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BECOMING A GATEKEEPER

The Process of Becoming a Gatekeeper: A Grounded Theory

by

Marisa Christine Rapp

A dissertation

submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

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Committee Approval

To the Graduate Faculty:

The members of the committee appointed to examine the dissertation of Marisa C. Rapp find it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.

Steven Moody, Ph.D.
Major Advisor

David M. Kleist, Ph.D.
Co-Major Advisor

Leslie Stewart, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Dan Hudock, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Ellen Rogo, Ph.D.
Graduate Faculty Representative

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Idaho State UNIVERSITY

Office for Research - Research Outreach & Compliance
921 S. 8th Avenue, Stop 8046 • Pocatello, Idaho 83209-8046

October 19, 2017

Marisa Rapp
Counseling
MS 8120

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DEDICATION

For Linda Vogelsang, who showed me the power of sitting with someone as they search.

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The Process of Becoming a Gatekeeper: A Grounded Theory

Dissertation Abstract- Idaho State University (2018)

Gatekeeping is a primary function in counselor education that has been studied extensively (Brown-Rice & Furr, 2013, 2015; Foster & McAdams, 2009; Gaubatz & Vera, 2002; Lumadue & Duffey, 1999; Parker, Chang, Corthell, Walsh, Brack, & Grubbs, 2014; Rapisarda & Britton, 2007; Ziomek-Daigle & Christensen, 2010). However, there is a dearth in the literature related to the process of becoming a gatekeeper. The purpose of this research study was to gain insight into the process of becoming a gatekeeper, as it is a fundamental role and responsibility that counselor educators and supervisors are called to assume (American Counseling Association [ACA], 2014; Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs [CACREP], 2016). Seven participants in various stages of their process were recruited and selected. Two rounds of intensive interviews (Charmaz, 2014), two interpreting dialogue sessions (Coe Smith, 2007), and a final group member check were used to gather participants' narratives. Charmaz's constructivist grounded theory (2014) was employed to examine process and elicit meaning. Participants' narratives revealed four primary categories that include: Being Molded by System Values and Relationships, Engaging in Educational Practices, Seeing the Need/Seeing a Bigger Picture, and Moving Toward Congruence. Results indicate that the process is characterized by continual momentum fueled by participants' personal and professional ethics to safeguard client welfare and integrity of the counseling profession. Counselor education programs can use this theory as a framework to ensure they are supporting the development of gatekeepers and providing education that enhances their effectiveness.

Keywords: counselor education, gatekeeping, grounded theory

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The construct of gatekeeping in counselor education and clinical supervision has received considerable attention in the professional counseling literature (Brown-Rice & Furr, 2015; Foster, Leppma, & Hutchinson, 2014; Freeman, Garner, Fairgrieve, & Pitts, 2016) due to the critical importance the function serves. Gatekeeping is conceptualized as an ongoing process to determine suitability for entry into the counseling profession (Brown-Rice & Furr, 2015). Counselor educators and supervisors (CESSs) engage in this ongoing process to monitor and evaluate counselors-in-training (CITs) progress toward developing the “knowledge, skills, and values necessary for the practice of counseling” (Ziomek-Daigle & Christensen, 2010). The role of gatekeeper is inherent in CESSs array of responsibilities and has been mandated by both the American Counseling Association (ACA) and the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP).

Counselor educators and supervisors are often faced with CITs whose professional performance fails to meet academic, clinical, and dispositional standards (Brown-Rice & Furr, 2016; Foster & McAdams, 2009) and are called to intercede when students are not making progress toward professional competency (ACA, 2014; Freeman et al., 2016). Counselor educators and supervisors who question a CIT’s appropriateness of fit and fails to intervene with problems of professional competence (PPC) run the risk of endorsing students who are not equipped for the profession, also referred to as ‘gate slippage’ (Gaubatz & Vera, 2002). Brown-Rice and Furr (2014) found that consequences of gate slippage can impact client care, other CITs, and the profession as a whole. Consequently, gatekeeping is vital to the health of the counseling profession as it ensures efforts to safeguard its integrity and more importantly the protection of client welfare (Brear, Dorrian, & Luscri, 2008; Homrich, DeLorenzi, Bloom, &

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Godbee, 2014).

The practice of gatekeeping has been sporadically examined over the past 40 years (Ziomek-Daigle & Christensen, 2010), with more recent literature indicating a consistent interest in addressing this topic of inquiry (Burkholder, Hall, & Burkholder, 2014) as counselor impairment continues to be a substantial concern in the counseling profession (Brown-Rice & Furr, 2014, 2015, 2016; Lumadue & Duffey, 1999; Rapisarda & Britton, 2007; Rust, Raskin, & Hill, 2013; Ziomek-Daigle & Christensen, 2010). Specifically, in the past two decades, researchers have examined the following aspects and varied experiences of gatekeeping: student selection, retention, remediation, policies/procedures, and experiences of faculty members, CITs, and clinical supervisors (Brown-Rice & Furr, 2013, 2015; Foster & McAdams, 2009; Gaubatz & Vera, 2002; Lumadue & Duffey, 1999; Parker, Chang, Corthell, Walsh, Brack, & Grubbs, 2014; Rapisarda & Britton, 2007; Ziomek-Daigle & Christensen, 2010). Although the above areas of research are needed to address the complex facets of the gatekeeping process, there is a dearth of research examining the process of CESs becoming gatekeepers.

The purpose of this research study was to gain greater insight into the process of doctoral students and recent graduates becoming gatekeepers, as it is a fundamental role and responsibility that CESs are called to assume (ACA, 2014; CACREP, 2016). Moreover, CESs serve on the ‘front line’ in assessing CITs fit for the profession, and therefore a more thorough understanding of this crucial process may help to prepare effective and competent CITs in graduate programs, and may indirectly impact quality assurance of client care. The following section laid the foundation of scholarly inquiry as I examined the “concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and theories” that support and inform my research (Maxwell, 2013, p. 39).

Conceptual Framework

This conceptual framework demonstrated a representation of the knowledge I used to develop a structure for the study, not a comprehensive and exhaustive review of scholarly literature (Maxwell, 2013). Subsequently, I reference information and literature that supported the development and structure of my study. To begin this section, I briefly review the history and evolution of gatekeeping in the helping professions.

History of Gatekeeping in Helping Professions

Holloway and Wheeler (2002) provided a broad definition of gatekeeping delineating the process as permission or denial of an individual's access to someone or something. Specific to the nursing literature, Brammer (2008) described the construct quite literally as a 'gate' that is viewed for one to have access to with the 'gatekeeper' serving as the individual or professional who monitors, oversees, and ultimately grants access through the gate. In relation to health care, the term gatekeeping is frequently used to designate the actions of health professionals who screen the demand for access to care, mainly access to specialist services (Hegney, Price, Patterson, Martin-McDonald, & Rees, 2004). Although this concept of gatekeeping has been described as a common phenomenon in health care, the term often carries diverse meanings and screens various processes across disciplines, and sometimes even within disciplines (Lee, 2005). Gatekeeping in relation to health care fields can provide context to the present form of gatekeeping in the counseling profession.

Unlike the counseling profession, gatekeeping is referred to in various processes in the nursing literature. McArthur and Montgomery (2004) described the process of gatekeeping where psychiatric nurses identified and redirected patients with mental illness from emergency services with the purpose to balance fiscal demands, provide quality patient care, and an attempt to reduce strain on the emergency system. Cullen (2003) referred to gatekeepers as nurses who

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assist in triage and grant patients access to same-day appointments. Contrarily to gatekeeping being applied to patients and access to specific care, Brammer (2008) introduced gatekeeping as a concept that pertains to supervision of nursing students or recent graduates. Brammers (2008) utility of the term aligns with the counseling professions conceptualization of gatekeeping. Within the field of pharmacy, Shimane (2013) reported that Japanese pharmacists have recently taken on a 'gatekeeper' role to help identify patients that may be at risk for suicide or substance abuse and referring these persons to appropriate care.

Gatekeeping has also been used to describe the process that is employed in clinical research (Lee, 2005) to safeguard patients and their families who may be asked to participate in research. Holloway and Wheeler (2002) also spoke to the potential of health care professionals being a vulnerable population to participate in research. Therefore, the professional serving in the role of gatekeeper aims to protect individuals solicited to participate in health care related research as they are considered a vulnerable population (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002). Moreover, the notion of gatekeeping has been connected to clinical research to control and monitor access to groups for cluster randomized trials (Whicher, Miller, Dunham, & Joffe, 2015).

Additional mental health professions, such as social work and psychology, have closely related definitions of gatekeeping (Bodner, 2012; Sowbell, 2012) and have informed and shaped the counseling profession's current understanding and usage. There are a variety of descriptions for gatekeeping in social work. However, all definitions are concentrated on the practice and process of endorsing competent clinicians and ensuring their appropriateness for the field (Sowbell, 2012). Similar to counseling, social work has a focused meaning of gatekeeping with its primary purpose to screen, monitor, and supervise students and professionals. In psychology, gatekeeping is most often described in context of educational programs that "assess, remediate,

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and/or dismiss students and trainees with problematic professional competencies”(Bodner, 2012).

Ethical, Professional, and Educational Standards for CESs

Gatekeeping in the counseling profession refers to the responsibility of all counselors, including CITs, to intervene with colleagues and supervisors who display inappropriate or unethical behavior that has the potential to threaten the welfare of client care (Foster & McAdams, 2009). The responsibility to intervene is mandated in the ethical and professional standards of the ACA and the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC). Gatekeeping in counselor education takes on a more involved and multilayered role, as further specification in educational standards exist for CESs (CACREP, 2016). The below section describes the ethical, professional, and educational bodies that dictate standards and directives for professionals assuming the role of educator and supervisor. Ethical and professional bodies refer to ACA and NBCC with educational standards referring to CACREP. Expectation of gatekeeping competence is woven throughout these standards and directives. Inclusion in standards affirms the significance and necessity of this vital role.

ACA. The American Counseling Association (ACA) is an “educational, scientific, and professional organization whose members work in a variety of settings and serve in multiple capacities” (2014, p. 3). Counselor educators and clinical supervisors in the professional counseling profession are expected to endorse the professional values set forth by the ACA as they teach, supervise, and mentor emerging professionals. The ACA’s code of ethics aims to provide guidance for professionals during ethical dilemmas while simultaneously informing ethical and competent practice that upholds the profession’s mission. The 2014 version has organized ethical codes into nine main sections. Several codes related to gatekeeping in the counseling profession are *Section C: Professional Responsibility* (C.2.d; C.2.g) and *Section F:*

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Supervision, Training, and Teaching (F.1.a; F.5.b; F.6.b; F.6.d; F.8a; F.8.d; F.9.a; F.9.b).

Specifically, F.6.b directly outlines the ethical responsibility and role of gatekeeping and remediation with the code reading as follows:

Through initial and ongoing evaluation, supervisors are aware of supervisee limitations that might impede performance. Supervisors assist supervisees in securing remedial assistance when needed. They recommend dismissal from training programs, applied counseling settings, and state or voluntary professional credentialing processes when those supervisees are unable to demonstrate that they can provide competent professional services to a range of diverse clients. Supervisors seek consultation and document their decisions to dismiss or refer supervisees for assistance. They ensure that supervisees are aware of options available to them to address such decisions (ACA, 2014).

Moreover, Code F.1.a describes the role of supervisors in monitoring client welfare and the services provided by counseling students (ACA, 2014). In addition to supervision, ACA (2014) described counselor educators' role in evaluating counseling students through programmatic training (F.9.a) with the following code specifically addressing the steps counselor educators must take when an impaired student is recognized (F.9.b). The content of these ethical codes are recognized and built upon in educational standards described below.

NBCC. The National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC) provides national certification recognizing professionals who have met general professional and/or specialized counseling standards (i.g. counseling addiction specialty, distance counseling). Often, many states will require a professional to be nationally certified through NBCC before applying for state licensure (i.g. Idaho, Missouri). Similarly to ACA, professionals practicing or applying for national credentialing through NBCC are required to meet certain ethical minimum standards

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with three directives mentioning and delineating gatekeeping responsibilities (13, 23, 63).

Specific to clinical supervision is directive thirteen which states, “NCCs who provide clinical supervision services shall intervene in situations where supervisees are impaired or incompetent and thus place client(s) at risk” (NBCC, 2014, p. 2).

CACREP. The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) is the accrediting body that creates educational training guidelines and standards for counselor education programs. The 2016 standards were written and published with the purpose of providing a clear document of the accreditation standards (CACREP, 2016). Accredited status is an indicator to the public that the program is dedicated to educational quality with standards developed as a means to provide proof of minimum competencies being met towards the education of emerging counselors. Moreover, graduating from an accredited program is increasingly important, as this is a requirement for many licensure boards. The newest standards explicitly state the need for accredited masters and doctoral level programs to follow appropriate guidelines to support effective gatekeeping practices while also defining gatekeeping knowledge that is expected to be mastered for doctoral students (CACREP, 2016).

The 2016 standards are organized into six general areas with gatekeeping related responsibilities and practices first introduced in the ‘Academic Unit’ section. The standards require counseling education programs to include master-level students with information regarding student expectations; ethical and professional obligations; personal growth expectations; and policy for student retention, remediation, and dismissal from the program (section M, N, and O). In the ‘assessment of students’, our standards provide faculty with assessment criteria to guide counselor educators and supervisors (CACREP, 2016, Section IV, F). Assessment procedures are an integral part of effective gatekeeping practices as it allows

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evaluators opportunities to assess CITs fit, provide remediation if necessary, and permit CITs sufficient time to complete remediation. Of particular importance, Section G delineates the need for faculty to “systematically assess each student’s professional dispositions throughout the program. The assessment process includes the following: (1) identification of key professional dispositions, (2) measurement of student professional dispositions over multiple points in time, and (3) review or analysis of data” (CACREP, 2016, Section IV, G, p.19). This section is directly related to the dispositional competencies that CITs must possess to successfully complete a program and enter the professional counseling field. Finally, standard H (CACREP, 2016, Section IV, H) outlines the requirement for accredited programs to have “a systematic process in place for the use of individual student assessment data in relation to retention, remediation, and dismissal” (p. 19).

Section six of the CACREP Standards, Doctoral Standards Counselor Education and Supervision, lays out criteria for accredited doctoral programs to prepare graduates in counselor education and supervision. There are five core doctoral areas that CACREP deems foundational to a doctoral professional identity; counseling, supervision, teaching, research and scholarship, and leadership and advocacy. Accredited doctoral programs are required to address the professional roles in these five areas to ensure graduates have a foundational understanding to effectively fulfill these roles. Two of these core areas, supervision and teaching, specifically outline gatekeeping knowledge doctoral graduates must understand (CACREP, 2016, B.2.i; B.3.a; B.3.f).

These accrediting bodies (ACA, NBCC, and CACREP) inform educational standards and counseling practice while aiming towards the pursuit of professional excellence. Each entity includes and stresses gatekeeping practices to safeguard the welfare of clientele and integrity of

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the profession. The inclusion of gatekeeping functions in these foundational organizations highlights the crucial importance the process of gatekeeping plays in CESs training.

