Member checking (see Appendices AA, AB, AC, and AD) also seems to support this as well as peer debriefing with faculty advisor and other study team member. Thus those aspects of researcher trustworthiness seem to be in place. The aspects of the microsystem (and beyond: meso-, exo-, etc.) will need to be picked up at a later point as they are yet incomplete.

APPENDIX Q

Diagram – Two Interlinked Gatekeeping Processes



APPENDIX R

IE Selective Coding – Categories and Concepts

Table 2 Selective Coding Chart for CE Internal Experiences & Striving

Concepts/open codes	Category	Larger category	Core category
1. Coming to understand gatekeeping 2. Taking on the role/ ethical responsibility 3. Contextualizing the gatekeeping role within the CE program)	Becoming a gatekeeper (developing & maintaining motivation)	<i>Integrating identities and balancing responsibilities</i> (not so well to well)	<i>Striving to be an effective gatekeeper amidst the many inherent challenges.</i> Variation = level of striving?
1. Having and using clinical/counselor perspective 2. Balancing counselor vs. counselor educator 3. Balancing gatekeeping responsibility with empathy and wanting to help students 4. Evaluating one's own capacity (time, energy, other duties) and motivation	Balancing gatekeeping, counselor, and counselor educator values & duties	CE ever-evolving self-concept Sustaining the GK role	Level of striving (effort) – a little to a lot
1. Self-awareness and introspection to address countertransference. 2. Noticing challenging identity aspects of students and their behaviors (e.g. “respect”) and faculty identities/expectations (age, race/ethnicity, gender) 3. Recognizing importance of and valuing reliance on collegial feedback 4. Using clinical skills & judgment	Practicing self-awareness & valuing feedback from colleagues Being thoughtful and intentional	<i>Practicing discernment</i> related to self and students (effort: low-high) Outcome (poorly to well)	Success in striving – being an effective gatekeeper
1. Dealing with anxiety - gatekeeping as an emotionally difficult task 2. Feeling upset at students – anger, betrayal, disappointment 3. Facing hardest emotions – hurting students by giving negative feedback or dismissing a student 4. Coping with conflictual feelings- having doubts, reassuring self	Managing difficult emotions Navigating the emotional consequences of gatekeeping	<i>Managing challenging emotions</i> (poor to well)	Unsuccessful to successful (rare?) Related to collaboration
1. Having positive feelings associated with working with faculty colleagues (high cohesion); camaraderie? 2. Having negative feelings associated with colleagues - feeling alone (low cohesion) their low motivation 3. Having varied perceptions of colleagues'	Having mixed perceptions, thoughts and feelings about colleagues (faculty cohesion and	<i>Perceiving cohesion and capability in colleagues and across the system</i>	Low = surviving (barely) (a few) Medium = striving

Concepts/open codes	Category	Larger category	Core category
capability/competence	capability)	(low to high) Esp: trust, support, respect, competence, motivation	(most) High = thriving
1. Dealing with administration – frustration but also gratitude at times 2. Considering relationships with sites – mostly worry	Worrying about administration and outside agencies		

APPENDIX S

IE Summary Memo – Core Concept of Striving

May 20, 2017

See: Diagram of 2 interlinked processes

IE Selective Coding: Categories and Concepts

The process of integrating round 2 data into initial coding set was easier than in 2nd study. Also, the process of some axial coding and some selective coding seems to have come together much more easily than in the 2nd study- which still needs some integration of round 1 and round 2 data and more working/refining of categories, and final eliciting re: core category.

In 1st study, it seems to have emerged much clearer. In essence becoming a gatekeeper and integrating that with the balancing of being a counselor and counselor educator is its own process that then is the context (self) that engages in a process of perception, introspection (examining thoughts and feelings), and deciding/ascertaining (often after garnering essential feedback from trusted colleagues to serve as a “check” for one’s own perceptions, if there is any doubt) to bring the concerns forward to the program faculty. Part of the context and a mediating factor here for sure: is motivation to be an effective gatekeeper or valuing gatekeeping or taking the responsibility seriously. The idea of taking gatekeeping responsibility seriously is also highly correlated or connected, according to participants, with commitment to high quality or excellence within the counselor education program. All participants profess to have this but do not perceive in all of their peers. That’s a mediating variable in study #2: motivation/ability

as a gatekeeper- part of context in program that can lead to misalignment in process or poor process that can lead to ineffective or no gatekeeping.

Back to this study: context seems to include: the CEs sense of themselves as a person, counselor, counselor educator, and gatekeeper; their thoughts and feelings regarding the potential/actual gatekeeping situation, and their thoughts/feelings regarding their role, professional identity, other demands and thoughts/feelings re: their colleagues, the department, administration, etc.

Mediating factors/variables would include: motivation, time, level of perceived support, energy (to push it forward or not), etc.

The larger categories lead to this core category/concept: Striving to be an effective gatekeeper amidst the many inherent challenges. Then the 3-4 main themes/codes to discuss would include: integrating gatekeeper role into counselor educator role (this would include becoming a gatekeeper and balancing counselor and counselor educator); being thoughtful; navigating challenging emotions; and balancing GK responsibility with other demands, contextual factors (microsystemic dynamics/influences) and continued effects of the gatekeeping role.

Emerging theory: the CE with an ever-evolving integration/understanding/identity as a gatekeeper and CE/counselor role and the inherent motivation that comes with valuing gatekeeping, the CE goes through processes of perceptions (of students and of colleagues), thoughts, feelings, internal decisions and interacting with their microsystem (elements of like trusted colleagues or the whole faculty) in carrying out gatekeeping behaviors.

APPENDIX T

Internal Experiences Memo – Initial Theory

May 25, 2017

How do counselor educators experience their internal reactions within the context of gatekeeping processes for PPC?

Counselor educators perceive the gatekeeping role as an essential function and ethical responsibility of every counselor educator and as a difficult role to fulfill. Results suggest that the difficulties entail both internal/intrapersonal and external (interpersonal and systemic) processes each of which contain complex challenges. Participants strive to be effective gatekeepers amidst these many inherent intrapersonal and interpersonal/systemic processes and perform this role with an evolving and contextualized understanding of themselves as a gatekeeper. The predominant context for the counselor educator is the complex multisystemic context of their counselor education program and their counselor educator colleagues with other systems such as accreditation, university administration and internship/practicum sites as other factors. Study #2 will delve further into the rich interplay of these contextual factors.

In trying to fulfill the gatekeeping role, counselor educators experience multiple internal dialectics or potential conflicts that they have to work through in order to effectively fulfill their gatekeeping responsibility. The four primary internal experiences that counselor educators experience are: integrating the gatekeeper role and the counselor educator role; being thoughtful, self-aware and intentional; navigating the emotional challenges and consequences associated with gatekeeping; and balancing other demands and contextual factors.

Counselor educators come to this role with some level of preparation and then embark on a continual experiential and developmental process of becoming a gatekeeper. Inherent in this process is the integration of the gatekeeper role in the ongoing dialectical experience of the counselor vs. the counselor educator. Participants note their inherent inclinations and initial training as counselors, i.e. people who choose to help people, strive to support them, see them holistically, and be “on their side”. Although counselor educators understand their role to train, to evaluate, to protect the public and thus the need to gatekeep- the counselor and humanistic lens is impossible to put aside which makes it difficult to perceive, intervene, and carry out gatekeeping for PPC, due to the perspectives, values, and intentions that flow from having a counselor identity or background. Here, the term counselor can stand for any helping discipline (school counselor, mental health counselor, psychologist, etc.) Throughout a gatekeeping process or situation, the extent to which a counselor educator can embrace the role of gatekeeper helps CEs reconcile and integrate the counselor-counselor educator dialectic and its associated difficulties.