Process of Gatekeeping

Counselor education and supervision literature consistently refers to gatekeeping as a process in which CESs engage and interact with CITs to determine suitability to enter and practice in the counseling profession (Brown-Rice & Furr, 2015; Foster et al., 2014; Haynes, Corey, & Moulton, 2003; Ziomek- Daigle & Bailey, 2010). Gatekeeping is not a one-time behavior or task that faculty and clinical supervisors must complete to assess or evaluate and grant entry for CITs. Rather, the consensus among various authors concludes that gatekeeping as an ongoing and extended process. The American Counseling Association (ACA) described gatekeeping as “the initial and ongoing, academic, skill, and dispositional assessment of students competency for professional practice, including remediation and termination as appropriate” (2014, p. 20). Glance et al. (2012) described gatekeeping as a metaphor where CESs engage in the “process of monitoring progression through a series of stages via critical points of entry or passage” (p. 2). Homrich et al. (2014) recognized that CESs and graduate level training programs utilize several evaluation points as gateways which provide opportunities for CESs to monitor CITs development and provide remediation and assistance as needed. Multiple evaluation checkpoints (beginning with application procedures) ensure that assessment and evaluation is ongoing and CITs are showing developmentally-appropriate counseling skills and dispositions that are conducive with effectively working with clientele while simultaneously upholding professional values and mission.

Ziomek-Daigle and Christensen (2010) identified critical segments of this ‘process’ as they found counselor educators to describe gatekeeping as a practice that included four phases to assist them in their responsibility of assessing a CITs ‘fit’. These four phases include pre-

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admission screening, post admission screening, remediation plan, and remediation outcome.

Similarly, Swank and Smith-Adock (2014) suggested implementing gatekeeping practices during student selection, retention, and remediation. One can see that gatekeeping is not a single, isolated event. Rather a process that continues through a students or supervisees academic and professional journey with CESs being charged with the responsibility of continual monitoring. Despite Ziomek- Daigle and Christensen (2010) providing phases for an emergent theory of ‘gatekeeping practices’, no theory explores the process behind CESs emerging as gatekeepers.

The ongoing appraisal of student’s performance and comportment can become challenging when CITs display behavior or clinical skills that do not meet professional standards or expectations. In order to identify underdeveloped clinical skills and/or inappropriate behavior for a professional counselor, an examination of specific criteria that constitute impairment is necessary.

Counselor ‘Impairment’

Gaubatz and Vera (2002) found that 10% of CITs are not appropriate for the profession, as they struggle with professional competence (Brown-Rice & Furr, 2016). Current language pertaining to CITs not appropriate for the profession (i.g., not meeting academic, clinical, or dispositional competencies) is broad and lacks universal terminology that has been adopted by CESs (Evans, Carney, Shannon, & Strohl, 2012; Foster, Leppma, & Hutchinson, 2014; Glance et al., 2012). Consequently, a plethora of terms and definitions exist in the literature describing an inability to meet expected standards. Terms being used to describe these CITs or struggling professionals include problematic student (Kress & Protinva, 2009), deficient trainees (Gaubatz & Vera, 2002), problems of professional competence (Rust, Raskin, & Hill, 2013), impaired, unsuitable, unqualified, and incompetent (Foster et al., 2014). Similarly to the lack of consensus, varying definitions of counselor ‘impairment’ (term endorsed by ACA and NBCC) or

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problematic behavior exists. The ACA described counselor impairment as a diminished capacity to “perform professional functions” (2014), with Duba, Paez, & Kindsvatter (2010) defining impairment as “any emotional, physical, or educational condition that hinders an individual’s professional performance” (p.155) with describing its counterpart, counselor competency, as possessing both clinical skills and psychological health. Kress and Protivnak (2009) described the impact undeveloped clinical skills and lack of psychological fitness can potentially have on peers, other supervisees, colleagues, and even the society at large. One of the more comprehensive definitions presented (although referring to ‘performance concerns’ and not impairment), was written by Lamb, Cochran, and Jackson (1991). Their definition of performance concerns includes a lack of ability or opposition to acquire and integrate professional standards into one’s professional counseling behavior; a lack of ability to attain professional skills and reach an acceptable level of competency; a lack of ability to manage one’s stress, psychological dysfunction, or emotional responses that may affect professional performance engagement in unethical behavior (Lamb et al., 1991).

In an effort to present a standardized definition of impairment to the counseling community, the ACA’s taskforce on counselor wellness and impairment developed a description of impairment (ACA, 2007). The definition is as follows:

Therapeutic impairment occurs when there is a significant negative impact on a counselor's professional functioning which compromises client care or poses the potential for harm to the client. Impairment may be due to; substance abuse or chemical dependency; mental illness; personal crisis (traumatic events or vicarious trauma, burnout, life crisis); and/or physical illness or debilitation. Impairment in and of itself does not imply unethical behavior. Such

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behavior may occur as a symptom of impairment, or may occur in counselors who are not impaired.

It is important to note recent criticism the term and concept of ‘impairment’ has received within the counseling community, as the term has close association with disability, which would then potentially require accommodations (McAdams & Foster, 2007). Consequently, leaders in the field have begun to move towards definitions such as Problems of Professional Competence (PCC) as evident in recent publications (Rust et al., 2013). Defining impairment or problematic behavior and the characteristics of what constitutes poor performance is vital for CESs in order to be able to consistently identify behavior and intervene when appropriate. Moving toward a universal definition of impairment is a needed effort recognized in the professional community (Brown- Rice & Furr, 2015; Glance et al., 2014).

Despite the lack of a universal definition of counselor impairment, departments espouse program specific language and policies. Creating a common language in a department is crucial in efforts to successfully implement gatekeeping practices and protocol (Homrich, 2009). Homrich (2009) described three best practices to improve gatekeeping practices in counseling programs which include consistent faculty enforcement, establishing clear expectations, and communicating them clearly and widely. In all three of these practices, an established nomenclature is needed. When identifying and evaluating impairment, it is helpful for CESs to utilize frameworks created as a means to better operationalize the possible impairment a CIT may be exhibiting. Overholser and Fine (1990) suggested that *impairment* be evaluated in five areas: factual knowledge, generic clinical skills, orientation-specific technical skills, clinical judgment, or interpersonal attributes. Frame and Steven-Smith (1995) provided an operationalized definition of impairment for the serious deficit of ‘interpersonal attributes.’ They

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provided five areas to measure discrepancies in appropriate attributes for professional counseling. These include: an inability to be open, flexible, positive, and cooperative; unwilling to accept and use feedback; unaware of impact on others; inability to deal with conflict and accept personal responsibility; and inability to express feelings effectively and appropriately (Frame & Steven- Smith, 1995).

Defining, identifying, and evaluating CITs for impairment or problems of professional competence are a central task in effective gatekeeping practices. However, with the various terms, defining characteristics, and frameworks to work from, CESs may be left feeling uncertain about their evaluation and remediation efforts with CITs who display problematic performance. The feelings of ‘uncertainty’ and ‘hesitation’ have been found to be common experiences of CESs when engaging in gatekeeping practices (Glance et al., 2014). The complications and intricacies of the role will be described below, providing context for the hesitation CESs may experience before engaging in gatekeeping practices.

Complexities of Gatekeeping

While professional and educational standards place the responsibility of gatekeeping onto counselor educators and clinical supervisors, it is important to make known the often demanding and multifaceted nature of the professional obligation and role (Brear & Dorrian, 2010). A large body of literature exists articulating the complexity of the responsibility CESs are called to assume (Brear & Dorrian, 2010; Gizara & Forrest, 2004; Homrich et al., 2014). Counselor educators and clinical supervisors engaging in gatekeeping processes must attend to a plethora of considerations from legal entities, accrediting bodies, licensing boards, institutional and agency policies, and professional standards and guidelines. These considerations can include, but are not limited to, policies and factors from the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), CITs rights, institutional pressures such as desired

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enrollment, client protection issues, and inadequate training on how to be a gatekeeper (Brear & Dorrian, 2010; Brown-Rice & Furr, 2014, 2016). Moreover, after these multiple elements are taken into consideration, research has shown that counselor educators can still be hesitant to engage in the gatekeeping process out of fear of personal and professional attacks (Glance et al., 2012; Kerl & Eichler, 2005). Legal challenges arising from student remediation and dismissal pose the main professional concern, which can situate gatekeepers and academic programs in vulnerable positions (Burkholder, Hall, & Burkholder, 2014). Recent court cases, such as *Ward v. Wilbanks*, have demonstrated potential litigation risks and the complicating nature that gatekeeping often undertakes. Fear of legal reprisal and the many considerations educators and supervisors are asked to factor in when making gatekeeping decisions can place evaluators in a place of hesitancy or avoidance in addressing concerns in their entirety, specifically when evaluating dispositional competencies (Homrich et al., 2014). Gatekeepers have reported that the dismissal process, after remedial efforts have been implemented, can involve extensive documentation to safeguard against allegations of subjective judgments (Bemak, Epp, & Keys, 1999; Gaubatz & Vera, 2002). The complicated nature of gatekeeping is illustrated through findings from McAdams et al. (2007) where counselor educators hoped gatekeeping related issues would resolve themselves, which resulted in delayed remediation action. The hesitancy of CESs to engage in gatekeeping intervention may be better understood with an investigation into their process of emerging into the gatekeeper identity, supporting my proposed study.

Another influencing factor that can present itself as a challenge in the gatekeeping process includes the emotional toll of dismissing a student, as it is likely that a relationship has been formed with this student (Gizara & Forrest, 2004). Recently, the term ‘empathy veil’ has been coined by Brown-Rice and Furr (2014) to describe counselor educators’ initial pull to

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empathize with CITs, which may keep the counselor educator from engaging in “ethical and competent gatekeeping” (p.1). It is evident that a competent gatekeeper must consider a plethora of issues before engaging in effective gatekeeping practices. Consequently, training and special attention to the various issues that may arise is crucial for novice and developing gatekeepers. Understanding gatekeepers’ process of evolving into this vital role may shed light into the struggles they face with gatekeeping interventions.

Doctoral Training in Preparation Programs

Doctoral preparation programs are designed to promote development in professional competency to produce effective leaders in the field (CACREP, 2016; Lambie & Vaccaro, 2011). Specifically, CACREP calls for accredited doctoral preparation programs to graduate students who possess foundational knowledge to effectively fulfill professional roles in the following five core areas; counseling, supervision, teaching, research and scholarship, and leadership and advocacy (CACREP, 2016, Section VI, B). As mentioned previously, the function of gatekeeping is explicitly written as a standard in the core areas of supervision and teaching (CACREP, 2016, Section VI, B, 2.i; Section VI, B, 3.f). However, specific standards written in the three remaining areas also include reference to the construct of gatekeeping although not overtly referring to the function. For example, the core area of leadership and advocacy requires doctoral students to have knowledge regarding “current topical and political issues in counseling and how those issues affect the daily work of counselors and the counseling profession” (CACREP, 2016, Section VI, H, p. 40). Gatekeeping related issues have been a consistent topic of inquiry addressed in scholarly and professional forums in the counseling education realm (Burkholder, Hall, & Burkholder, 2014; Letourneau, 2016), especially in light of recent litigation initiated by students who were dismissed from training programs (i.e., Ward v. Wilbanks (2009) and Keeton v. Anderson-Wiley (2010)). Upon graduation, doctoral students should be

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knowledgeable regarding gatekeeping issues in order to stay abreast and provide leadership and direction in the professional conversation. In relation to research and scholarship, the accrediting standards outline the necessity for doctoral students to have a working knowledge of “research designs appropriate to quantitative and qualitative research questions” (CACREP, 2016, Standard VI, B, 4.a, p. 40). In demonstrating this standard, it is imperative for doctoral students to be knowledgeable about what methodologies have previously been utilized to study the myriad of gatekeeping related issues. Furthermore, a working knowledge is required to be able to develop a study that addresses gaps in the literature with appropriate research questions and designs.

Doctoral programs aim to prepare graduates to work in a range of roles within the core areas listed above. Outside of programmatic training, past scholarly endeavors have sought to investigate a variety of roles required by CACREP. These previous studies have attended to constructs of identity, development, practice, and training in roles a doctoral student is called to assume in order to prepare them for work as a future CESs. These studies included investigations into a doctoral students’ development of a researcher identity (Lambie & Vaccaro, 2011), supervisor identity (Nelson, Oliver, & Capps, 2006), doctoral supervision practices (Fernando, 2013), doctoral professional identity transition (Dollarhide et al., 2013), and co-teaching experiences for doctoral students (Baltrinsic, Jencius, & McGlothlin, 2016). These investigations have promoted better understanding of the varied components of doctoral students’ professional identity and contributed knowledge to understand emerging CESs. Yet, no research to date exists on the development of doctoral students’ role of gatekeeper, an essential function and role present in the core professional roles articulated in the CACREP standards.

The scholarly literature presented in the conceptual framework thus far sets the

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groundwork for the structure of the study. It is not intended to provide a comprehensive and exhaustive review of the literature in relation to gatekeeping. Rather, the framework provides a representation of knowledge utilized to support my research question. Towards this end, I continue to build upon the conceptual framework as I examine my personal assumptions, expectations, and beliefs that mold and inform this study. In qualitative inquiry, the researcher is the instrument of inquiry (Maxwell, 2013) acting as the tool to gather data, analyze the data, and interpret the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Maxwell, 2013). As I am the instrument in this process, it is critical to incorporate my identity and experience to inform the conceptual context of the study. I bring over twenty-eight years of lived experiences to the research process and strive to make these experiences and the value they carry known. Creswell (2007) described qualitative researchers as ‘positioning themselves’ in a study when they reflect, recognize, and report their values and biases. In the following section, I will explore experiences in an effort to ‘position’ myself within the framework.

Situating the Researcher (experiential knowledge)

Immeasurable experiences have shaped my identity as a counseling professional and my emerging researcher identity. It would be impossible to adequately explore and unpack the many facets that have and continue to shape these roles. Nonetheless, it is crucial that I speak to my understanding of the perspectives that I believe shape and inform the foundation of the current study. I will speak to the personal, professional, and educational experiences that have undoubtedly molded my perception of the research topic in my varying roles as a clinician, doctoral student, supervisor, supervisee, and instructor. Gatekeeping practices and concerns have presented themselves in different forms in the varying roles listed above creating a multidimensional view and perspective of gatekeeping.

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In reflecting back to my time as a CIT, I can recall certain peers that I had doubt or concern regarding their fit for the profession. I comforted my internal apprehension by justifying their lack of professionalism or attention to competent care as the norm. In consultation with practicing professionals regarding their behavior, I was relieved to hear that the hope for my peers would be they would leave the field or not be able to maintain a full case load. Now as an emerging educator and supervisor, I recognize the ignorance and naivety of my relief in believing these peers would naturally transition out of the field. I more fully understand the power differential inherent in the counselor-client relationship and the recognition that many clients are indeed vulnerable and may not realize their power or rights to request a new counselor, thus being stuck working with an incompetent and potentially harmful counselor.

In my role as clinician, I have had the privilege of working with committed, ethical, and passionate counselors. However, there have been colleagues I have worked along side where I often found myself questioning their ability to make sound ethical decisions or observed un-therapeutic interactions with clientele. My experience in the treatment setting has increased my passion and commitment to understand how we can better prepare graduates to enter the workforce.

As a doctoral candidate in a CACREP-accredited counselor education and counseling program, I have experienced the process of gatekeeping through various lenses. When assuming the role of supervisor and/or instructor, I have observed my own development in interacting with students and learning the difference between CITs who may be in acute stress, struggling to meet developmental milestones, or who more accurately displays signs of impairment. I have leaned upon my advisor and mentors greatly throughout my time in the doctoral program. These professionals' ideas, philosophies, and approaches to gatekeeping have varied and my evolving

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understanding of gatekeeping has been influenced by all of their direction, supervision, and consultation. The doctoral level classes I have completed have informed my current frame of reference along with the many doctoral students I work along side. As we develop our identity as CESs, we often discuss the challenges we face in relation to gatekeeping during our doctoral level coursework.