Another dialectic that CEs navigate involves a process of perception/self-reflection/introspection and consideration of initiating a related interpersonal process of communicating one’s perceptions to a trusted colleague or colleagues and seeking feedback to inform a CEs perceptions. This process is mediated a great deal by the contextual dynamics of how much trust, support, respect, resources, and motivation they perceive in their colleagues. The full extent of this interpersonal process will be explored in study #2. Most participants report having at least one colleague that they trust emotionally, whose opinion they respect, and who they perceive to be invested in

gatekeeping, that they can seek feedback from. From when CEs first perceive a potential PPC with a student to the eventual resolution, CEs are engaged in a continual loop of self-reflection regarding their thoughts and feelings pertaining to the situation and its stakeholders. This process involves self-awareness and introspection to rule out any possible countertransference or bias such that the gatekeeping process is fair and intentional and objective as possible from the faculty perspective.

Concurrent with this process, the CE is continually feeling various emotions and reflecting upon and processing through those emotions whether: guilt, sadness, anger, disappointment, frustration, relief, gratitude, etc. Counselor educators experience a wide multitude of emotions in many gatekeeping situations and although some counselor educators have received doctoral training in gatekeeping, as one participant put it, “Emotional preparation and... more academic theoretical preparation [are] two different things, they can’t prepare you for the emotional part.” (11,2,3). As mentioned, not only are counselor educators loathe to possibly “hurt” students might applying rigorous gatekeeping, but they’ve also become quite invested in these students and experience many emotions when it doesn’t seem to work out. Counselor educators rely on a range of available internal and interpersonal strategies to mitigate the emotional consequences of difficult gatekeeping situations (especially when remediation fails and dismissal or other severe consequences are necessary).

Besides undergoing these two internal processes that are mostly centered on their thoughts and feelings about each gatekeeping situation, counselor educators are experiencing a myriad of thoughts and feelings about their own competing demands and resources, perceptions and thoughts about their colleagues within this process, and the

macrosystemic factors that might come to bear (potential university administration involvement or risk of litigation or other possible retaliatory actions by unhappy students). Counselor educators are continually weighing all of their professional demands against the anticipated time and effort required of any potential gatekeeping situation. They are also continually assessing and perceiving their colleagues efforts as part of the program's collective gatekeeping response. The thoughts and feelings towards a counselor educator's colleagues can vary quite widely from gratitude for trust, support and mutual investment in gatekeeping to many negative thoughts and feelings of resentment, isolation, and distrust.

As counselor educators experience these internal dialectics and cognitive and emotional experiences, they concurrently are continually communicating with and working with their faculty colleagues in terms of multiple mutual programmatic efforts to include gatekeeping which has a reciprocal effect on counselor educators' internal experiences.

Counselor educators who take gatekeeping seriously experience and engage deeply in affective, cognitive and interpersonal processes in order to sustain themselves, seek excellence and meaning as a counselor educator, and to fulfill their responsibilities to their students, their colleagues, their counselor education program and the future clients of their students. Their gatekeeping experiences (internally, interpersonally and systemically) are then internalized, at times not fully consciously, into an evolving understanding of oneself as a gatekeeper and counselor educator.

APPENDIX U

IE Theoretical Memo – Striving

May 20, 2017 rev June 13, 2017

See: Other theoretical memos

IE Selective Coding: Categories and Concepts

The process of integrating round 2 data into initial coding set was easier than in 2nd study. Also, the process of some axial coding and some selective coding seems to have come together much more easily than in the 2nd study- which still needs some integration of round 1 and round 2 data and more working/refining of categories, and final eliciting re: core category.

In 1st study, it seems to have emerged much clearer. In essence becoming a gatekeeper and integrating that with the balancing of being a counselor and counselor educator is its own process that then becomes part of the internal context (one's self-concept as a counselor educator in real time). The counselor educator integrates their current self-concept as a counselor educator with the many influences and demands that occur in their microsystem while having internal reactions and engaging in internal processes of perception, introspection (experiencing and examining thoughts and feelings), and deciding/ascertaining (often after garnering essential feedback from trusted colleagues) to take appropriate gatekeeping actions (e.g. bringing concerns forward to the program faculty). Counselor educators are experiencing perceptual, cognitive, and emotional processes while also assessing their own motivation and internal resources. They are thus trying to balance their strong values and beliefs regarding program quality

and maintaining standards and the related motivation and actions of effective gatekeeping.

Part of the context and a mediating factor is a counselor's initial and enduring motivation to be an effective gatekeeper. This idea of taking gatekeeping responsibility seriously is also highly correlated or connected, according to participants, with commitment to high quality or excellence within the counselor education program. All participants profess to have this but do not perceive in all of their peers. That's a mediating variable in study #2: motivation/ability as a gatekeeper- part of context in program that can lead to misalignment in process or poor process that can lead to ineffective or no gatekeeping. However, these perceptions of colleagues and one's own internal reactions mediates gatekeeping actions taken by the counselor educator even if their gatekeeping motivation is high to start.

The context and core processes that seem to influence counselor educators in striving to be an effective gatekeeper amidst the many inherent challenges include: the CEs sense of themselves as a person, counselor, counselor educator, and gatekeeper, i.e. integrating identities and balancing responsibilities; their thoughts and feelings regarding the potential/actual gatekeeping situation, i.e. practicing discernment related to self and students and managing challenging emotions, and their thoughts/feelings regarding their role, their colleagues, the department, administration, etc., i.e. perceiving elements of cohesion and capability in their colleagues and across the system.

Inherent in the balancing responsibilities are the mediating factors/variables that include: motivation, time, level of perceived support, energy (to push it forward or not),

etc. which I've characterized as elements of capability, i.e. their assessment of their internal resources and day-to-day motivation to address gatekeeping situations.

These four larger categories lead to this core category/concept: Striving to be an effective gatekeeper amidst the many inherent challenges. Then the 3-4 main themes/codes to discuss would include: integrating identities and balancing responsibilities (this would include becoming a gatekeeper and balancing counselor and counselor educator); practicing discernment; managing challenging emotions; and perceiving cohesion and capability in one's colleagues and across the system.

Emerging theory: counselor educators, acting from an ever-evolving integration/understanding/identity as a gatekeeper and counselor educator and possessing the inherent motivation that comes with valuing gatekeeping, undergoes specific internal reactions and processes of perceiving, thinking, feeling, and acting/interacting with their faculty microsystem towards striving to be an effective gatekeeper amidst the many inherent challenges.

Subsequent memos will address each of the larger categories and their influence on the core category of striving.

Variations in striving to be an effective gatekeeper

The variations that I conceptualize in this core category are two main dimensions and they are interrelated. One sense of striving has to do with current level of striving (**effort**), like how hard is someone trying? Counselor educators can be striving (trying) a little to a lot and what this means is that they can currently be engaged in individual and collective gatekeeping actions and behaviors a little or a lot, or perhaps insufficiently to sufficiently. And somehow this has to square with their self-concept... and seems related

quite a bit to their own capability (in-the-moment motivation and capacity). Capacity might include their own internal resources- energy, cognitive ability, emotion regulation, etc. that could almost “impair” them and their abilities including gatekeeping. Or, just knowing that they have a lot going on, or that there isn’t a lot of buy-in, support, shared responsibility (i.e. low cohesion and capability), they might choose to “downshift” and thus put less effort into gatekeeping. Thus, their current level of striving could be lower.