Although I have many perspectives, I am restricted to the experiences of only two state institutions, Southeast Missouri State University and Idaho State University. I lack experience in seeing how other academic programs may implement and practice gatekeeping procedures and norms. Two roles I have yet to experience that will certainly limit my knowledge and awareness is that of an administrator or faculty member. Speaking to faculty members regarding gatekeeping practices have shed light on the reality that there are elements of the gatekeeping process or protocol that students or educators cannot be privy to due to FERPA, ADA, and other entities protecting the CITs privacy and rights. Assumptions, expectations, bias, and beliefs currently exist that are undoubtedly shaped by various life experiences outside of the counseling profession. These include: previous work in higher education administration as a graduate assistant (office of admissions), family of origin, view of authority, emerging pedagogy beliefs, sociocultural experience as a white, cisgender, middle class, straight female, belief of the importance of higher education, and lastly my strong held belief of consistent gatekeeping practices to protect the integrity of the profession.

I utilized research identity memos as described by Maxwell (2013) to assist me in the process of gathering, organizing, and exploring experiential knowledge such as assumptions, expectations, and beliefs. This activity provided me an opportunity to explore ‘experiential data’ (researchers’ technical knowledge, research background, and personal experiences) as described

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by Strauss (1987).

Summary

A call to the counseling profession was made to explore the gatekeeping role of doctoral students and CESs through qualitative inquiry (DeDiego & Burgin, 2016; Rapp, Moody, & Stewart, in review). In response to this call and the dearth of research in counselor education pertaining to the process of becoming a gatekeeper, I completed a qualitative study that illuminated the varied dimensions and elements of becoming a gatekeeper. The research question that was examined is: *What is the process of doctoral students and junior faculty becoming gatekeepers within counselor education?*

I utilized grounded theory to investigate the process of becoming a gatekeeper through a constructivist lens. Grounded theory was an ideal research methodology for this study as it aims to examine the process behind a particular phenomenon (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2014). Implications for this research study are wide reaching and rich in potential to strengthen the understanding of how doctoral students navigate becoming a gatekeeper in their educator and supervisor role. Specifically, results impacted and influenced four general cohorts; CESs, CITs, counselor education programs, and future clientele. Counselor educators and supervisors will gain a deeper awareness of the process they undergo when fulfilling their duties and role of gatekeeper. The study also served to enlighten educational practices for training doctoral students. Counselors-in-training will benefit from the results, as understanding the process of CESs will directly influence their experience of interacting with CESs who possess a greater awareness of their process. And finally, future clientele may be impacted, as better insight into the gatekeeping process will aim to lessen instances of gate slippage and work towards ensuring competent clinicians are entering the field as professionals. The following chapter provides

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information regarding research design, including an overview of grounded theory methodology, data collection, data analysis procedures, and how I established trustworthiness.

CHAPTER II: METHODOLOGY

The critical importance gatekeeping serves in counselor education and professional counseling is well established in scholarly literature and professional standards (ACA, 2014; Brown-Rice & Furr, 2014, 2015, 2016; CACREP, 2016). The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) has highlighted the necessity of doctoral students graduating with a foundational understanding of their duties and roles as a gatekeeper; however, there is a dearth of literature exploring if doctoral students and/ or junior faculty possess ‘foundational knowledge’ that assists them in their role of gatekeeper. It is unclear whether any foundational knowledge has been a factor in their development or process of becoming a gatekeeper. Many articles do report and describe the complex role, practices, and responsibilities of gatekeepers and the lack of direction and preparation felt within this responsibility (Brear & Dorrian, 2010; Brown-Rice & Furr, 2014, 2016; McAdams, Foster, & Ward, 2007). Without a more thorough examination of the process CESs experience, a disparity remains in the literature, professional discourse, and professional standards. This study investigated the process of becoming gatekeepers for counselor education doctoral students and junior CESs faculty.

As stated in the previous chapter, the purpose of this research study was to gain greater insight into the process of doctoral students and recent graduates becoming gatekeepers, as it is a fundamental role and responsibility that CESs are called to assume (ACA, 2014; CACREP, 2016). Counselor educators and supervisors serve on the ‘front line’ in assessing CITs fit for the profession, and therefore a more thorough understanding of this crucial process may help to prepare effective and competent CITs in matriculating through graduate programs, and may indirectly impact quality assurance of client care. This exploratory study contributed to a

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knowledge base to help inform CESs and counselor education programs' continual efforts toward professional excellence. Consequently, the study provides direction for doctoral preparation programs to enhance programmatic performance and efficiency in training future faculty members.

Toward this end, I will describe my epistemological stance that informs the qualitative groundwork the investigation was built upon. Stating my epistemological stance will better situate the reader as they proceed into understanding the methodological footing of the study. Following a description of the epistemological community in which I align, I will introduce the qualitative approach. As stated in the previous chapter, qualitative inquiry is an ideal fit for the phenomenon I studied as I gathered rich data that illuminated the process of becoming a gatekeeper. A brief description of defining qualitative characteristics, how the inquiry differs from quantitative tradition, and its alignment with my counseling identity will be discussed. I then describe my chosen qualitative methodology, constructivist grounded theory, and the underpinnings of the paradigm of social constructivism. Concluding the chapter, I will provide a detailed account of the research procedures, data collection, data analysis, and trustworthiness and credibility of the study.

Epistemology

Creswell (2007) asserted that qualitative research begins when an inquirer recognizes their philosophical assumptions that guide them to a qualitative study. Creswell (2007) suggested that it is important to explicitly make your assumptions known to the reader as they guide, inform, and influence your study. To explore philosophical assumptions, I examined questions and personal beliefs of ontology (the nature of reality) and epistemology (the nature of knowledge) before I decided upon a research question (Lincoln and Guba, 2013). In my

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scholarly journey of seeking, defining, and believing what is reality, truth, and knowledge, I have come to understand the epistemological community I most closely align with. Traveling towards a theory of knowledge that is most congruent with my philosophical views is a crucial voyage for a researcher, as qualitative inquiry is influenced by the researcher's perspectives (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011). I have come to quickly reject a modernist (positivism, post positivism, foundationalism) view of truth. Rather, I believe in seeking multiple realities and find myself embracing constructivist and postmodern ontologies and epistemologies. In seeking multiple realities, qualitative inquiry aligns with my epistemological position and will best illuminate the phenomena under investigation for this current study. Espousing a constructivist stance, I sought to co-create a theory that illuminated the process of becoming a gatekeeper. Corbin and Strauss (2015) listed characteristics of qualitative researchers that attract them to qualitative inquiry that include; a humanistic bent, curiosity, creativity and imagination, and a sense of logic. As a professional counselor, I practice from a humanistic school of thought and many of the qualities listed for qualitative researchers are congruent with my identity as a clinician. Other characteristics listed that I strive to embody as a researcher include; willingness to take risks, ability to live with ambiguity, acceptance of self as researcher, and trust in self.

Qualitative Inquiry

Qualitative research is a form of inquiry where the researcher collects, documents, and interprets data (words, documents, observations, stories) and participants' meaning-making processes; making the researcher as much a part of the research process as participants and the data they provide (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Patton, 2015). As the researcher is the instrument of inquiry in qualitative research, what I bring to the study (i.g. background, experience, training, skills, bias, assumptions, interpersonal competence, capacity for compassion) is foundational to

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the credibility of findings (Maxwell, 2013; Patton, 2015). Consequently, examining myself as the instrument is critical. In the previous chapter, I incorporated my identity and experience in narrative form and will continue throughout the research process to reflect upon my experiential knowledge of the construct of gatekeeping and my role as a gatekeeper in counselor education. This continual reflection also included my reactions to the data and incorporated in memo writing described later in this chapter.

Pioneers of the qualitative research movement were inspired to understand phenomenon and participants in a contextually rich and more meaningful manner than past ways of knowing had produced (Patton, 2015). Specifically, deductive reasoning utilized in quantitative methodologies do not aim to capture the essence and experience that qualitative inquiry intends to illuminate. Qualitative research has deep roots within and across various disciplines (spanning from astronomy to political economy) and is situated in a broad historical context (Patton, 2015). Unlike quantitative methodologies, qualitative inquiry, highlights process and meaning through rich description of the social phenomenon being studied (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Patton, 2015). Quantitative inquiry aims to report data that is generalizable while qualitative emphasizes the unique, culture-specific, and context-laden experience of individual participants. Qualitative methodologies emphasize a participant's holistic worldview, experience, and strive to illuminate meaning.

In honoring the holistic worldview of participants, qualitative researchers acknowledge the complexity and rich meaning of human beings and experiences (Patton, 2015). Professional counselors aspire to honor and empower diverse human experiences with the practice and art of counseling intended to explore personal meaning making of clientele while considering various worldviews and the culture in which these worldviews are embedded within (ACA, 2014;

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CACREP, 2016). Subsequently, qualitative inquiry compliments and aligns with the mission in which the counseling profession is built upon. My professional identity as a counselor and counseling educator is an important and influential piece of how I move through, perceive, and interact with the world. Bor and Watts (1993) affirmed the advantages for a research study when the methodology is congruent with the professional theoretical framework.

As stated in chapter one, grounded theory was utilized, as the purpose of this study was to describe a process. This qualitative methodology allowed me to generate a theory regarding the process of becoming a gatekeeper and appropriately addressed my research question. Creswell (2007) asserted that the research design process is launched once an inquirer makes known their philosophical assumptions. I will explicitly make known the paradigm of research in which my methodological decisions are rooted within as I discuss the constructivist paradigm that embodies the beliefs that I brought to this study (Creswell, 2007). The following sections will detail the evolution of grounded theory and the constructivist turn, in which I employed, along with an introduction into the paradigm of social constructivism.

Grounded Theory

Grounded Theory is considered the “most influential paradigm for qualitative research in the social sciences today” (Patton, 2015, p. 19). Not only is the approach influential, it is a popular methodology utilized internationally in various disciplines. In order to understand its evolution, one must begin with its birth in the late sixties from the University of Chicago. Glaser and Strauss developed the qualitative methodology with the purpose of constructing theory ‘grounded’ in data (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). During the seminal years of grounded theory, the inquiry utilized a positivist lens to objectively analyze data (Charmaz, 2014). Two decades later, the qualitative methodology evolved from a positivist stance to a more constructivist perceptive (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Within postmodern discourse in which constructivism was born, no

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true meaning of life or existence is possible, it can only be constructed (Patton, 2015). A more detailed description of constructivism and constructivist grounded theory follows.

Constructivism and Constructivist GT. Social constructivism is a paradigm of research and worldview where individuals seek understanding of the world around them and develop subjective meanings of their experiences (Creswell, 2007). McAuliffe and Eriksen (2011) emphasized the guiding principle of constructivism as “individuals actively create the world as they experience it” (p. 4). This worldview recognizes that individual meaning making is complex and leads researchers who espouse the paradigm to seek out the diversity of perspectives and views (Creswell, 2007). Cultural, historical, and social entities play an involved role in the meaning making process of an individual. Perspectives and views are not derived in isolation, rather through historic and culturally rich interactions with others lending to the title of ‘social’ constructivism (Creswell, 2007). Charmaz (2014) stressed the notion that subjectivity cannot endure separately from social existence, as they are innately connected.

With the emphasis on meaning making through cultural and historical-laden social interactions, constructivists operate under the premise that there is no absolute truth or supreme knowledge (McAuliffe & Eriksen, 2011). In the pursuit of discovering multiple realities, constructivist researchers often focus on the particular contexts of participants in order to understand the historical and cultural settings in which they live. Charmaz (2014) developed a grounded theory approach that is consistent with the values espoused in the constructivist paradigm.

Charmaz (2014) challenged classical grounded theory in the early nineties by acknowledging researchers’ subjectivity in data analysis, emphasizing the researchers role in constructing and interpreting data. Through the methods proposed by Glaser and Strauss,

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Charmaz (2006, 2014) argued that the constructed theories are undeniably affected and influenced by life experiences and personal filters through which researchers view and perceive the world. Consequently, researchers cannot separate themselves and their experiences from their research, or be objective about the data (Higginbottom, 2014). Findings that emerge from a researcher's investigation do not represent a true, discoverable reality (Charmaz, 2014; Higginbottom, 2014). Rather, the findings represented interpretations of multiple realities co-constructed by participants and myself.

Constructivist grounded theory aligns with my epistemological stance as I believed information being studied will not be 'discovered' but rather co-constructed with participants and self. Listed are basic assumptions of Charmaz's grounded theory: (a) multiple realities exist, (b) data reflect researchers' and researcher participants' mutual constructions, and (c) the researcher enters, however incompletely, the participant's world and is affected by it" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 349). My lens in which I view reality and knowledge is congruent with the design of the study and Charmaz's basic assumptions.

Research Procedures and Analysis

Qualitative methodology is characterized by inductive and emerging procedures molded by the researcher's experience (Creswell, 2007). I followed an inductive logic in which I built from the 'ground up'. Procedures and my initial 'building' for this study began with the conceptual framework discussed in chapter one that concurrently informed the development of the methodological procedures outlined below. Methodological procedures included the selection of participants, data collection and analysis, and procedures put into place to ensure credibility and trustworthiness.

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Participant Selection

Participant selection is guided by foundational information gathered during the process and creation of the conceptual framework. In staying congruent with the philosophical underpinnings of qualitative inquiry, I employed purposeful selection to solicit participants. Purposeful selection allowed for solicitation of participants who richly contributed to the setting (counseling profession, specifically academic institutions with counseling programs) and activities that participants believed have led them to becoming gatekeepers (Maxwell, 2013). I deliberately sought counselor educators-in- training and current faculty who were new in their role to illuminate the process of becoming a gatekeeper in counselor education.

Concurrently, maximum variation sampling was employed with purposeful selection to adequately capture the heterogeneity in the population of counselor educators in training and CESs. I achieved maximum variation sampling, as participants represented various regions, academic institutions, number of years in the profession, and varying demographic information to develop a heterogeneous pool (Clarke, 2005). Using a heterogeneous pool of participants allowed for a diverse range of voices to be represented in illuminating the process of becoming a gatekeeper.

Participants were recruited from professional online listservs, such as Counselor Education and Supervision Network (CESNET-L). Participants had completed at least one academic year of full time doctoral study in counselor education and supervision at a CACREP-accredited doctoral program, had experience in co-teaching and/or experience in supervising CITs, and/or employed at a CACREP-accredited university as a CES with less than two years experience (recent graduate of a doctoral program in counselor education and supervision). Specifically, inclusion criteria for experience in co-teaching and supervision during one year of full time study is as follows; (1) co-taught at least one course in which you assisted the instructor

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of record or shared responsibility for academic grading, evaluating, and present for every class period for the entirety of the course, and (2) supervised at least one CIT in which you provided regular supervision (weekly and/or bi-weekly) meetings spanning across at least a six week period (not a one-time consultation and/or one-time supervision session) and provided the supervisee with evaluations.

Potential participants completed a brief questionnaire (Appendix C) on Qualtrics software (2017), an online data collection tool. I reviewed potential participants to ensure they meet the inclusion criteria and made a selection based upon various levels of diversity to align with maximum variation (Maxwell, 2013). Levels of diversity denotes the varied experiences a potential participant carries from two perspectives; professional work with CITs during gatekeeping related issues, and potential participants who fall into varied demographics categories such as age, gender, culture, geographical locations, and experience in the profession to determine how these factors may have affected the process of becoming a gatekeeper. Seven participants were identified, allowing for a small enough pool to explore each participant with detail, depth, and intensity (Charmaz, 2014). Previous researchers utilizing grounded theory methodology have used similar sample sizes (Odegard & Vereen, 2011; Wagner & Hill, 2014). If I was unable to recruit the necessary number of participants after three postings were made to professional listserves, snowball sampling (Suri, 2011) would have been utilized to secure an appropriate sample size. However, participants were selected after one posting to professional listserves.

Data Collection

Data collection was comprised of two phases; individual intensive interviews (Charmaz, 2014) and interpreting dialogue sessions (Coe Smith, 2007). After participants were chosen through purposeful selection and maximum variation sampling, they were provided with a

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‘consent to participate’ form (Appendix A) that outlined information pertinent to the study. The ‘consent to participate’ form described the following dimensions; description of the study, potential risks and benefits of participation, compensation, rights of participants, and confidentiality. Confidentiality was protected through the use of pseudonyms, in which participants chose. Recordings of interviews and interpretive dialogues were conducted via online video communication (Zoom), then securely transcribed through professional services. Recordings and transcriptions were securely stored in a confidential location to maintain participant privacy.

Once participants agreed to enter and participate in the study, they were asked to engage in an individual intensive interview. Intensive interviews are researcher-guided and mostly unstructured, providing opportunity for in-depth exploration of participants’ experiences, processes, and situations through dialogue (Charmaz, 2014). Interviews consisted of open-ended questions structured and informed by the conceptual framework and myself. Charmaz (2014) suggested creating questions before the start of the interview for dual purposes; reducing the chance of imposing preconceived notions on the interview and or participant, and reducing anxiety of the researcher (Charmaz, 2014). Intensive interviews for each participant ranged from 45-60 minutes with interviews permitting space for deep exploration and interaction of dialogue between participants and myself. I determined length of intensive interview based upon my assessment of when no new information is being contributed, indicating that the interview has reached a saturation level (Charmaz, 2014). The three initial questions for this study were: (1) How have you learned about gatekeeping practices? (2) What has been your experience in the gatekeeper role? (3) What critical incidents have influenced your development in this role? The intensive interviews aimed to gather rich, and detailed understanding of the participants’

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perspective, meanings, and experiences (Charmaz, 2014). The questions were designed for flexibility and to engage the participant in a deep exploration as a means to collect unique data. A second round of intensive interview and interpretative dialogue questions were dependent upon the first round analysis; follow up questions and discussions ensued based upon the answers from the first round of intensive interviews and interpretive dialogues.

The second data collection measure was the utilization of interpreting dialogue sessions (Coe Smith, 2007). An interpreting dialogue session was scheduled after each round of interviews (two total). Coe Smith (2007) created interpreting dialogues for participants to confirm, expand upon, or clarify researcher interpretations of the analysis of an intensive interviews. Interpreting dialogues align with constructivist thought as the aim for this method seeks co-construction of meaning with participant and myself. After the first round of intensive interviews was coded, I presented the emerging understanding of the process to participants. I solicited feedback, reactions, and further contributions and provided room for any changes to the interpretation through dialogue. Consequently, these dialogue sessions were another means of data collection and were recorded, transcribed, coded, and included in the analysis. Finally, a final member check ensued in which participants were presented a final copy of the theory for concluding verification and fit. The final member check was sent via e-mail. I informed participants in the final e-mail that we can communicate over Zoom if they wanted clarification or to refute any dimension of the final theory.

Data Analysis Procedures

Constructivist grounded theory lays out an analysis process that is ongoing throughout the research process. The analytic process includes three broad dimensions; memoing, coding, and theory emergence. Memoing allowed me to reflect upon my process of interacting with the data

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and participants through an analytical lens. ‘Coding’ in grounded theory generates the ‘bones’ of your analysis followed by ‘theoretical integration’ that assembled these bones into a skeleton (Charmaz, 2006, p.113). Memoing, coding procedures, and theory emergence are described below.

Memo-Writing

Memo-writing is a crucial analytic level in grounded theory in which I documented my experience in the research process, explored assumptions related to the data, reflected upon bias, and analyzed data early and often. My memos also served as a record of my research and analytic progress. Charmaz (2014) asserted that memo writing provides the researcher with “a space and place for making comparisons between data and data, data and codes, codes of data and other codes, codes and category, and category and concept for articulating conjectures about these comparisons” (p. 163). Charmaz (2014) described memo writing as forming the core of the grounded theory while simultaneously keeping you deeply involved and present with the themes emerging. There is no prescribed method for memo-writing; it serves solely as an analytic role and provided me flexibility to structure memos in whatever way advanced my thinking and assisted me in making sense of data in a rigorous and analytic manner. I have begun to memo-write throughout the construction of the conceptual framework, and continued throughout the data collection and analysis process on a password-protected computer to safeguard confidentiality. I stored the memos in a chronological manner in order to review, revise, or simply revisit with a ‘critical eye’ as the analysis progressed and unfolded as recommended by Charmaz (2014).

Coding

Charmaz (2014) described the procedure of coding as the “pivotal link between collecting data and developing an emergent theory to explain the data”(p.113). Coding assisted me in

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beginning to define what is occurring in the data and a place to interact with its potential meaning. The coding dimension of the analytic process provided a frame from which I built the analysis (Charmaz, 2014). My analysis followed three coding phases; initial, focused, and theoretical.

The initial coding phase was an involved examination of the data in which I studied portions of the participant's interviews. In this phase, 'fragments' of the data were dissected as I looked specifically at line by line and segment by segment for any analytic significance. During this phase, it was critical for me to remain open to theoretical possibilities. Codes that I assigned in the initial phase were provisional (as new conceptualizations or understandings arised in later phases) and comparative as I moved quickly through the transcribed interview content. The initial coding procedure required me to remain open and flexible and "close" to the data. Charmaz (2014) recommended making initial codes short and precise, preserving action, and comparing data with data. Critical analysis during the initial coding permitted me to construct tentative codes and create categories that helped "crystalize the participants experiences" (p. 133).

The second phase of coding is what Charmaz (2014) entitled focused coding. Focused coding built off of the initial coding phase and engaged the data into a comparative process. During focused coding, I explored what concepts and themes emerged from the first phase that were relevant, applicable, and significant to my research question. I looked for themes across the initial coding phase, compared these codes, and explored any remaining gaps in the data. An objective in this phase was to organize data into an emerging analysis by focusing and expanding upon the initial codes to ensure codes were grounded in the data and highlight "identifying moments" (Charmaz, 2014, p.144). Through focused coding, I began to delineate the content and

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see the developing analysis take from. Charmaz (2014) suggested that researchers treat focused codes as tentative categories to further develop and scrutinize. Categories refers to “conceptual elements in a theory”(Charmaz, 2014, p.189).

As the first two phases of coding led to tentative categories, the concluding phase in the analysis process was theoretical coding. Charmaz (2014) referred to theoretical coding as a ‘sophisticated’ level of coding ensuing the codes I have selected during focused coding. Theoretical coding assisted me in theorizing the data and focused codes. Charmaz (2014) eloquently described this level of coding as movement in a researcher’s analytic story. Theoretical coding ensured my developing processes were coherent and comprehensible. This phase was crucial to the analytic process as it integrated developing categories identified in the focused coding phase to develop the emergent-grounded theory. The utilization of theoretical coding precludes the need for axial coding, traditionally employed in classical grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014).

Throughout the various phases of coding (initial, focused, theoretical), I remained reflexive, flexible, and open to non-linear thinking and doing. Coding was an ongoing process and I stayed close to the data (i.e. persistent observation) in every phase to ensure I was capturing my participants’ experience (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Charmaz (2014) stressed writing memos on your codes from the initial phase to help clarify what is happening in the data. In grounded theory, memo writing relies on treating some codes as conceptual categories to analyze. I assessed codes to see what best represented what I saw happening in the data. In a memo, I raised them to conceptual categories for my developing analytic framework, giving them conceptual definition and analytic action in narrative form in my memo. Memoing is woven throughout all three forms of coding as a data analysis tool and a means to construct

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theoretical categories.

Establishing Trustworthiness and Credibility

Throughout the research process, I continually assessed the integrity, quality, and accuracy of my data interpretation and theory emergence. In qualitative inquiry, trustworthiness and credibility are standards of verification to ensure quality of the research. In the pursuit to establish trustworthiness, Maxwell (2013) asserted that qualitative researchers often run into two general threats to validity; researcher bias and reactivity. To reduce these threats and increase the credibility of my conclusions, multiple procedures were put into place to guarantee that I was working toward credibility and increasing my confidence about my interpretations and conclusions. These procedures included memo writing, triangulation, interpreting dialogues, and prolonged engagement with the data. These procedures supported me in answering questions posed by Charmaz (2014, p.182) in relation to trustworthiness: (a) Are there strong logical links between the gathered data and your argument and analysis? (b) Has your research provided enough evidence for your claims to allow the reader to form an independent assessment- and agree with your claims?

Memo-Writing. As stated above, I utilized memo-writing throughout my data analysis process to enhance trustworthiness and credibility. Memoing provided an audit trail (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) in the data analysis while simultaneously helping in reducing researcher bias as I engaged in reflexive journaling. In documenting my authentic reactions and responses to the participants and data, I aimed to increase my ability to see how my assumptions, values, and beliefs may impact the data and/or participant reactivity (Charmaz, 2014).

Triangulation. In conjunction with memo- writing, triangulation was employed. Triangulation is the gathering of information from a varied range of individuals, settings, and sources to ‘check on’ one another to see if they all support the interpretations of the data

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(Maxwell, 2013). This strategy reduced the risk of chance associations and allowed for a better appraisal of the generality of the categories that developed (Maxwell, 2013). In particular, I attended weekly meetings with the chair of my dissertation committee, Dr. Steve Moody. Dr. Moody served as an inquiry auditor while providing space to discuss and process my reactions, thoughts, beliefs, and experiences (Charmaz, 2014). Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe an inquiry auditor as an individual who examines the process and product of the inquiry. Dr. Moody was present through every phase of the research process to assume the auditor role. Other individuals I consulted with throughout the process included my committee members and counselor education faculty familiar with grounded theory and the construct of gatekeeping. Investigator triangulation assisted me in the continual process of examining assumptions to reduce researcher bias.

Interpretive Dialogues. Interpreting dialogues (Coe Smith, 2007) were employed as a third procedure to enhance trustworthiness and credibility. Maxwell (2013) referred to the process of analytically requesting feedback from participants as ‘respondent validation’. Lincoln and Guba (1985) entitled this procedure ‘member checking’. Maxwell (2013) described respondent validation as a crucial strategy of “ruling out the possibility of misinterpreting the meaning of what participants say and do and the perspective they have on what is going on” (p. 126-127). Coe Smith (2007) developed a collaborative interpreting session to provide participants the opportunity to co-construct the meaning of the analysis. I created the space for participants to challenge categories they perceived as inaccurate, provide additional insight, and verify the accuracy of the analysis. Interpreting dialogues not only reduced researcher bias enhancing the credibility of the analysis, it also empowered participants (Coe Smith, 2007). The empowerment of participants aligns with the humanistic and social constructivist lens I am

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working from.

Final Member Checks. I used a final member check after the second interpreting dialogue sessions were recorded, coded, and analyzed. Final member checks allowed for participants to see how the theory changed after coding the final interpreting dialogue session. It provided a final opportunity for participants to refute, challenge, confirm, or ask for clarification to ensure accuracy of their process. I provided the option for participants to conduct the final member check over Zoom or e-mail. All agreed that they felt comfortable reviewing and providing feedback over e-mail. I informed them that if any questions did arise or they wanted further clarification, a Zoom session could be scheduled upon their request.

Prolonged Engagement. I was engaged with this study over the span of an academic year with participant contact spanning over several months. Prolonged engagement is a strategy that refers to the quality of investment and sufficient time to accomplish the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lincoln and Guba (1985) stressed the critical importance of prolonged engagement throughout the research process as it aids in building trust with participants and increased the likelihood of accurately representing all participants. As a licensed professional counselor practicing from a humanistic school of thought, building rapport and fostering a safe and comfortable space where my participants feel valued and heard was imperative for the study.

Conclusion

The purpose of this research study was to understand the process of doctoral students and new faculty becoming a gatekeeper. With the recognition of the critical role gatekeeping serves in academic training programs and the profession as a whole, it is of great magnitude that CESs have a deeper understanding of this process. As mentioned throughout both chapters, there is a dearth of research pertaining to the role of gatekeeper and the process by which CESs become

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gatekeepers.

I employed qualitative inquiry to construct meaning and experiences of participants becoming a gatekeeper in counselor education through the use of constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014). As previously stated, the use of qualitative methodology and constructivist grounded theory was congruent with the study's goals to illuminate a process and co-construct a theory with participants. Through qualitative analysis, I uncovered a rich theory that better describes the process of becoming a gatekeeper.

The study provides a framework for CESs and counselor education programs on the process of the critical function and role of gatekeeper. This study contributes to a knowledge base to help inform CESs and counselor education programs continual efforts towards professional excellence. Moreover, the study may provides direction for doctoral preparation programs to enhance programmatic performance and efficiency in the training of future faculty members. Finally, I will utilize the information gleaned from emerging themes to spur further research in the counselor education field. The study unfolded as data collection and analysis procedures were followed as described in earlier sections. The participants completed two rounds of intensive interviews followed by two rounds of interpreting dialogues. Through this process, memo writing, coding, and theoretical emergence occurred (Charmaz, 2014).

CHAPTER III: ROUND ONE ANALYSIS

Upon receiving approval from the Human Subjects Committee, a recruitment call for participation was posted on CESNET, the Counselor Education and Supervision listserv. Twelve interested professionals responded to the recruitment call via e-mail. I followed up with each potential participant by sending a link to Qualtrics for a brief screening of eligibility. Potential participants provided basic demographic information and answered a short questionnaire to ensure they met the inclusion criteria and would be able to richly contribute to the phenomenon under study. Selection of participants were made based upon the their ability to meet inclusion criteria and maximum variation sampling. In addition to the inclusion criteria, I was looking for participants to represent various phases of the process I was investigating. Having participants who represented different phases would allow me to not only capture each individual process, but to see how the process may change as participants move through different professional milestones. Ultimately, seven participants were selected and interviewed in order to examine the process of becoming a gatekeeper.

After the screening questionnaires were reviewed, discussed, and agreed upon between my major advisor and myself, I made the decision to select seven participants that met the needs of the study. I provided the selected participants with an electronic informed consent through e-mail. All seven participants agreed to the terms of the study and returned the signed electronic informed consent. Once all informed consents were gathered, data collection ensued. Data was first collected through 45 to 60 minute individual online video interviews, utilizing Zoom. Participants engaged in semi-structured, intensive interviews (Charmaz, 2014) regarding their experience and process of becoming a gatekeeper. The initial questions that guided the interview were: (1) How have you learned about gatekeeping practices? (2) What has been your experience

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in the gatekeeper role? (3) What critical incidents have influenced your development in this role? Additional questions that were developed in process included what Charmaz (2014) has described as intermediate and ending questions: (1) Could you tell me how your views on your role as a gatekeeper has changed since the critical incident? (2) Is there something else you think I should know to better understand your development/thoughts as a gatekeeper?