Another sense of *striving to be an effective gatekeeper* is **how successful** a counselor educator is in reaching the goal of being an effective gatekeeper. This has not been explored a lot (not directly asked) nor is someone’s self-appraisal an accurate way to assess effectiveness as a gatekeeper, but certainly counselor educators have some sense of themselves (and perhaps integrated with their perceptions of their counselor education program) as an effective gatekeeper. In this way, an individual identity and competence as a gatekeeper can be heavily influenced and integrated with a collective identity and perception. This is an area that deserves more research. Although a counselor educator’s main duties are typically evaluated individually (i.e. teaching a class, conducting research, performing service), such indicators as gatekeeping outcomes or effectiveness or quality of counseling graduates or quality of the counselor education program are, by necessity, collective endeavors that cannot be foisted on any individual counselor educator.

In spite of all this, it does seem that counselor educators have a sense of themselves as a gatekeeper that is more or less well-reconciled with the gatekeeping motivations and abilities of their colleagues. To a large extent, it’s the “matching” or concordance of these two “levels of gatekeeping effectiveness or responsibility- the

individual and the program level” that informs and perhaps influences a counselor educator’s sense of satisfaction overall. It certainly does influence their perception and experience of their colleagues, their sense of faculty cohesion, and in some ways their overall motivation as a counselor educator. Certainly, participants who experience a large discrepancy between their own gatekeeping motivations and actions and that of their colleagues report some of the most dissatisfaction, isolation, and burnout of all participants.

Thus, as will be explored further, the category of *perceiving cohesion and capability in colleagues* is influential in the more collective sense of striving to be an effective gatekeeper and as part of the iterative cycle, a counselor’s evolving self-concept as a counselor educator.

APPENDIX V

MD Selective Coding for Theory – Conditions and Processes

Table 3 Faculty Conditions – Faculty Cohesion and Faculty Capability

Having necessary conditions	Having poor conditions	Category & variation	Faculty conditions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having trust • Trusting well-known colleagues • Relying on colleagues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lacking trust in colleagues • Facing mistrust from colleagues 	Trust (none to some to a high)	Cohesion (weak to strong) Low 5, 12 High 1,6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciating colleagues • Sharing the emotional burden • Getting along • Feeling supported by colleagues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling a lack of support from colleagues • Faltering collegiality in difficult gatekeeping • Negative interpersonal dynamics 	Support from colleagues (low to high) <i>Camaraderie</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respecting colleagues' perceptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not trusting colleagues perceptions 	Respect for colleagues	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared sense of responsibility • Perceiving commitment to quality and thus gatekeeping • Some faculty not as invested thus unequal sharing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not sharing responsibility • Having different motivations • Colleagues not invested in quality nor gatekeeping • Faculty resistant to change 	Shared motivation & sense of responsibility (low to high)	
Helpful conditions	Unhelpful conditions	Category & variation	Faculty conditions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balancing counselor & CE roles • Understanding & acting GK role • Gaining perspective from coll. • Drawing on shared experience • Valuing diverse perspectives • Respecting colleagues' perceptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can't separate counselor role from educator role • Having colleagues who are not aware of their limitations • Having colleagues who don't understand gatekeeping • Not discerning issues or skills 	Having competence (low to high)	Capability (ineffective to effective) Weak – strong High 1,8 Low 9, 12
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needing time to collaborate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Struggling not enough time • Not having resources to do gatekeeping 	Having capacity (adequate to inadequate)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having good P&P • Seeking to improve P&P • Having effective program leadership 	n/a	Having leadership & effective P&P	

Table 4. Counselor Educator Faculty Microsystemic Processes (Individual Actions-Engaging/Avoiding Gatekeeping and Collective actions – Helping/Hindering Collaboration)

Engaging gatekeeping	Avoiding gatekeeping	Category & variation	Faculty processes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being consistent & following good practices Being involved with students Evaluating students carefully Giving students formative feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experiencing variability in perceiving PPC Faculty avoidance of gatekeeping Passing students along Ignoring potential PPC Talking tough but avoiding action Actively refusing to do gatekeeping Avoiding conflict 	Engaging in gatekeeping actions None – a lot	CE Individual actions - engaging vs. avoiding gatekeeping
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Getting feedback from colleagues to gain perspective Relying on colleagues for validation Getting consultation and support from colleagues 	n/a	Engaging colleagues (not at all to a lot)	
Helping collaboration	Hindering collaboration	Category & variation	Faculty processes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working together well Appreciating the group process, even if difficult Handling differences well Valuing healthy challenging of colleagues Colleagues providing validation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Handling differences poorly- shutting down conversation Delaying the process/stalling but talking tough Not exploring concerns 	Interactive and inclusive group process	CE Collective actions - helping vs. hindering collaboration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seniority as a factor Having consensus is validating and makes decisions easier Moving forward without consensus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unhealthy faculty dynamics hurt gatekeeping Consensus as avoidance of gatekeeping 	Thoughtful decision making processes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharing the gatekeeping workload equitably Challenging colleagues to follow through Putting responsibility on program leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoiding the work of gatekeeping Sharing inequitably – some working much harder than others 	Sharing workload (equitable to inequitable)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following established P&P Having consistent colleagues Updating and evolving over time 	n/a	Following effective P&P (well-not well)	

APPENDIX W

MD Summary Memo – Emerging Theory: Conditions and Processes

June 2, 2017

I've been able to get clearer, more succinct and continue to focus/narrow down and see the connections between necessary faculty/collegial conditions and the processes they interact with.

These faculty conditions are counselor educators' perceptions about the state of their relationships with their colleagues and their colleagues' capabilities and motivations regarding gatekeeping. The two main conditions are cohesion and capability. Cohesion includes crucial relational categories/concepts of trust, support and respect, while capability includes concepts such as levels of motivation, competence and capacity (time, resources). Each of these conditions (and sub-conditions) interacts with one another and also strongly influences the two main processes of gatekeeping in the faculty microsystem. It is important to note that these conditions seem necessary and may or may not be sufficient (to use Rogerian terms) for effective gatekeeping in counselor education programs. Essentially, both cohesion and capability can range from low to high and will have varied effects on the two main gatekeeping processes in the faculty microsystem.

The two main processes in the faculty microsystem that counselor educators experience are: engaging/avoiding of gatekeeping by individual counselor educator colleagues and enhancing/inhibiting collaboration by their counselor educator colleagues. The first process includes all of the actions and behaviors of individual counselor educators that relate to gatekeeping which they carry out on an individual level (e.g. inflating a student's grade or ignoring a student with PPC in their class) which counselor

educators perceive to be their colleagues either engaging in or avoiding gatekeeping. The second main process in the faculty microsystem includes all of the actions and behaviors of counselor educators in their interactions with one another (e.g. giving and getting feedback on colleague's perceptions of potential PPC or behaviors in faculty meetings during discussions of concerning students) that counselor educators perceive as either enhancing or inhibiting collaboration towards gatekeeping.