Each interview was transcribed by a professional transcriptionist and individually coded for categories of significance. Individual coding consisted of initial (i.e. line-by-line, segment-by-segment) focused, and theoretical coding followed by an overall analysis. As I progressed through each of these phases, I systematically compared participants' focused and theoretical codes. In constructing codes, I was cognizant to emphasis process, influence, and movement. The emerging categories were emailed to each participant with supporting quotes. Participants then discussed the emerging categories during a 20 to 40-minute interpretive dialogue. During the interpreting dialogue session, I was able to discuss the emerging categories in more depth and provide a space for participants to share their thoughts and reactions to the exploratory analysis. The interpretive dialogue allowed participants to expand upon, refute, and/or inquire about my interpretations of the data and the emerging themes and co-create the construction of this theory. After completing the interpretive dialogues, the sessions were transcribed and coded to inform the second round of interviews.

Participant Description

Participants consisted of one student in the second year of their doctoral program, three participants in their third year of study, one participant in their fourth year of study (ABD) and first semester as a faculty member, one participant in their first semester as a faculty member, and one participant in their second year as a faculty member. Maximum variation sampling was

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achieved through choosing participants who varied in age, gender, ethnicity, and region of the country where they currently reside. Participants represented all five regions of the Association for Counselor Educators and Supervisors (ACES): North Central (NCACES), North Atlantic (NARACES), Rocky Mountain (RMACES), Southern (SACES), and Western (WACES). Two of the seven participants identified as persons of color, one participant identifying as male, and the remaining six identifying as females.

The seven participants selected were Ann, Robert, Jane, Michele, Sandra, Ariel, and Denise. Five participants chose to use pseudonyms with two asking to use their real names. All seven participants were enrolled as doctoral students at a CACREP accredited program or teaching as pre-tenure faculty within their first two years at a CACREP accredited program. All participants indicated in the pre-screening questionnaire their previous experience in supervising and/or teaching master-level students and indicated experience with gatekeeping related issues within these roles. Below is a description of each participant.

Ann

Ann is a forty-two year old white female, in her third year of doctoral study in the WACES region. She currently holds the position of associate clinical director of the on-campus clinic at her respective university. She has been a clinician for fifteen years.

Robert

Robert is a forty-six year old white male, in his first semester as an assistant professor in the NARACES region. He worked as a career counselor before transitioning into counselor education. Robert was the one self-identified male voice in the study.

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Jane

Jane is a twenty-eight year old white female, self-identified as Eastern European Jew, in her second year of doctoral study in the RMACES region. Prior to entering her doctoral program, Jane worked as a professional licensed counselor for three years working with children, adolescents, and their families in both clinical mental health agencies and the school setting on the east coast.

Michele

Michele is a forty-nine year old white female, in her third year of study in the NCACES region. Michele has been working as a clinician for twenty-five plus years. She currently serves as the clinical director of a college-counseling clinic.

Sandra

Sandra is a thirty-six year old black female, in her third year of study in the SACES region. Sandra is a Clinical Manager of a mental health agency where she oversees the clinical and administrative functions of two programs serving children, adolescents, and families. Her professional counseling experiences have mainly been individuals from diverse and underserved populations across the lifespan. Sandra is very active in the larger counseling community.

Ariel

Ariel is a thirty-year-old white female, in her second year as an assistant professor in the RMACES region. She primarily teaches master-level-students and will soon start working with doctoral level students. She has contributed to the counseling professional literature on pertinent gatekeeping issues.

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Denise

Denise is a twenty-nine year old black female, in her first semester as an assistant professor in the NCACES region. She is currently finished with her doctoral course work and is ABD from her program in the SACES region. Denise transitioned from her masters program directly into her CE program. She began working as a clinical supervisor during her second year in the CE program in a community-counseling agency. Combined, she now has over 3 years of clinical experience working as a family therapist/counselor in the community and university settings.

All participants seemed eager to share their experiences with many noting the importance of this topic of study and their commitment to effective gatekeeping as a primary motivator in participating in the study. Time was spent building rapport and answering questioning before interview questions ensued. Following first round interviews, data analysis was conducted to determine initial categories of significance in the process of becoming a gatekeeper.

Initial Process Categories

I identified five categories in the initial coding process including (1) **“Hands-on” Learning**; (2) **Receiving/ Lacking Intentional Education**; (3) **Seeing the Need/ Seeing a Bigger Picture**; (4) **Being Molded by Cultural Values**; and (5) **Ongoing Movement**. The emerging process categories, sub-categories, and properties are depicted in the one-dimensional graph (see Figure 1). Sub-categories and properties were also identified in the five main categories. Sub-categories represented smaller units of meaning within the larger category, allowing for full complexity and diversity of the data to be recognized. Sub-categories were based on where participants were positioned in their process at the time of the interviews. Defining properties were included with certain categories that emphasize particular actions,

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processes, or feelings evident throughout the category as a whole. Participants' narratives are organized and presented in alignment to categories, sub-categories, and/or defining properties, as well as to one another.

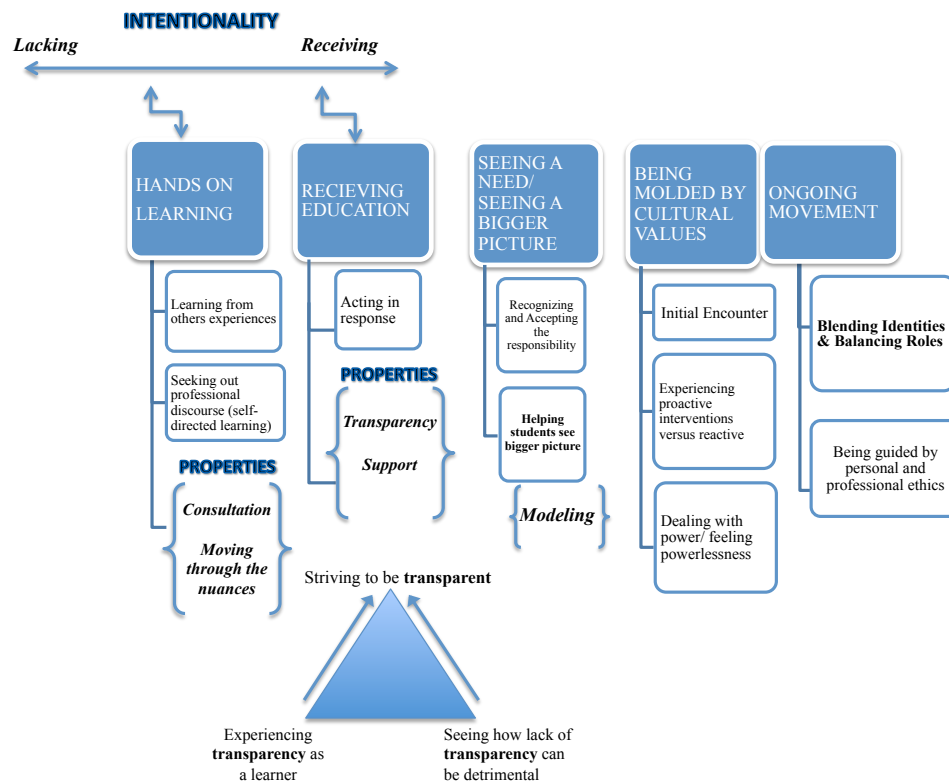


Figure 1. One-dimensional Graph of Initial Analysis after R1 Intensive Interviews.

“Hands-on” Learning

This category is defined by participant’s consistent narrative of ‘learning as you go’ in relation to gatekeeping-related interactions. Learning through experience (whether direct experience or indirect experience) was evident across all participants and described as being influential in their process and development. Participants used the term “development” to describe the process of becoming a gatekeeper. Coding revealed two sub-categories including *learning from others* and *seeking out professional discourse (self-directed learning)* within this category. There were two properties that characterized “**Hands-on**” learning and the two sub-

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categories, *moving through the nuances and consultation.*

“Hands-on” learning is a direct quote from Michele who has been supervising and gatekeeping master-level-counselors for over twenty years. When I asked Michele how she has learned about gatekeeping practices, she responded: “How have I learned about gatekeeping practices? To be honest with you, it’s been mostly initially hands-on and from other supervisors of mine. And then as well as working with site supervisors of trainees from their institutions.” With a long history in the mental health profession as a counselor and clinical supervisor, Michele recalled her learning in the gatekeeper role as initially being “case-by-case.”

Um really it’s been kind of learning as—learning as I go, as situations arise and dealing with those situations in the moment, kind of on a case-by-case basis. Um being guided by the code of ethics in terms of, you know, what things are really problematic....So it’s been kind of on a case-by-case basis at least initially. I’ve been a supervisor for a number of years. But really it was a lot of hands-on learning because..,

I probed about how she perceived her role as a gatekeeper changing (if any) after the critical incidents she described. After a moment of pause and reflection Michele responded with:

Um (sighs) I think that it’s—it’s taught me—again, by experience—how to have conversations that are uncomfortable for me and probably uncomfortable for the trainee....But again, I think a lot of that just comes with experience and the fact that I’ve had to do that so often.

Denise spoke to learning of the abstract idea of gatekeeping through doctoral coursework, but highlighted application through her own personal experience.

So of course in the ethics course we learned about gatekeeping, but the actual practice of it has been more so just my own personal experience, just having to get out there and

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discuss it and live it, because it really wasn't talked about as much as I would have liked to—like to have it in my programs.

I noticed as an interviewer that Denise often spoke in adages or commonly used expressions to portray her experience thus far. With this form of communicating, it was important for me as the researcher to be persistent in asking Denise to describe her interpretation of an adage to confirm her intention as my interpretation of an expression may be very different than her intention. Denise described her experience in the role of gatekeeper as “sinking or swimming” a metaphor that captures the essence of her experience in learning in the moment. Through direct experience, she built her “muscle” or capacity to work through gatekeeping related issues.

So I found that in a—in the past few years, and when I say few I mean like four to five years, I found myself in a lot of positions where I've kind of had to sink or swim. And so that [gatekeeping] was just another one of those areas. So on one hand it definitely built my muscle. And when I say by that, it built my capac—it built my competence. So it made me say that—it gave me reassurance that, ‘Yes, you are capable. You are able to do what you've been charged to do....

Ann described her application or **“Hands-on” Learning** as a deliberate piece of the program curriculum adopted by her department. Ann spent a portion of the interview describing the programs structure in training and educating doctoral students in how to espouse the role of gatekeeper as clinical supervisor and future faculty member. At various points throughout the interview, Ann voiced her appreciation and praise of the programs structure and expressed her gratitude for the opportunities and support she has received during her training in how to be a gatekeeper. She also made it known of the involvement doctoral students have in gatekeeping

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remediation and this direct involvement as important in her learning process. After going through intentional gatekeeping related curriculum she reflected on her responsibility to carry out and practice what she had learned in her role of teaching master-level students, “Well, I’m teaching. And so I’m expected to apply gatekeeping as needed.” After asking the initial question about how she learned about gatekeeping practices, I inquired more specifically about what has been the most helpful for her in learning the role. She stated: “Um I think being able to participate in a junior faculty kind of way on remediation plans.” Ann went on to describe the applied opportunities she was afforded after didactic learning.

I think it’s second semester of first year or maybe first semester of second year, um if there are students in the master’s program that need remediation, then we’re assigned to do the remediation for that student. So the remediation plan is created and then we’re the ones that actually apply it with the master’s student.

Ariel, a second year junior faculty member, spoke to learning as she goes through ‘trial and error’ as a new faculty member. She stated, “I mean I’m still really new at all of this, so it’s a lot of trial and error. A lot of things I do are trial and error, but gatekeeping is certainly a lot of trial and error.” Ariel described her surprise as a faculty member in how often gatekeeping issues arise.

Um but yeah, I’ve—in a year—I guess in a year and two months as a faculty member now, it comes up all the time. I was really surprised. Because as a student, you won’t hear about it much. I think you only hear about it when big things kind of blow up.

In this emerging category of “**Hands-on**” Learning, the type of experience varied from participant to participant depending upon where they were in their process, but a general consensus was clear that learning by doing was a pivotal piece of their emerging role as a

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gatekeeper. The notion of learning through experience shared by participants is not a novel concept and parallels the experiential learning philosophy. Implications will be discussed in chapter six.

Sub-Categories. Two sub-categories emerged from “**Hands-On**” Learning. The sub-categories were as follows: *Learning through others experience* and *seeking out professional discourse*. Both of these capture participants’ process in learning through other means than traditional training and curriculum. These sub-categories preserve the action of participants being willing and open to learn about their role of gatekeeper.

Leaning Through Others Experience. In the subcategory of *learning through others experience*, participants described learning that vicariously occurred through numerous indirect means. These indirect methods took form during informal conversations, observation, or second hand information. *Learning through others experience* was present through all phases of the process, second year doctoral student to second year faculty. Jane, a second year doctoral student, described the questions that arose for her when providing clinical supervision with a supervisee and/or student who may have gatekeeping related concerns. She explained her process of learning through a senior doctoral student to shed light on gatekeeping identifiers, gatekeeping interventions, and basic processes to take if a behavior is identified and needs further intervention.

How do they give feedback? How do they help students? What do they do when they’re in the observation room with the students? Because we have an observation room, so what do they do? So I asked the supervisor who was a—in her last year of the doc program actually.

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Ariel, the second year faculty member, explained the value of continual learning through hearing her fellow colleagues dialogue through gatekeeping related issues with their students. She described her faculty meetings as having “built-in-time” where gatekeeping related issues are discussed. Although many of the students discussed are not her supervisees, she asserted that listening and being a part of these conversations during faculty meetings deepen her understanding of gatekeeping while simultaneously provide a feeling of community and support.

And it’s helpful for me to learn too, because I get to learn from other people’s experiences from their students. So even if something hasn’t come up in my class, I still get to learn from the issues they’re working through with their students, just in case those kinds of things come up for me too. So I’m not isolated; I’m not only dealing with things that my students bring to the table, I’m learning from what my other faculty members might be navigating with their students and their classes. So I kind of have that perspective too.

Ann, a third year doctoral student, recalled the significance of a “mock hearing” that is utilized as an instructional tool to enhance training in becoming a gatekeeper. After a year of “intentional” education surrounding gatekeeping, her faculty set up a “mock hearing” where doctoral students can apply the knowledge they have gained throughout previous courses in a pseudo case where a remediation plan for a student is taken to the university’s legal counsel. Ann detailed the structure of the mock trial in which doctoral students were assigned different roles and the involvement of university counsel to provide guidance, feedback, and different perspectives. Ann described this educational event as influential to her development as she learned from administrators and legal counsel in the university setting.

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And then to hear the university counsel basically say, Oh, you all would not have had a leg to stand on at all. You could not dismiss that student based on what you presented. It was like, Oh! Well okay, but we're worried about this person in relation to how they would be out in the field. And from the university's perspective, that's not their worry. It's, you know—it's when they're in there—so I mean it was just really interesting to see everybody's points of view about it and get a sense of, Oh, I need to pay very close attention to keeping track of things and making sure that if we have concerns, that there's a paper trail. And you know, all of those kinds of things. And it's been really helpful.

Denise, finishing her dissertation while in her first semester as a faculty, described much of her learning of gatekeeping practices to be through direct experience. However, she attributed certain ways of being with supervisees and the art of initiating difficult conversations (which she believes is a must in effective gatekeeping) to the teaching and modeling of her supervisor. Difficult conversations consist of dialogue with colleagues, peers, students, and/or supervisees that are uncomfortable to have but needed to address a concerning professional issue. Observing her supervisors' skill in initiating and navigating "difficult conversations" has been informative in her development as a gatekeeper.

Yeah. So I have to attribute this to one of my supervisors in the same agency that I worked in. And I don't think that she understands just how much like she has shaped my ability to have difficult conversations. It goes in—she basically taught me to go in without assumptions.

Participants described learning through others in various means and throughout their development of becoming a gatekeeper, not just one specific phase. An additional sub-category that emerged was *seeking out professional discourse. Learning from others experiences*

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occurred for participants in a more indirect manner, while *seeking out professional discourse* revealed more action on the part of the participant, hence “seeking”.

Seeking out Professional Discourse. The second sub-category, *seeking out professional discourse*, characterizes participants’ eagerness and desire to engage in professional discourse and learn about gatekeeping issues that are relevant to them in their positions and roles. If participants found there was no professional discourse to engage in, they sought to create conversations through scholarly writing, professional presentations, and conversation with colleagues. Furthermore, the ‘seeking’ of discourse may be motivated by the lack of gatekeeping knowledge to fuel their thirst for more information and understanding. For example, Sandra, who was a clinical supervisor engaging in gatekeeping interventions before her doctoral courses in a CES program, recalled her experience in self directed learning as instrumental in her process. When asked how she knew how to be a gatekeeper before ‘core courses’ that she identified as teaching her essential functions, she stated, “Just from reading and being a person that really valued ethics and professionalism as much as possible... Journals, counseling magazines like *Counseling Today*...” She indicated that she created a “gatekeeping subfolder in my resource folder on my computer” to refer to as she encountered uncharted gatekeeping territory.

Ariel, in reflecting back on her time as a doctoral-level supervisor, spoke to the complexities of being a student while providing supervision to a master-level student. She described her critical incident as supervising a master-level student who was consistently placing religious values on clients struggling with substance abuse recovery. When seeking out information in peer-reviewed journals on the unique position of doctoral students providing supervision to students with gatekeeping issues, she found a lack of writing to assist or guide her.

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She described this shortage of information as a motivator to write about her experience and provide a framework for doctoral students in her position.

That was essentially the tone of every single session she had with every client that I listened to. And clearly that's not appropriate and so I kind of got to learn a little bit more through that process about gatekeeping, because at that point I was aware of what that term meant and what the responsibilities of educators were. But I was still a student. Which was when—about when we were like, Hey, like there's nothing out there to help us in the literature about this either. We better do something about that.

Denise spoke to her learning through professional discourse, specifically with senior level clinicians. She voiced her appreciation in how these conversations challenged her way of conceptualizing and thinking about gatekeeping and providing a perspective from experience. Similarly to Denise, Jane also described the value of speaking to senior-level professionals, such as faculty, to broaden her perspective and learn through their experience. Jane recalled confusion and curiosity when master-level students were remediated. She described reaching out to fellow doctoral students and seeking out information from faculty to understand the process better. She understood limitations of information due to FERPA, but rather was curious about behavioral indicators that led to gatekeeping interventions for her personal learning purposes. She stated:

...and then I've asked people like, 'Why did that happen?' And they said—and even professors—I think I talked to my Chair about it, maybe once, because he's—he's like the guru in supervision in our department, so we had like a conversation about it.

Ann described how presenting at professional conferences with a faculty member was influential in her development as a gatekeeper. Ann spoke to the helpful nature of preparing to present for a professional conference as it deepened her understanding and working knowledge

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base. Not only did she need a thorough understanding of gatekeeping to present on the topic, she spent time reflecting on the strengths of her programs processes and policies and how they may differ from other programs. She also spoke to the reality of presentation preparation as a motivator to truly understand the material in a richer way to enhance the quality of the presentation and hopefully deliver content in a meaningful manner in which attendees find useful.

Um any time you teach something, you really have to know it. And not only was I teaching it to people who knew nothing about, I was presenting in front of people who know a whole lot about it. (Laughs) And so I felt like I had to have a really good sense of what it is, specifically—well, I guess what it is generally and then specifically like how we do it at our program and the strengths of what we’re doing versus what other people might be doing. So getting up in front of people who have been doing this job for thirty years, um sort of I really had to know what I was talking about.

Properties. Two properties characterize this category that include *moving through the nuances* and *consultation*. *Moving through the nuances* illuminates the complexities participants found themselves navigating through direct experience, learning from others, and/or seeking more understanding for the nuances in professional discourse. The act of *consultation* was relied upon through direct experience, learning from others, and seeking out professional discourse. Participants spoke to the desire, want, and need for *consultation* in their gatekeeping duties and how influential it has been in their role of gatekeeper.

Moving through nuances. The properties of *moving through nuances* and *consultation* were found to be present throughout the category of “**Hands-on**” Learning and the two sub categories described above. Participants’ processes revealed varying levels of recognizing and

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moving through the complexities of the gatekeeper role through “**Hands-on**” Learning, *learning from others experience*, and *seeking out professional discourse*. Participants described a wide array of complexities and layers they sifted through. Ann described seeing the construct of gatekeeping and her role within the larger construct as moving from one dimension to multi-dimensions through the application of the practices and processes she had been taught. Along with seeing the multidimensional aspects of the construct, come the complexities with each new dimension.

Well, I think when you—when you learn about it, um sort of didactically, and then when you get to apply it in a real-life situation, you can see the complexity of it. And where things could go wrong or things could go well, um so I think it really—it’s just not only application from a teaching kind of perspective, like teaching it to the first-years, but actually seeing it in action and how it might affect a student in real life.

Ariel spoke to the difficulties in the inherently complex and nuanced processes gatekeeping often undertakes as comparing it to an involved process rather than a “formula”. She stated: “Right. It’s not a formula. So I think that’s what makes it hard, is that it’s not clear-cut and it’s not just some formula to be applied. Like, if you do this, then you have to do this.” Ariel spoke to a few constants in the decision making process in gatekeeping related interventions, such as being transparent with your decisions and recognizing a need for remediation. In her experience, all other dimensions involved are fluid and context dependent. She stated: “Yeah, so there’s never a clear-cut—other than having a plan for how to remediate with students and being transparent about that, there’s not really a way to predict anything else, because it always changes.”

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Michele, a senior clinician and clinical supervisor, spoke to considerations and complexities that may impact a gatekeeper in more advanced development once recognizing non-academic concerns have become more easily identifiable through experience and education. Two layers that Michele spoke to include cultural consideration and supporting the students' development. In describing the cultural considerations, Michele recognized the inherent difficulties of determining what may be deemed appropriate professional dress as culture greatly impacts this concept. She spoke of the challenges in contemplating how to address the potential issue: "And I never liked talking to people about the way that they dress. It's a personal thing. This trainee was of a different culture. She was from a different country, a different ethnicity."

Sandra also spoke to the nuances of navigating professional ethics with institutional expectations and guidelines. She stated, "Because what I've learned is that although you have like codes of ethics and stuff pertaining to gatekeeping and counseling in general—and counselor education in general—there's also institutional or programmatic guidelines for gatekeeping and what that looks like." As participants described the many nuances they must navigate in their role of gatekeeper, the second property of *consultation* is frequently relied upon to alleviate the stress and confusion nuances can bring.

Consultation. The property of *consultation* includes actions of seeking, desiring, and/or receiving guidance and direction inherent in consultation. Participants described varying types and quality of *consultation* as in helpful in their development. Despite negative or positive experiences in the act of consulting, all were experienced as information gathering and moving them to a more realized state of what the role of gatekeeper entailed. Throughout "**Hands-on**" **Learning**, *consultation* was utilized or viewed as needed by participants to deepen understanding, find direction, and dialogue through questions that may arise.

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Sandra described her process of seeking out and receiving *consultation* to help solidify the direction she may be considering to take with a student and/or to hear a differing professional opinion with an uninvolved party. She stated:

Yeah, well it helped mainly to provide confirmation or validation that I'm on the right track, but also to get the objective opinion from someone that's not involved in the case or the situation to see, Hey, this is what's going on with this student, or this is what's going on with this supervisee. This is what I've done. This is what's happening. What are your thoughts? And getting feedback from them.

In reflecting back on her process of becoming, Denise stated her desire and want for further *consultation* as certain situations arose in her role as a gatekeeper pre-doctoral program. She made the parallel of the critical nature of *consultation* in clinical work and her desire and want to have *consultation* in the gatekeeping aspect of the field. Denise even described her longing for validation and normalization that *consultation* can provide.

Yeah, so it was like—it was times of needing, you know, consultation—like further consultation for myself, because we know that that's very important in this field regardless. Like needing—not necessarily reassurance, but needing to feel validated in my feelings of isolation or just...

Michele brought in the emotional component of fulfilling gatekeeping duties, which often encompasses fear and anxiety. The below excerpt not only speaks to Michele seeking out and receiving *consultation*, but also captures her external narrative in moving through the nuances and complexities (supporting student development while being held reliable). She stated:

Well it's scary. Sometimes it's scary, because you know, ultimately I'm liable for the things that the trainees may or may not do. And I'm also—you know, I also have some

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responsibility in the type of service that's delivered too—in this setting students at the university. And so it involved consultation with other peers, but it's a little bit scary having to feel your way around those kinds of issues and dealing with them hopefully the right way, but also respecting the fact that they are students, they are trainees, they are learning, that's to be expected.

Ann, when discussing the support she receives from faculty in her gatekeeper role, described not being “expected to just do it on our own” and described “processing through” many elements of her thought process and possible decisions with faculty. Ann described the support senior faculty provide as taking form in *consultation*. I asked for clarification to ensure *consultation* and mentorship fit for her description and process. Ann replied with, “Yeah, a lot of that (consultation).” The next emerging category, **Receiving/ Lacking Intentional Education**, captured the participant's educational experience aside from their “**Hands-on**” Learning, adding to the dynamic process they progress through when becoming a gatekeeper.

Receiving/ Lacking Intentional Education

The second emerging process category, **Receiving/ Lacking Intentional Education**, is best described on a continuum. On one end of the spectrum is receiving more intentional educational practices or opportunities. The other end of the spectrum illustrates participants' experiences of not being given opportunities or lacking intentional educational practices devoted to building their gatekeeper competencies and gatekeeping practices. Ann, who described her learning about gatekeeping practices to be through a very structured curriculum succession, described the process as “very intentional.” She stated:

And so we—we have a very intentional process of teaching gatekeeping and dispositions and everything related to that. So it starts our first year in the first semester. And where we just sort of go over the literature on gatekeeping and dispositions and that stuff, and

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then after that, along with discussion and that piece. But we have a ten-step process where by the end of your first semester of your second year, you've gone from not knowing anything about it to actually teaching the first year students.

Ann spoke of the usefulness of receiving the ten-step process and how the initial didactic components provided a foundation for when she was expected to apply this knowledge in practice with master-level students. Ann described the content being delivered with “lots of scaffolding of the knowledge, so we're not expected to just do it on our own.” Ann explained the intentional process as including opportunities for her to work with students in the remediation process and feeling prepared, as the education her program delivered was developmentally appropriate.

Ann goes on describe the value she placed on the ten-step process that has been designed to prepare doctoral students for their gatekeeper role as a future faculty member in her program. She described recognizing the uniqueness of her education pertaining to her role of gatekeeper through professional conversations she had at both regional and national conferences while presenting on the ten-step process with a faculty member. She recalled that after presentations, “doctoral students come up and say, This is fantastic. Nobody is teaching us anything about this in our program.”

On the other end of the **receiving education** spectrum, is the absence of intentional education or the feeling that intentional education was lacking in some form. Denise described her doctoral program as “hands off” and receiving “not a lot” of education as she interpreted her program to be catered toward professionals who have significant clinical and supervisory experience and may be more privy to the construct or role of gatekeeper. She stated:

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And so then in my doc program, it's so kind of hands-off in that aspect, because—and I think it's just the nature of the doc program. I was an outlier, to say in the least: I came in very young, like right out of grad school—like right in my master's program. Whereas most of my cohort or even just class members were—had been practicing for years—like 10+ years. And so gatekeeping—for some reason, that was just not one of the topics that was discussed, I guess because it was assumed—That we knew what gatekeeping was and how that would look for us as, you know, coming in and wanting to be counselor educators. And so that—I guess that's—from my experience, that was what I got from it: not a lot.

In recalling her training as a doctoral student, Ariel supported what Denise had provided by speaking to the lack of “concrete training” she received and even provided areas that she believed would have been helpful for her as a student.

Okay, well I can't include you in the actual remediation process, but as my supervisee, why don't you take a stab at making one? What would you want to do? How would this look—like what would you recommend for this student? What do you think would help? So even if it's just in the abstract, you know, take a stab at writing a remediation plan as a student for your actual supervisee or for some kind of case vignette or like something.

But there's no concrete training about how to do that. At least I didn't get any.

Ariel spoke to the complexities inherent in gatekeeping practices that have lead to confusion, particularly in the lack of direction for choosing appropriate remediation options for students. She recalled the “lack of training” in weighing the options for students that has translated to limited understanding as a second year faculty member.

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Like I understand how to recognize a gatekeeping issue, but then what do I do? What are the kind of range of options of what's appropriate based on the severity of the issue? So I think that's the part I still need to educate myself on, is what kinds of things might be options in terms of addressing gatekeeping issues? Well, and how do you choose?

Ariel goes on to describe the lack of direction and education she received in the processes that followed identifying a gatekeeping issue with a student and/or supervisee. She spoke to the struggles she now faces as she is left to make the decisions with remediation although never having training or practice in how to do so.

A participant earlier in her process, Jane, who is in her second year of the doctoral program described her struggle and confusion in identifying gatekeeping issues within students and supervisees and the lack of clarity and information provided to her by faculty in dissipating the confusion. Similarly to Ariel, Jane described not understanding the process that would unfold if a CIT were to be "gatekept" on any level and the ambiguous air surrounding gatekeeping processes.

But yeah, it's sort of ambiguous. Nobody's ever sat down and been like, 'If somebody is gate-kept, this is the process that happens.' We've talked about gatekeeping broadly, we've talked—there's an instilled like culture of somewhat fear and paranoia and sort of a like uncertainty in the air....So no, the steps and the process and the decision-making are extremely ambiguous.

When I asked Jane if there is anything else she believed I should know that would help me better understand her development as a gatekeeper, she reiterated her absence of clarity and understanding describing her feelings that she is "in the dark" concerning the processes and role of gatekeeping. She stated:

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I mean I know how I want to be with my students and I practice that, but in terms of what does gatekeeping mean for me and like what does it mean overall in the program and just like how is it defined? Like it's so unclear and like I just feel like I'm sort of in the dark about that.

Contrarily to Ann who praised her programs intentional delivery of developmentally appropriate gatekeeping education, Jane spoke for the desire to have more “gradual” exposure to gatekeeping by stating, “But I think it (training) needed to be maybe more developmentally appropriate and also that yeah, like a gradual—like maybe next semester we could have more responsibility and this semester have like half that responsibility.”

Michele, who was placed in a clinical supervisor role performing gatekeeping functions well before any formal training, described having “zero preparation to be in that role” and noted that due to the lack of preparation and training she “didn't have the realization of the responsibilities inherent in that role.” She described her changing perspective of what gatekeeping is through doctoral coursework. She felt validated for the things she was doing correctly, and introduced to considerations she previously missed. She stated:

...sometimes I've been struck with, Wow, somehow I've been doing the right thing all along and I didn't even realize like that this was a thing. Other times I've been struck with just that I've been lucky that all of the things that I should have probably considered but I didn't—I didn't know to think of—um the fact that like we spent a lot of time talking about supervision contracts, for example—um the fact that somehow I had developed a supervision contract that hit every point that it needed to hit and that contract has been a saving grace for so many, you know, issues over the years. Um so some—

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most of it has been sort of reinforcing to me, but some of it has been a little bit eye-opening, that there's—that supervision is a much broader really sort of specialization.