Further memos will explore:

- the interactional effects between the two conditions (and their sub-conditions or concepts that comprise the two main conditions)
- the concept of motivation which seems to straddle both cohesion (sense of shared motivation) and capability (need motivation along with competence and capacity to enact gatekeeping behaviors and attitudes)
- how cohesion and capability influence the process of individual counselor educators engaging vs. avoiding gatekeeping
- how cohesion and capability influence the process of counselor educators enhancing or inhibiting collaboration
- and lastly, because these faculty conditions are perceptions about colleagues and relationships that are built from a reciprocal feedback loop of being affected by colleagues' actions and behaviors, I will explore how engaging/avoiding gatekeeping and enhancing/inhibiting collaboration affect the faculty conditions and....

Of course these collective experiences then, in turn, affect the counselor educators' evolving/developing sense of themselves as a gatekeeper and their thoughts/feelings

about their colleagues in any given gatekeeping situation, which is already explored in study #1 about counselor educators' internal experiences.

APPENDIX X

MD Diagram – Collaboration: Conditions x Processes

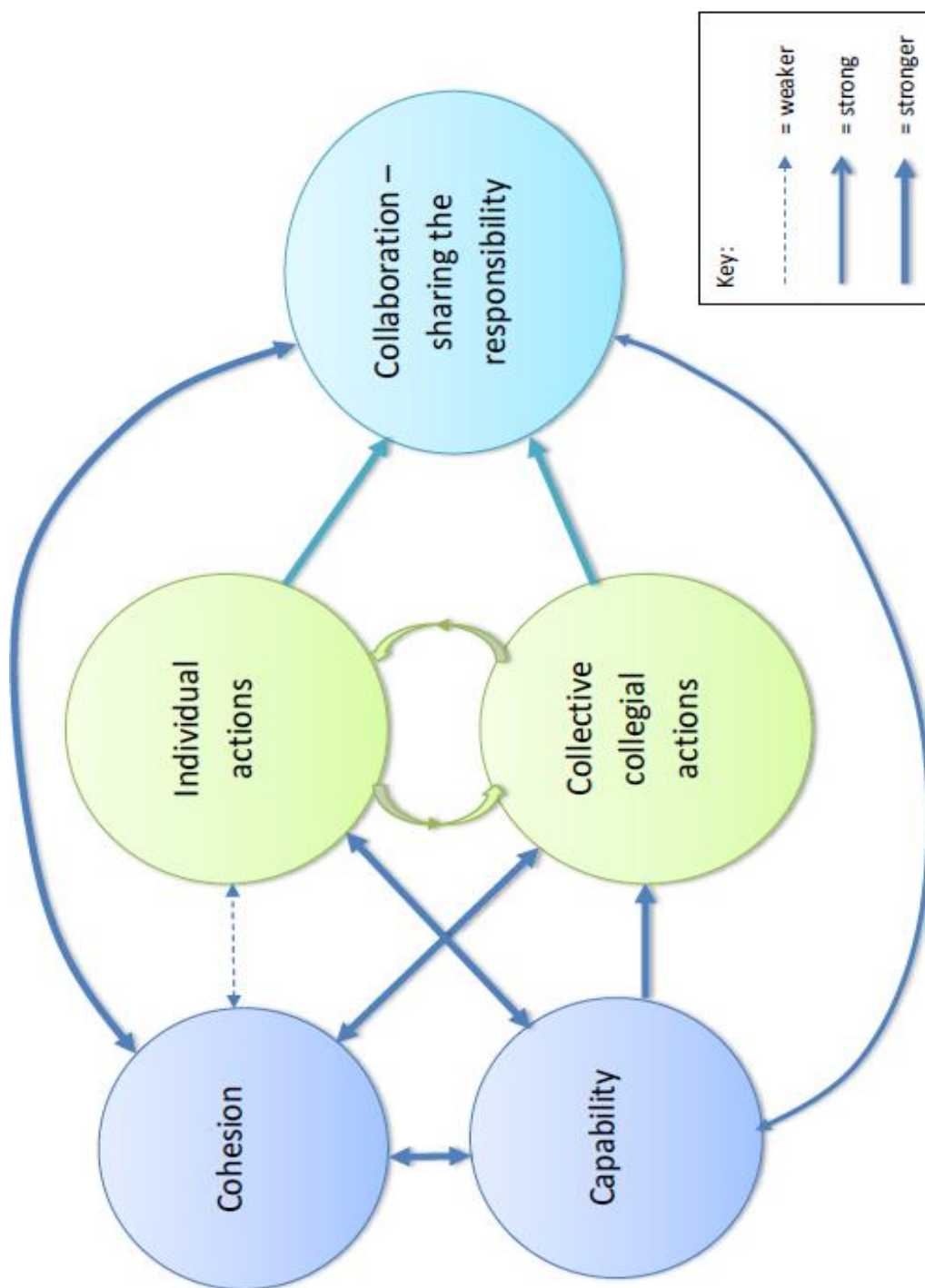


Figure 1 MD – Collaboration: Conditions X Processes Diagram

APPENDIX Z

Email to Participants for Member Checks

Dear [Participant],

I hope that summer is treating you well. I am progressing along and at the stage of conducting some member checking, a key component of insuring trustworthiness in qualitative research.

Please read through the two attached Annotated Outlines for the results section of two separate manuscript-style dissertation chapters, the first study on Counselor Educators' Internal Experiences of Gatekeeping and the second study on Counselor Educators and Faculty Microsystemic Dynamics during Gatekeeping. These are pretty abstract outlines, so there's a lot of detail to fill in, but these should give you a good idea of the theory and concepts that have been conceptualized from the data.

I'm open to your thoughts and feedback. In general, do the theories, models and overall results make sense to you? Do they seem to incorporate your experience?

Please also find attached our two interview transcripts.

I look forward to your comments and thoughts that you can email back to me within one week's time.

Thank you for any feedback that you can provide on the results thus far.

Happy summer and stay cool!

Best,

Victor

Victor Chang, MA LPC

PhD Candidate

Oregon State University

APPENDIX AA

Annotated Outline – Internal Experiences

Title: A Grounded Theory Study on Counselor Educators' Internal Experiences of Gatekeeping

Central research question: How do counselor educators experience their internal reactions within the context of gatekeeping processes for PPC?

Counselor educators experience a range of internal reactions to gatekeeping that must be effectively considered, managed, reconciled, and thought through as they carry out their gatekeeping responsibility and strive to be an effective gatekeeper amidst the many inherent challenges.

I. Results – Theory of *Striving to be an effective gatekeeper*

Comprised of four major categories of internal reactions and processes, *striving to be an effective gatekeeper* is the core category of internal experience for counselor educators during gatekeeping. A model of Striving to be an effective gatekeeper is proposed.

A. Introduction and Overview of categories, core category, and theory

The myriad of related internal reactions were coded into four main sets of internal processes each of which influence the core category of: *striving to be an effective gatekeeper*. The four main categories of internal processes are: *integrating identities and balancing responsibilities, practicing discernment, managing challenging emotions, and perceiving cohesion and capability in colleagues and across systems*. Each category influences a counselor educator's sense of themselves as *striving to be an effective gatekeeper*. As this study only focuses on the internal reactions and processes, it does not

delve into the other significant related process and context- that being the faculty/program environment and the quality of collaboration with one's colleague during gatekeeping. However, the internal aspect of this truly interactive and contextual component is internally represented by *perceiving cohesion and capability in colleagues and across systems*.