Sub-Category. One sub-category emerged from **Receiving/ Lacking Intentional Education**, which was *acting in response*. The sub-category of *acting in response* was an action and process that was captured through participants' experiences in which they responded to their perceptions of what 'worked' or 'didn't work' in their learning to be a gatekeeper. If participants observed a successful and/or effective way in which the program and/or faculty intervened with CITs, participants spoke to their process in intentionally carrying on the effective interventions or ways of being. If participants felt in their learning to be a gatekeeper that something was missing or did not agree with the way an issue was handled or decision was carried out, they were intentional with trying something different.

Acting in Response. As a new faculty member, Ariel reflected on her process of learning from past gatekeeping experiences as both a master student and doctoral student. She reflected on her attempts to implement what she perceived as working or change what didn't work. She stated, "Yeah. So we do that a lot, right? Something happens to us, we learn from it, and then we overcompensate the next time to make sure it doesn't happen again."

As she is positioned to educate and supervise doctoral students in the coming semesters in her faculty role, Ariel described her desire to provide an experience that is more "empowering" and "transparent" than the experience she had as a doctoral student. She stated:

And so you know, I haven't gotten to work with any doc students in supervision yet, but I will and that's going to be really interesting too. I have to really think about how I'm going to navigate that with the doc students who are going to be serving as supervisors for my students starting in the spring. And I haven't quite figured that out yet. But it's

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something that's on my radar of how do I—so how do I navigate these potential issues with them in a way that's more empowering and more transparent, as much as I can be, as opposed to what I experienced which was just, 'We'll handle it. Don't worry about it anymore.

Properties. This category possessed two properties, *transparency and support*. The property of *transparency* was evident across this emerging category. Transparency was conceptualized as the act of being open and honest with intention, intervention, and outcome of gatekeeping related issues. Participants noted transparency as being a fundamental action that was perceived as helpful in learning about gatekeeping and seeing how gatekeeping can be applied. The second property that emerged in this category was *support*. Participants shared common experiences in their processes as they were desiring, needing, receiving, and or feeling *support*.

Transparency. Transparency was spoken about in numerous forms and noticed in varying levels of interactions. These varying levels ranged from transparency in explaining the abstract and concrete practices of gatekeeping for doctoral students education, to how transparent faculty are with sharing processes they take with CITs who are involved with remediation. Some participants experienced transparency as a learner and carried on the learned behavior as they found it to be helpful for their development. Other participants experienced a lack of transparency and witnessed how this was detrimental to the gatekeeping process and their development. Regardless of whether participants experienced a lack of transparency or consistent transparency, all moved toward acting in ways that are transparent and placed value on being transparent.

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Denise described an experience that was significant in her process when she recalled being overwhelmed with juggling various responsibilities and lacking support. This experience has translated to her role of clinical supervisor and has informed how she may approach her gatekeeping role. When I asked how her view of gatekeeper has changed since that experience, she responded:

It has made me more intentional. And when I say intentional, I mean seeing my role in it, like seeing how I influence that. It has made me more transparent in talking about my struggles and difficulties that I've had. It's also made me a little bit more compassionate, because I've been in that position as well and been—like again, I guess it falls back into the transparency: like the only reason I'm able to be compassionate about it is because I've talked about it. It's because it normalizes it, that we all kind of go through it.

Ariel spoke to the complexities of learning about gatekeeping as master-level student information is kept confidential due to FERPA. However, she strongly believed that general processes and information can be shared in a clear and transparent manner in order for her to increase understanding of the process and feel more prepared for a faculty position when she will be navigating situations on her own. She spoke about providing supervision for master-level students during her doctoral coursework and when asked whether she was aware of the 'general process' she answered with "I didn't. Nobody (doctoral students) did", highlighting the lack of transparency in disseminating information.

Acting in response to a lack of *transparency*, Ariel spoke to her efforts in changing what she perceived as not working during her master and doctoral education in terms of information being disseminated and understood. She stated:

And so now with my faculty, that's become something that we've had a dialogue around

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is—especially since this student—is do our students know and understand what remediation is, when we use it, and what it looks like? Because those are things that everybody should know; that’s just transparency.

Jane spoke to her intentions in being transparent with supervisees regarding evaluative feedback after coming to value and see the necessity of transparency after experiencing a supervisor who provided little transparency that resulted in an injury to the supervisory relationship. She stated:

So I feel like what I do want to do, that I’ve been trying to do, is be transparent, you know, throughout the process, communicate early on and throughout, make sure that I’m collaborating with other people in that process.

In contrary to Jane, Robert spoke to the transparency he experienced as a doctoral student regarding expectations that were set for him as a student. He recalled expectations being “very very clear at the beginning.” This clear information communicated and modeled for him was influential in how he believes information to should be presented to students. Transparency was identified as an essential feature in becoming a gatekeeper that appeared on numerous levels (self and others). Additionally, the property of support saturated the data in this round of interviews.

Support. The second property, *support*, is infused throughout the many actions and narratives spoken about in this emerging category. For example, Ariel spoke to the gratitude she held for her faculty in being supportive and open to consultation. She stated, “And then luckily I have a really supportive faculty that I can consult with about what to do if those things should become issues.” This *support* is valued in discussing potential gatekeeping concerns and/or addressing current gatekeeping issues.

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Ann described receiving support through her process as a whole due to the program's intentional gatekeeping curriculum and accessible and committed faculty. She stated:

And so I've never felt like I've just been thrown to the wolves related to it. It's always been very much, "Let's sit down, let's talk about this process." Being able to tease out the specifics of what needs to occur or not occur or are we looking at this in a way that is going to be helpful for the student. Um what kind of plan needs to be created to help them grow? So never feeling alone, at all.

Ann spoke of feeling supported and "never feeling alone" while Denise described navigating "feelings of isolation." Denise spoke to her desire for *support* and at times necessity for support as she struggled to juggle various roles (one of which being gatekeeper) and the impact it had on her development as a gatekeeper. She stated:

What else is coming to me next?' Like it was just a lot of fireballs, I guess, that you had to continue to just put out. And it was like, 'I need help from somebody and where is that help?' And nobody was kind of around. And so just navigating that—feelings of loneliness, feelings of isolation.

Earlier in her career, Michele's experience echoed that of Denise when she was left feeling unsupported and the feelings that accompanied this experience.

Um it was scary. It was scary. Again, it was one of those sort of feel-your-way kind of—kind of times. I did have a supervisor at the time who I don't remember her being helpful really. I mean she knew what I was dealing with, but it was kind of, 'Well, you deal with it.'

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Seeing the Need/ Seeing a Bigger Picture

The third process category that emerged, **Seeing the Need/ Seeing a Bigger Picture**, was evident across the participants' process. **Seeing the Need** is the action or process of recognizing the necessity of effective gatekeeping and its essential nature in protecting client welfare. The recognition of the need appeared to occur earlier in participants' process (before entering into doctoral program) when they noticed peers inappropriate behavior or poor clinical skills in their work as clinicians. Robert recalled recognizing the need in his clinical work. He stated "So I think that's where it kind of came into focus, you know? I would see examples." Robert expanded upon his experience in **Seeing the Need** through working with other professionals in the field. This category also contributed to him being able to see the bigger responsibility at hand, which is to train effective counselors and work toward preventing incompetent clinicians from working in the field.

Well I think what I mean by that is, you know, as I got more into the field, I would come across people and I would think to myself, I'm not sure if what they're doing is helpful for this person. Or I wonder about—I'm surprised that this person is in that role, just because of the way they interacted with other individuals. You know, I think we find plenty examples of that in our work: people who are ineffective at supervision or other aspects of the work that we do.

Seeing a Bigger Picture captured the process of participants seeing the larger impact their role of gatekeeper may have. Robert spoke to his experience in **Seeing a Bigger Picture** through his recognition that although counseling student development is a primary concern for CESs, the quality of care for clients is always the ultimate focus.

Denise spoke of visualizing the bigger picture and the realization of the impact she can have that accompanied her visualization.

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So I saw a bigger picture. I saw the students that I could potentially impact. I saw the clinicians that came after me that I could potentially impact. And so they were more of a motivation to me than anything that I had within myself, even the clients. Like I believe that everybody deserves counseling—great services, regardless of, you know, any type of ‘isms so that, you know, we experience in our society.

Sandra recalled presenting at a professional conference on the topic of gatekeeping geared toward working professionals. She remembered her surprise at the large turnout and heavy interest and **Seeing the Need** from the perspective of professionals wanting and needing gatekeeping information and training. Similarly, Ariel spoke of **Seeing the Need** in terms of gaps in literature addressing doctoral student performing gatekeeping duties. She recalled being motivated to write a manuscript speaking to these concerns and later presenting at a professional conference where she was surprised as well.

Sub-Categories. Two sub-categories came to the surface which included *recognizing and accepting the responsibility* and *helping students see the bigger picture*. *Recognizing and accepting the responsibility* is a sub-category where participants not only saw the general need for gatekeeping, but moved beyond to the realization that they had a role and responsibility in this bigger picture, and they consciously accepted the responsibility. *Helping students see a bigger picture* captures participants’ intent to assist students to see the bigger picture of their clinical work, their colleagues’ clinical work, and their efforts toward protecting the profession

Recognizing and Accepting the Responsibility. After recognizing the responsibility and entering into his doctoral program, Robert spoke to moving beyond recognizing and moving toward accepting the responsibility as he shared his thoughts on his current duty as a faculty

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member. He stated, “So that’s something—regardless of what’s going on, you have to kind of step back, set aside what you’re doing, and address whatever that concern is.”

Sandra spoke to the ‘shift’ that occurred stepping into the role of clinical supervisor and accepting the responsibility that is inherent to the work, gatekeeping. She stated:

Um well it shifted in the sense that it became more of a weight on me, because it was more of, listen, I’m responsible as a supervisor to not only model but to engage in gatekeeping functions to protect the public from any harm, you know, if someone that I was supervising was struggling.

Ariel passionately spoke to her process of recognizing the need after seeing incompetent counselors working in the field. These interactions fueled her desire to pursue a doctoral degree and accept and embrace the responsibility of a gatekeeper.

You know, I felt really motivated to want to train people properly and to be able to step in and do something if those kinds of issues came up, and to be a supervisor so that I could keep an eye on people and make sure that clients are being served properly. And that’s probably more responsibility than I should have put on myself, but I still feel that charge to be a gatekeeper. I wanted to be a gatekeeper because the people around me weren’t doing it.

Helping Students See a Bigger Picture. Denise spoke to the idea that fostering a “bigger picture” for CITs is a guiding aim for her work as a gatekeeper. She stated, “I think one of my biggest goals in gatekeeping as well is to help students to see that this is something that you can adopt and that you can live as well.” Denise also spoke to the importance of instilling ethical values into students and helping them see how their work with clients is tied to the perception, longevity, health, and integrity of our profession.

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They may not, you know, see the changes—ten, fifteen years from now, who knows. You may have been the first person to introduce them to what counseling is, provide the services, be intentional, you know, conceptualize well, do things in an ethical manner. Because you are planting that seed for if they continue. Maybe they don't want to continue right now, but if they ever do seek services again, they're going to remember that this person provided me with services.

Denise went on to speak to the reality that her students will have more direct interaction with clients and therefore can have an impact on monitoring quality of care outside of the classroom.

And so me being a counselor educator, nine times out of ten—or future counselor educator—my role in the world of actual working face-to-face with a client probably decreases, you know, significantly compared to the students that I'm working with, so teaching them the importance of gatekeeping and what that looks like, and, This is how we—this is how we made this decision, so it's not just my responsibility to think about.

Ariel echoed Denise in her stance on the importance of preparing students for their gatekeeping duties as clinicians.

They have responsibilities to each other, you know, and once they become counselors, they have responsibilities to make sure that other practitioners are doing what they're supposed to be doing. And if they aren't, there are certain avenues that you need to follow. So it's not just—teachers aren't the only gatekeepers, and so I think it's important for my students to understand the obligations that they have to each other. And I guess that's probably because I felt that obligation as a student, too, to teach my—Yeah. I mean we teach what we know...

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Sandra described educating students and supervisees on the larger impact their professional behavior can have not only on clients, but the system in which they work with and the individuals involved in that system. Robert spoke to supervisory interventions he employed when discussing “bigger picture” issues that aimed to broaden students understanding of the impact their bias and unexplored values may have on clientele. He stated:

And we try to project it out a little bit. Assume you’re with a client. So assume you’re not a student anymore and you’re with a client. You have this notion after a client says this particular thing. How do you think that might play out? So we try to take it beyond, again, just that academic piece and actually get the student to think about, Okay, what does this mean in terms of my identity as a counselor and how might this play out in a negative way if I’m confronted with this in a practicum setting, in an internship setting, in a professional setting.

Helping students see the bigger picture was a sub-category that participants took part in once they recognized their responsibility at hand. Thus, it is important to note that this process occurred after participants had individual meaning making to begin to understand their own role. After their own conceptualizations of the construct and role became more refined, the act of assisting students in their conceptualization was present. Throughout this category as a whole (and specifically the sub-category of ***helping students see the bigger picture***) the action of modeling was interpreted through the many actions observed by participants or performed by participants.

Property. The property of *modeling* was evident across the entire category of **Seeing the Need/ Seeing a Bigger Picture**. Participants defined modeling as gatekeeping interventions,

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attitudes, and beliefs that are behaviorally and/or ethically felt for students, supervisees, and colleagues to witness. They spoke to being modeled for and in return, modeling for CITs.

Modeling. Sandra spoke to her broadening understanding of the CESs role as leading into her intentional efforts to model for students and supervisees. She stated “But the more I understand it from a supervisor and counselor educator perspective, you know, really modeling gatekeeping functions and—for the people that I supervise and I teach.” Sandra even spoke to her experience in observing students and supervisees she has intervened with gatekeeping measures as simply needing a mentor to clarify professional expectations.

Robert spoke to his experience of upholding expectations placed on him and how his integrity translates into teachable moments for the students he interacted with as he is *modeling* for them. He stated:

Well when I say modeling, I guess it ties more back into that—into expectations. You know, I think we were expected to demonstrate that we were willing to challenge and to have difficult conversations with students as they progressed through that work. For example, we did work with practicum students or internship students. And I think in an indirect way, by making sure that we’re doing things we’re supposed to do, you know, hopefully the masters students would pick up on some of that and see the importance of the dispositions and how those things are rolled into the work beyond the academic piece of it.

Robert hoped the CITs he worked with would endorse professional competencies through his embodiment of these attributes. Robert’s gatekeeping ideals were shaped during his doctoral study, and through *modeling*, he hoped to cultivate a norm that will permeate his classroom. The

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following category, will describe the process participants spoke to in the foundation of learning to be a gatekeeper.