B. Integrating identities and balancing responsibilities

The first major category of internal reactions that counselor educators experience within the context of gatekeeping processes serves also as much of the internal context for all of the associated gatekeeping reactions and responses. I've named this category *integrating identities and balancing responsibilities* and it incorporates both *becoming a gatekeeper* and *balancing gatekeeping, counselor, and counselor educator values and duties*. As a counselor educator's lived experience of the multiple duties and demands of a counselor educator evolves alongside their accumulating experiences of gatekeeping within their program, these gatekeeping experiences would seem to interact with the counselor educator's ever-evolving identity as a gatekeeper which would then have an impact on their sense of *striving to be an effective gatekeeper*.

C. Practicing discernment

Practicing discernment encompasses *using clinical skills and judgment, practicing self-awareness and introspection to avoid potential counter-transference, noticing challenging issues, and recognizing the importance of collegial feedback* in order to accurately appraise, evaluate, remediate and monitor a student with potential PPC. Fair, ethical and effective gatekeeping requires this level of self-awareness on an individual and program level, in part because of the subjectivity inherent in gatekeeping. When

counselor educators are able to enact a high level of *practicing discernment* they feel capable and effective as a gatekeeper thus enhancing the sense of *striving to be an effective gatekeeper*.

D. Managing challenging emotions

The idea that gatekeeping is emotionally challenging for counselor educators may seem obvious or intuitive but data reveals that it's also complex as there are myriad emotions that are evoked within counselor educators throughout the gatekeeping process. Furthermore, counselor educators are challenged to effectively manage not just the many initial and ongoing complex emotions that are provoked, including emotions towards self, students, colleagues, but also the emotional consequences of gatekeeping. The complex and deep emotions that counselor educators experience as a result of gatekeeping have an impact on counselor educators that takes its toll and feels like a heavy burden. The extent to which counselor educators can cope with and handle the emotional and other challenging aspects of gatekeeping, helps them to sustain as gatekeepers and counselor educators. Of course there are other factors that influence how well counselor educators manage these emotions, chief among them being the trust, support, respect, etc. of and from their colleagues, all of which are key components of faculty cohesion, which will be discussed next.

E. Perceiving cohesion and capability in colleagues and across system

As part of their internal reactions during gatekeeping, besides thoughts and feelings about students, oneself and the process during gatekeeping, counselor educators experience a wide range of thoughts and feelings about their immediate context, i.e. their counselor education faculty colleagues (microsystem) and the broader environment (the

university and the practicum/internship sites). However, most of these external or microsystemic influence thoughts and feelings are related to their faculty colleagues and can be categorized into basically positive and/or negative thoughts and feelings about aspects of *faculty cohesion* and *capability*.

Faculty cohesion includes aspects of mutual *trust*, *respect*, *support* and *shared motivation/investment*. *Faculty capability* includes perceptions of their colleagues' gatekeeping *competence*, the *capacity* for gatekeeping, and other related faculty microsystemic conditions. It is interesting to note that the sense of *faculty cohesion* that counselor educators perceive in their colleagues strongly mediates the sense of emotional burden.

F. How the four concepts affect *striving to be an effective gatekeeper*

Integrating identities and balancing responsibilities and striving

As a counselor educator's lived experience of the multiple duties and demands of a counselor educator evolves alongside their accumulating experiences of gatekeeping within their program, these gatekeeping experiences seem to interact with the counselor educator's ever-evolving identity as a gatekeeper which has an impact on their sense of *striving to be an effective gatekeeper*. Perhaps positive experiences with gatekeeping outcomes (for students with PPC) and processes (individual and collegial/collaborative) would enhance one's identity as a gatekeeper which influences subsequent gatekeeping experiences and feeling like one is being more successful in striving to be an effective gatekeeper. Being an effective gatekeeper is complexly influenced by one's individual efforts and the efforts of and interactions with one's colleagues throughout the gatekeeping endeavor.

Practicing discernment and striving

Having self-awareness and being thoughtful are essential skills in the perception of student PPC and most counselor educators also pair these skills and processes with seeking feedback from colleagues. It makes sense then, that high levels of practicing discernment would support counselor educators' striving. Conversely, low levels of practicing discernment would contribute to lower levels of striving to be an effective gatekeeper. When counselor educators are able to enact a high level of practicing discernment they feel capable and effective as a gatekeeper thus enhancing the sense of striving to be an effective gatekeeper.

Managing challenging emotions and striving

The complex and deep emotions that counselor educators experience as a result of gatekeeping have an impact on counselor educators that takes its toll and feels like a heavy burden. For some counselor educators, it causes almost professional existential questions about whether they want to remain in the profession. It is interesting to note that the sense of faculty cohesion- e.g. the trust, support, respect and shared motivation/responsibility, that counselor educators perceive in their colleagues strongly mediates this emotional burden. If counselor educators can cope with and handle the emotional and other challenging aspects of gatekeeping, it helps them to sustain as gatekeepers and counselor educators over time. This has to do with personal aspects of coping and resilience but a large part has to do with how much they perceive and experientially feel emotional support from their colleagues and a sense of "esprit de corps" that they're all in it together.

Although gatekeeping's emotional consequences can be positive- in feeling good about carrying out this ethical responsibility or developing and maturing as a counselor educator; it also can lead to stress and potential burnout, especially if carried out without sufficient faculty cohesion, "So, I think that piece is like burnout, I think that's been a consequence. I think it really added to stressors and I think it's also a consequence too."

If counselor educators manage the challenging emotions well, then it leads to higher striving to be an effective gatekeeper and if they have difficulty managing the challenging emotions it negatively impacts their striving to be an effective gatekeeper, especially over time. As we've seen the large mediating effects of faculty cohesion play a role in helping counselor educators manage the burden and emotions associated with gatekeeping, and faculty capability helps in sharing the gatekeeping work.

Perceiving cohesion and capability in colleagues and across systems and striving

Besides managing themselves via balancing their identities and responsibilities, practicing discernment and managing challenging emotions- how counselor educators perceive their colleagues, the range of thoughts and feelings that they have towards them regarding crucial qualities such as trust, support, shared motivation and burden, competence, etc. will greatly influence *striving to be an effective gatekeeper*.

Because gatekeeping is necessarily an interpersonal and collegial endeavor consisting of both individual counselor educator actions and collective faculty actions, counselor educators need to trust and rely on one another to do their parts. Relatedly, mutual support and respect combine with trust to form a sense of camaraderie. When counselor educators feels this camaraderie for their colleagues and that is also combined

with a perception of shared motivation and responsibility and an adequate amount of gatekeeping competence, a particularly strong esprit de corps or unity is felt.

The influential role of trust and respect for colleagues regarding gatekeeping and trust more globally on how gatekeeping proceeds collaboratively and how that collaboration and competence iteratively affects trust is borne out by this participant who states, “Gatekeeping is the hardest part of our job... and to work as a team with people where gatekeeping is part of all of our jobs; I have to be able to trust that everyone else is holding students to a high standard, that everyone else kind of has eyes on in the way that we are supposed to.” And this same participant describes their team as “... probably the most collaborative team I’ve ever worked on, and I worked on some pretty tight teams.... So, we know each other well and we’ve worked together well for several years.... it’s a tight team and we trust each other too.” Obviously the faculty cohesion enhances collaboration and individual striving as a gatekeeper and those gatekeeping outcomes and processes seem to cyclically enhance counselor educator/gatekeeper identity and motivation in a positive way as well. High perceived faculty cohesion leads to the relationships and actions that help counselor educators feel like they’re sharing the burden and getting help with both gatekeeping itself and the emotional consequences gatekeeping entails. On the other hand, counselor educators who are committed to gatekeeping are thwarted in their striving to be effective gatekeepers by perceptions and experiences of a lack of cohesion and lack of capability from their colleagues.

G. How the four concepts interact to affect core category: *striving to be an effective gatekeeper*

Besides the various ways in which the four categories affect the core category, they are also structured such that *integrating identities and balancing responsibilities* serves as the internal context/identity and current and evolving state as it encompasses such aspects as *capacity* and *motivation*. It then affects how the cognitive (*practicing discernment*) and emotional (*managing difficult emotions*) processes take place and affect the counselor educator.

A counselor educator even in a low cohesion and low capability environment can still feel fairly successful as a gatekeeper because it's a strong part of their belief system and identity (i.e. they are highly motivated gatekeepers) and to the extent, that they on a more individual basis are still able to affect gatekeeping processes. In this way, high motivation/commitment may mitigate negative faculty microsystem influences such as low cohesion and low capability. However, it seems that high motivation coupled with high cohesion and strong capability (an engaged and collaborative microsystem) would best lead to a high level of striving to be an effective gatekeeper, i.e. thriving.

As an example of interactive effects, as participants have well-noted, besides possessing motivation and self-awareness, a counselor educator needs a requisite amount of faculty cohesion (trust, support, shared motivation, respect) with colleagues to seek and receive consultation from faculty colleagues that "checks" or "validates" their perceptions and internal reactions towards students with PPC.

Lastly, these three categories are all affected by not just the perceptions of colleagues but the actual interactive experiences with colleagues. In this way, this internal experiences theory does incorporate the immediate microsystemic influence of one's colleagues (sense of collaboration, cohesion, etc.) via the internal thoughts and feelings

towards colleagues. In an ecological model, the internal experience in Figure 1 would be embedded within the faculty microsystem of the counselor educator. Additionally, having a high level of *striving to be an effective gatekeeper* both in terms of effort and success is likely to have a positive influence towards more effective gatekeeping as a program. In turn, more successful gatekeeping outcomes and more highly collaborative collegial processes will have an enhancing and sustaining effect on the other categories. In this way, the internal experiences and microsystemic dynamics interact in an iterative cycle.

Counselor Educators' Internal Experiences of Gatekeeping

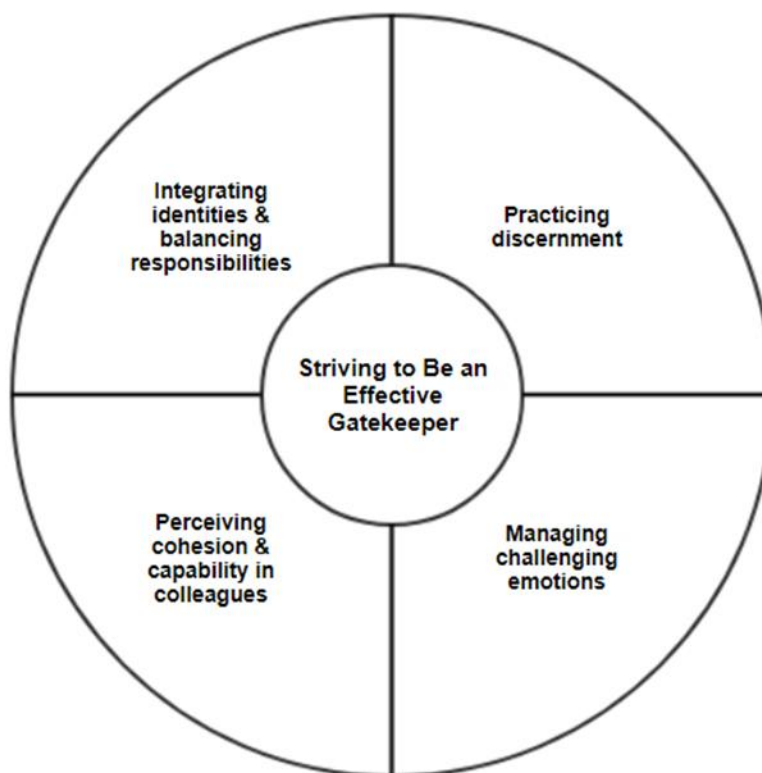


Figure 1 Model for Striving to Be an Effective Gatekeeper

H. Theory of surviving, striving, thriving as a gatekeeper

Based on all of the data analysis and grounded in participants' lived perceptions and experiences, counselor educators internal experiences of gatekeeping can be

conceptualized to lead towards *striving to be an effective gatekeeper*, with counselor educators as gatekeepers having a range of experiences from the lower end of surviving (sometimes barely), to where most counselor educators seem to be - striving, to the upper end of thriving as a gatekeeper.

APPENDIX AB

Annotated Outline – Faculty Microsystemic Dynamics

Title: A Grounded Theory Study on Counselor Educators' Experiences within the Faculty Microsystem during Gatekeeping in Counselor Education Programs

Central research question: How do counselor educators experience microsystemic dynamics in the context of gatekeeping for PPC in counselor education programs?

I. Results – Theory of *Collaboration – Sharing the burden* and the model for the Faculty Microsystem for Gatekeeping in Counselor Education Programs

Drawn from participants' rich and vivid descriptions and conceptualized through grounded theory, the core category of *collaboration – sharing the burden* occurs within counselor education programs as a result of the interactions between two contextual conditions and two main processes. The two contextual conditions are: *faculty cohesion* and *faculty capability*; while the two main processes are: *individual actions – engaging/avoiding gatekeeping* and *collective actions – helping/hindering collaboration*. Together, these five categories comprise the conditional/consequential matrix (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p.90) for counselor educators experiencing microsystemic dynamics during gatekeeping which led to the model of the Faculty Microsystem for Gatekeeping in Counselor Education Programs (see Figure 3.1). This model of the faculty microsystemic dynamics highlights the complex interactions between conditions and processes, as well as the counselor educator and the overall sense of *collaboration – sharing the burden*.

A. Introduction and Overview of categories, core category, and theory

The core category of *collaboration – sharing the burden* stems from the four main categories that underlie this core category: the two faculty microsystemic conditions of *faculty cohesion* and *faculty capability* and the two faculty microsystem processes of *individual CE actions- engaging/avoiding gatekeeping* and *collective CE actions- helping/hindering collaboration*. These four categories will each be explicated and then the interactions and influences between them and how they contribute to collaboration will be explored. The model for the Faculty Microsystem for Gatekeeping in Counselor Education Programs will be explained via examining the components first, then how they interact within the faculty microsystem.

B. Faculty microsystem condition – *Faculty cohesion*

Faculty cohesion is one of the central concepts that has emerged from this study along with the awareness that it is the essential/key contextual condition that is associated with a high level of *collaboration – sharing the burden*. I use the words *faculty cohesion* to represent an ever-evolving state or condition that counselor educators perceive, influence and experience within their counselor education program. It describes multiple components and represents a felt sense of cohesion (from weak to strong) with a counselor educator's faculty colleagues. *Faculty cohesion* is comprised of the elements of trust, support, respecting competence and shared motivation for gatekeeping that counselor educators perceive and experience interacting with their colleagues.

C. Faculty microsystem condition – *Faculty capability*

The concept of gatekeeping capability can be applied to oneself, to a colleague/fellow counselor educator and to a group of counselor educators within a counselor education program. It also ebbs and flows over time due to the influences on its

constituent components of having competence, having capacity, and having effective leadership and policies and procedures which will be explained further. These components represent necessary structural conditions for effective gatekeeping and collaboration to take place. For the purposes of this study, we are focusing on the perceptions and experiences that counselor educators have of their colleagues which are an essential condition of the faculty microsystem.

D. Faculty microsystem process – *Individual CE actions – engaging vs. avoiding gatekeeping*

Individual CE actions are those gatekeeping actions or behaviors that individual counselor educators undertake, either well or poorly and consistently or inconsistently/not at all. These *individual CE actions* can be conceptualized to fall within the range from avoiding gatekeeping to engaging gatekeeping. The two main categories within this concept are engaging in gatekeeping actions and engaging colleagues and include actions such as effectively monitoring and evaluating students, following established practices, and having consistency. Influenced by acculturation within the program and experience, engaging in gatekeeping actions stems from some amount of requisite competence and motivation as a gatekeeper as part of an ever-evolving gatekeeper identity. *Individual CE actions* and *collective CE actions* together represent some level of *collaboration – sharing the burden* in gatekeeping.

E. Faculty microsystem process – *Collective CE actions – helping vs. hindering collaboration*

Collective CE actions are those gatekeeping actions or behaviors that counselor educators undertake with one another as a small group or the entire program faculty.

Again these collective actions can be assessed to range from hindering collaboration to helping collaboration. This category of *collective CE actions – helping vs. hindering collaboration* is the most comprehensive category as it encompasses a variety of subcategories that together comprise the collective actions of counselor educators in gatekeeping situations. This category represents the most important set of processes that make up the core process of *collaboration – sharing the burden*. The four categories that comprise *collective CE actions* include: *interactive and inclusive group process*, *thoughtful decision making processes*, *sharing the workload*, and *following effective policies and procedures*.

F. How these four concepts interact to affect the core category: *Collaboration – sharing the burden* and the Faculty Microsystem for Gatekeeping in CE Programs

Taken together, the quality and sufficiency of the two main processes of *individual CE actions* and *collective CE actions* affect the core category of *collaboration – sharing the burden* simply from the cumulative effect of sufficient or insufficient gatekeeping actions addressing a particular student with PPC. It is in the complexity of how these two sets of processes are influenced by noticeable interactive effects with the contextual faculty microsystem conditions of *faculty cohesion* and *faculty capability*, that leads to the overall faculty microsystemic core category of *collaboration – sharing the burden* and the model of the Faculty Microsystem for Gatekeeping in CE Programs.

Although there are multiple interactions between all four categories, the strongest interactive effects are between *faculty cohesion* and *collective CE actions*, whereby such factors as trust, support, and shared motivation allow for sufficient *collective CE actions* that enhance *collaboration – sharing the burden*. Secondly, *faculty capability* factors

such as competence and capacity enhance both *individual CE actions* and *collective CE actions*. In these ways, *faculty cohesion* and *faculty capability* are both necessary at sufficient levels to positively affect *individual CE actions* of engaging gatekeeping and *collective CE actions* of helping collaboration in order to reach a sense of collaboration – sharing the burden. When faculty conditions are low or insufficient, it puts great strain on counselor educators trying to uphold their duty as gatekeepers and they definitely do not feel a sense of collaboration – sharing the burden; instead they feel like they, in isolation or perhaps with a subset of colleagues are shouldering the gatekeeping burden.

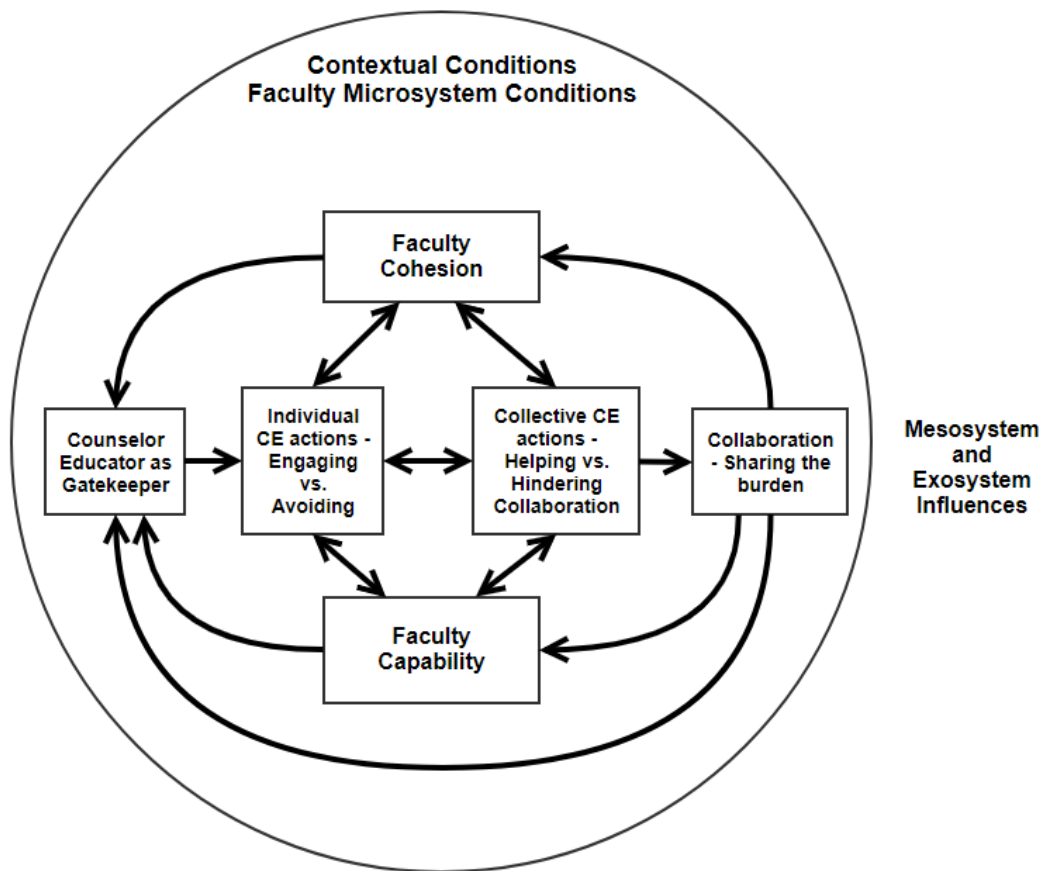


Figure 1 The Faculty Microsystem (Conditions x Processes) for Gatekeeping in Counselor Education Programs

This diagram outlines both a process whereby counselor educators perform both individual and collective gatekeeping actions that manifest a level of collaboration in gatekeeping and the reality that this process is embedded within a faculty microsystem, which itself is embedded within an ecological model. Mesosystem and exosystem influences such as adjunct faculty, university administrators, practicum and internship sites, and CACREP have their own effects and interactions with components of the faculty microsystem.

APPENDIX AC

Member Checks Summary

Member checking is a key component of establishing trustworthiness in qualitative data. During the theory building stage and after two rounds of data collection and analysis, annotated outlines of the emerging theories from the two studies on Internal Experiences and Faculty Microsystemic Dynamics were created and sent to the participants for their review and feedback. Participant feedback was sought by email (see Appendix Z – Email to Participants for Member Checks).

Of the twelve participants, eight participants responded and gave comments about the results thus far and the emerging theory. In general, participants thought that the theories, models, and processes made sense and they could “find themselves” within the resulting data analysis and grounded theory. They appreciated the complexity of the concepts and processes that were presented from their experiences. A few participants had questions about their experiences that were not necessarily captured in the results. One participant (#9) raised a thought regarding faculty cohesion that had not occurred to me or come up in other interviews- that of counselor educators feeling close to and cohesion with other counselor educators outside their universities. This would be an interesting idea to follow up on and would, if it materializes, provide another layer of complexity and sophistication to the emerging ecological model for gatekeeping in counselor education. It is interesting to note that the other piece of substantive feedback (from participant #12) also has to do with the faculty microsystem and how it is related to the as-yet-under developed faculty mesosystem and exosystem for counselor educators

during gatekeeping. The participants' specific feedback is quoted below (edited a bit for clarity, spelling or to redact identifying information, otherwise not edited):

Participant #1:

I don't have additional feedback. I read over what you originally sent and it seemed pretty spot on to me.

Participant #2:

I looked over the items you sent, no changes necessarily, only one typo regarding the ____ [redacted] and number of months/years of the ____ [redacted], but likely not relevant. I don't have any real input into the outlines, so specific to your work, but looked great.

Participant #3:

I do think your theories, models and results make sense. And they seem to incorporate most of my experience. I'm attaching a short commentary with additional thoughts. You may in fact be including issues I raise in the details that you will provide later. But I offer them for you to decide. If what I write isn't clear, give me a call.

Faculty Microsystemic Dynamics

I really like the description of "evolving" elements, cohesion, etc. I also like the "ebb and flow" of various forms of faculty capability. These descriptors really capture something that's not fixed in time and difficult to pin down.

The model itself is intriguing and appropriately complex; it seems to demonstrate the many interactive layers of the process.

Internal Experiences

Striving to be an effective gatekeeper:

Theoretical orientation – does this impact the various components? How do you address orientation? (Behavioral vs. psychoanalysis vs. experiential etc.) In my transcript I mentioned this at one point. Is it a salient issue?

Managing challenging emotions – does this include conflicts such as being accepting/non-judgmental – as a counselor, educator and person – vs. making judgments and rejecting students – as a gate keeper. This is definitely part of the “heavy burden” that I experienced.

I like the description in “Managing challenging emotions and striving” – seems an obvious guideline or intervention is to encourage faculty to discuss their challenging emotions with each other (before and during actual gatekeeping activities) – to build cohesion and encourage self-reflection.

Participant #4:

Thank you for sending this. The conceptual models do make sense and I can see my own experience within them. I look forward to the continued development of the concepts.

Participant #6:

Everything looks good to me! I feel like my experience has been very accurately captured.

Participant #8:

It does make sense and you have written it well. I'm actually in _____ but did take some time to go through it. Very nice job. I would think your major professor is pleased.

As for transcripts, I don't sound as coherent as I think I'm speaking. I hope I come across better than it reads.

Not sure if you plan to publish these but if so I'd want to modify some of my comments about _____ [redacted]. As it is now it is too identifiable. Let me know and I can change some of the details. Like a women in her 40's. Been a school principal and taught adjunct at a university instead of _____ [redacted]. Change _____ [redacted].

I hope this is helpful. I think you are making a contribution.

Participant #9:

I have been able to review the documents you shared and I must say enthusiastically "GOOD JOB!" I recognize this is only 1 of the many interviews you completed, and you still have a lot of work in front of you in this dissertation process....

One piece of feedback that struck me while I was reading through your annotated outlines is related to the areas where you discussed "the sense of faculty cohesion". As I was reading these areas, I noticed language was making references to faculty feeling even more empowered and confident in their gate keeping when they felt the sense of cohesion among their peers in the program. In my experience, this has been even more broad. There have always been faculty in every position I've held who I've considered a "safe person" and built a strong collegial bond with that would meet the needs that you described when defining "faculty cohesion". But, these faculty were not always counselor educators. They were not always in the specific counseling program or department that I was employed in. And, most, who I would put in that category now for me are also spread out throughout institutions across the country. I met them and formed these strong bonds through intentional and thoughtful professional networking.... So, I wanted to offer these thoughts to you, if they're helpful at all, as I absolutely support including a discussion on faculty cohesion and its impact on gate keeping. It seems essential given

your topics. However, I wonder about offering a broader discussion about the various ways that faculty define their "cohesive group" as it were and if there might be even more faculty who resonate with this theme than if it's considered only from the perspective of the faculty within the counseling program at ones' institution of employment. Does that make sense?

I also really like the connection to gatekeeping and the responsibility that comes with that for counselor educators is NOT only about gatekeeping students for the field. The responsibility also includes self care as a counselor educator and gatekeeper, and truly, how well are we all doing at that? Some days are better than others, sure, but are we consistent? Are we adaptive and healthy? Faculty are continually asked to do more with less and this is not unique to counselor education, and is certainly not unique to education overall in this country.... This will have an impact on counselors of all specialty areas. It will have an impact on higher education across all disciplines. So many counselor educators also have private practices and/or use their practitioner license simultaneously while serving as a faculty member. So, when they're constantly exposed to the "real world" through their practitioner lens, and then asked to also maintain the gatekeeping role as a counselor educator when they're a faculty -- I ask again, how well are we (counselor educators) truly doing at self care, balance, and wellness to ward off burnout?

Participant #12:

In general, I understand what you created and I think you did a good job... I did have a question regarding your figure 3.1, the faculty microsystem. I am finding myself struggling to understand the figure clearly, and I wonder if this is due to its title? The

“Faculty Microsystem” seems a bit misleading to me because how the microsystem is being defined and operationalized is not clear to me in this document. Of course, I realize that you likely operationalize this in another section of your dissertation.

Please let me know if my understanding is correct and I am following you:

Looking at your figure, it appears that the “Faculty Microsystem” is referring primarily to the Core Counselor Education program faculty, and the gatekeeping activities that occur within that group of members....therefore the “setting” where these activities take place would be on-campus or within the counselor education program itself, correct? Further, as you described the mesosystem and exosystem as being influences such as adjunct faculty, university admin, clinical sites, etc., I assume that is referring to the connections or links (be it communication, knowledge, information, etc.) between those parties (e.g., adjuncts, admin, clinical sites) and the core counselor education faculty? If so and if I may, I would just respectfully offer the reminder to state that the exosystem is bi-directional in nature whereby events that happen within the exosystem can impact the microsystem and vice versa. For instance, CACREP policies and standards that are created far away in some office in VA have an impact on the policies and practices of individual counselor education programs. But at the same time, individual programs are able to impact the policies that are created by CACREP by way of advocating for changes within their policies. At the moment, for example, I believe CACREP mentions gatekeeping in their standards. However, more programs may request from CACREP to be more explicit (or more lenient) in their standards towards gatekeeping, thus motivating CACREP to make changes to their standards. Overall I appreciate your models and theory.