Being Molded by Cultural Values

The fourth emerging process category is **Being Molded by Cultural Values** of the respective program or agency in which participants belong. It became evident through round one interviews that the process of becoming a gatekeeper is influenced by the environment participants are embedded. Their beliefs, attitudes, training, and perceived competence surrounding gatekeeping were impacted and shaped through program and/or agency values. For example, when inquiring about how the faculty dynamic and culture of the department impacted her process, Ann responded that her experience and process would be “totally different”. She specifically spoke to the intentional training she received on how to be a gatekeeper and recognizes that if her department did not “take gatekeeping very seriously” and prioritize and value gatekeeping preparation and efforts, her development would have been altered. Furthermore, Ann spoke to the safety that was cultivated in her program as necessary to ask questions, make mistakes, and find guidance. Ann even mentioned having support from administrators (university counsel) that she found as crucial. She stated:

Yeah, it was safe. It was safe for us to screw it up. It was safe for us to—to question. And luckily our university counsel that was a part of it is a very supportive person of our program and—and was willing to answer all our questions that we had.

Ariel spoke about the support she feels in her current position as a second year faculty member and her recognition that she is allowed freedom to introduce master-level students to gatekeeping in a way she believes will be foundational for their professional development. She noted that not every department or program may support or see the value in this. Denise, in her

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first semester as a faculty member, described the ‘trickle down’ effect the system in which she works with influences her idea and approach to gatekeeping. She stated:

And so gatekeeping is something that they value. And so being in this environment it has—for me, it has no choice but to trickle down, like for it to influence me in some type of way. Because this is the environment that I have to function in or that I choose to function in, because this is a job that I chose to take.

Jane provided an insightful perspective when noticing how the financial burdens of budget cuts have impacted her development and process. She articulated personal ramifications that can occur when finances impact the holistic functioning of a program and result in changing dynamics. She stated:

So there were budget cuts last year too, which is a whole other dynamic that impacted everything else.... Three faculty members total have left within the past like four years. So then they didn’t have funding to—or they didn’t get approved to hire anyone else. So there’s only really three this semester. And last semester there was only four, where usually we have six at least. So I feel like they try, but I don’t know if they have enough time and—yeah, to really fully support in the way that I expected when I came into the program, I guess.

Jane spoke further to how relational dynamics can transform into department “politics” that inevitably impact the flow, values, and functioning of the program. When I asked for follow up and clarification on if “politics” have influenced gatekeeping process with master-level students in their department, she responded with, “I think so. I personally think so. I think that’s influenced everything in the program.” I then inquired if “everything” included her learning about gatekeeping. She responded:

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Yes. From faculty to students to doc students. Yeah, I think it's gone through all levels. And also yeah, probably has had an impact on my learning and I think helped me understand, you know, what it is that I want and what I don't want, in terms of being a gatekeeper and being a faculty member in a program. I think it's helped me understand like, you know, that um—that relationships with people and politics and dynamics are going to always be there but that, yeah, you—I don't—I try not to get involved or reinforce or split or get in those spaces that are sort of unhealthy in my mind, in terms of—

Jane also provided an example of how her programs current values and dynamics influenced how she viewed and interacted with gatekeeping. She described a norm developed in the department that was vastly different than the one she experienced as a master-level student.

Yeah. And I notice that kind of culture and that fear and normalization of that it's like everyone is supposed to be really critical. And if you're not being critical then you're not—you're—maybe you think you're too good or something. I don't know.

Jane reflected on how her experience and process as a whole has been impacted by various relational conflict among faculty, lack of faculty support due to budget cuts, lack of cohesion, and overall disjointed values. She stated:

And my development and my support and my identity as a gatekeeper I think has suffered because of those things. That it's sort of like—it's impacting all things. It's sort of like this trickle down like from all levels. I feel like this semester it's been a little bit better, but it's still—I mean even just this year, the idea that we don't have as many faculty I think contributes to that. Because we don't have as many people able to support our development. We don't have as many people who can sort of be there to have

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questions about or to talk about this more in depth, because they're busy and they're doing their own things.

Similarly to Jane, Sandra spoke to seeing cultural norms in CES programs influence how gatekeeping is thought about, approached, and interacted with; inevitably impacting her development and views of her own role as gatekeeper.

And I've been learning that there's—sometimes in counselor education programs—and even in my own experience, from what I've observed and heard from colleagues—is that there's a fear to engage in gatekeeping to a certain extent, because everybody wants to be quote unquote 'nice.' No one wants to come off as being rude or mean, so they'll let things go. As well as they don't want to be sued, you know, so it's kind of like, 'Well, let's kind of sweep it under the rug and pretend it doesn't exist.' Which I think in and of itself is a gatekeeping issue and it's a huge ethical issue because some of these things that people tend to sweep under the rug could lead to problems in the future with clients not getting the best care possible.

Sub-Categories. Three sub-categories emerged from **Being Molded by Cultural Values**; *initial encounter*, *experiencing proactive interventions versus reactive*, and *dealing with power/ feeling powerlessness*. The sub-category of *initial encounter* highlighted participants' first introduction to the construct of gatekeeping, taking place within their program and/or initial agency. *Dealing with power and feeling powerlessness* captures movement in participants' process where the agency or program empowered them in their development or left them feeling unheard. And lastly, participants spoke to their process in *experiencing proactive interventions versus reactive*. The culture and/or dynamics of a given program/ agency modeled

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for participants two ways to address gatekeeping issues, proactively or reactively. The three sub-categories are listed below with selected excerpts.

Initial Encounter. How gatekeeping was spoken about and discussed played a role in shaping initial thoughts surrounding participants' responsibility and role. Sandra recalled learning about gatekeeping in her master's program and firstly believing that it was simply an act or function that senior level professionals engaged in. Similarly to Sandra, Denise recalled learning about gatekeeping in her master's program. Denise remembered the term 'gatekeeping' was not necessarily used. She recalled the primary focus on self-care with never a direct connection to gatekeeping. Denise also described her experience as one of 'ambiguity' in which she didn't understand how her faculty may intervene if an issue was identified with her.

Ann described her limited understanding when introduced to the concept as a master's student, recalling that her program was "not transparent at all" in terms of what gatekeeping was and how it can be applied to her as a students and/or the profession. Ann took into account the time in which she received her master's degree (a period in the counseling literature when gatekeeping related topics were just coming forth).

Ariel recalled being exposed to the idea of gatekeeping when she encountered peers she perceived as being ill suited for the profession. She stated:

But honestly it was more having experiences of when that came up for me, and I think the first time—well, honestly the first time that came up was as a master's student, because there were students in my program, in my cohort, that really shouldn't have been there.

Ariel continued to speak to her experience in dealing with problematic peers during her first exposure to gatekeeping related incidents. She stated:

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And so I found myself really frustrated (about peers), because I was trying really hard and this profession and this work means a lot to me. And so to see students just kind of cruising through and me wondering what their clients are going to experience with them when they finish the program was really frustrating.

Dealing with Power and Feeling Powerlessness. This sub-category captured movement in participants' process where their system empowered them in their development as a gatekeeper or created an environment where their voices were not honored, heard, or taken seriously, resulting in feeling powerlessness. Dealing with power also pointed to participants' observation and realization of inherent power that exists within academic systems, particularly as doctoral students considering they are still being evaluated with their own degrees/education on the line. In describing a supervisee who she worked with in her doctoral program, Ariel stated the powerlessness she experienced, as she felt responsible for the welfare and care of her supervisee's client and little control over assisting in the students remediation. She stated:

So like I knew there was a problem and I had concern for her clients, but I had no—I had no tools, I had no voice. I had no way of knowing what was going on. So I didn't know what I could do. Like I knew what I would want to do if I were the faculty member in that situation, but I had no—I mean it's a political process too, like you can't be too—I felt like I couldn't be too forceful about it, because I'm still a student too, I'm still getting evaluated too. And so I know I'm in charge of this client's well-being, technically I'm the only one listening to these tapes, no one else knows what's going on, the site supervisor is clearly clueless. But I can't do anything because who am I going to go to? If I go to another faculty member, they're just going to route me back to my supervisor.

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Ariel also spoke to the complexities in navigating power dynamics in serving as a clinical supervisor while being a doctoral student who is being assessed and evaluated for clinical supervision. She also spoke to the frustration in having faculty members not communicating essential information or being transparent about a process that would be useful for her development, education, and peace of mind as a supervisor. Ariel then described her current position of a second year faculty member and the transition into power. She described her experience as “intimidating” and “stressful.” She stated:

You know, and so that’s an interesting challenge that I’m still trying to navigate, because I have not sat in this seat and had this power before as a supervisor. I’ve only done it as a doctoral student and that’s kind of that weird, gray in-between place where all I can really do is report to someone else. But now I have this legal and ethical responsibility that I need to navigate and it’s intimidating and it’s stressful.

Jane spoke directly to her experience of cautiously moving through her education, including her involvement with gatekeeping, in the ‘political’ dynamics of her program as she acutely sees the power that can be used for or against her as a doctoral student, impacting her trajectory.

So you want to make sure that you’re not saying anything to stir the pot and get into a situation where you become—you get involved in sort of a political space where certain people might not—that might affect your—I don’t know, you know? How they grade your comps or how the dissertation happens.

Jane spoke more specifically to how “politics”, relational, and power dynamics can influence and inform the way gatekeeping issues are dealt with in a program.

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So I think that that is really important, because multiple people work with this student and I know it's inevitable that you're going to get different feedback from different people. But if not everybody's on the same page and then you get to a situation where someone is in a—does have a concern, then it can sort of be like, 'Oh, we have to support this person in the faculty,' even if we don't agree with them, because now we're in a space where if we go—if we're not with them, then it's going to look bad on us and then we jeopardize—that person could jeopardize their own reputation and sort of—like following someone in a group because you feel like you have to, even if you don't agree with them. And I don't want to ever be in that position...

Denise captured a different layer of dealing with power when speaking to her experience of recognizing the power inherent in a clinical supervisor role and considering how this will inevitably influence the relationship and gatekeeping related issues. She specifically spoke to encouraging her supervisees to be honest and open with issues that may be impacting their performance as a way to understand and support them better.

Experiencing Proactive Interventions Versus Reactive. This sub-category speaks to participants' observations in seeing proactive and reactive measures in response to gatekeeping. Ariel described her faculty of dialoging about student issues early and often before they became 'big issues' which she found utility and usefulness in.

And I think—I've—my faculty—I feel like my faculty handles issues fairly well because we make a lot of effort to talk about things before they become big issues, which is something I appreciate, because it's a good learning process for me to learn the entire process from when you notice something's off to someone's potentially getting harmed

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and we really have to do something here. So I appreciate that my program as a whole is fairly proactive when it comes to gatekeeping.

In contrast, Jane spoke to her process as a doctoral student in witnessing gatekeeping issues handled by the department in the vein of, “We don’t want to deal with it until it happens. Like we don’t want to go there until something comes up.” *Experiencing proactive measures versus reactive* demonstrates how the system participants are embedded influences their process of becoming a gatekeeper. The fifth and final category emerging from round one data analysis is described below.

Ongoing Movement

The final process category that emerged from the first round of interviews was **Ongoing Movement**. This category captures the continual learning and ever-changing context of gatekeeping related issues. Evolving context includes concepts such as varying students and their developmental needs, changing faculty, differing program culture, and modifications to institutions policies and procedures. Ariel spoke to the evolving nature as she stated:

So you’re really always just having to figure out, what do I do with this problem? How do I help this student? How do I protect this client? I don’t really know because sites are always different, students are always different, faculty might change.

Ariel eloquently described her process of becoming a gatekeeper and the aspects of learning as ‘journey’ in which there is always learning to be done and never a final destination. She stated:

I think I say ‘journey’ because you’re never done learning. So that’s the thing, it’s like anything else—the minute you think that you’re awesome at gatekeeping is when you need to be careful. Because, you know, impairment and burn-out, I think, impact the gatekeeping role just as much as anything else. And so you can’t treat students the same

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because they're not the same, and you can't treat clients and clinicians the same because they're not. And so it's good to have structure in the way that you remediate, but you also have to have some flexibility because everybody's a little different. And so where it may at the surface seem like the same issue with two students, you don't know what's going on underneath...I think—I think it's an ongoing learning process in general, just like anything else.

Sandra echoed Ariel's process in recognizing that there is always movement toward more learning and deeper understanding. She stated, "There's always definitely more to learn. And I feel like even within that space, I was limited and gatekeeping was more related to clinical supervision, versus now I look at it more broadly pertaining to counselor education."

This category, although prominent among certain participants, did not appear as frequently throughout others narrative. Participants who did not have direct quotes capturing this category, still possessed focused codes that alluded to the process of ongoing movement. This may have been due to the content of questions asked during the first round intensive interviews.

Sub-Categories. Two sub-categories emerged that included *blending identities and balancing roles*, and *being guided by personal and professional ethics*. *Blending identities and balancing roles* emerged as participants spoke of continual movement toward integrating identities into their process of becoming of a gatekeeper while simultaneously balancing roles. Participants shared numerous identities they felt blending together and/or balancing such as clinician, educator, supervisor, researcher, and gatekeeper. *Being guided by personal and professional ethics* appeared as a driving force that kept participants moving forward in the pursuit of doing what they believe was right.

Blending identities and balancing roles. Robert spoke of his foundation as a professional

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counselor and grounded professional identity as aiding his development and process of becoming a gatekeeper. He stated, “I think if I did not have that same strong identity... I don’t know how that would affect it. But I think that that identity definitely strengthens the notion of gatekeeping and what we need to do as gatekeepers.”

Ariel spoke to her process in struggling to balance her role of doctoral student while fulfilling duties and responsibilities (such as gatekeeping) of a counselor educator and her confusion in integrating and balancing. She stated:

Um so that idea (gatekeeper role) was introduced generally in our first semester, just in that as we were being prepared to do supervision and to co-teach courses, they kind of gave us a brief introduction of our roles and responsibilities. But it was one of those conversations where it’s like your roles and responsibilities as a counselor educator, but I’m not a counselor educator yet but I’m still doing these thing and I’m fulfilling these roles. So where does my—where’s my voice?

As Ariel recalled past experiences in which she reflected upon balancing roles, Robert described challenges he currently faces as a first year faculty member and his struggles in balancing and fulfilling the many duties and responsibilities that are on his plate. He stated:

I think the difficult thing can be trying to manage this with all the other things that we’re doing, especially as a first semester new faculty person trying to get acclimated to the university, to the students, to the department, trying to get acclimated to the different roles that I’m playing, trying to keep everything together and manage well. I think for me, that’s the difficult part, honestly right now, is just having it play out in that context where all of this other stuff is going on.

Despite facing challenges in the action of balancing and blending, participants still forged

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onward to engage in gatekeeping. This onward push was propelled by personal and professional ethics. The consensus among participants for what constitutes “ethics” consisted on client safety and quality of care, which funneled down to their role of gatekeeper.

Being guided by personal and professional ethics. The final subcategory, ***being guided by personal and professional ethics***, was evident through participants’ narrative of the continual force of ethics guiding and motivating them through the process. Robert spoke to how his personal beliefs and ethics align with professional ethics and how both inspire him to train competent professionals. Sandra spoke to the same concept of not only professional ethics guiding gatekeeping identities and practices, but personal ethics and ways of being as well. She described her experience in working with colleagues and observing professionals who did not value gatekeeping and did not display personal concern for colleagues/ students who may have been displaying unprofessional behavior. She stated:

It’s also tied to their personal ethics, not just professional ethics, like who they are as individuals will impact the level of....not intensity, but I’ll say intensity for lack of a better word—that they use to pay attention to their role as a gatekeeper.”

Jane described her personal and professional values of integrity and her commitment to upholding the reputation of the profession to protect clients. Denise stated that she ‘lives’ her gatekeeper identity. She described doing so by continual reflection, acting ethically, and looking through the gatekeeper lens to inform her other roles and identities. She reiterates the importance of upholding her own integrity of gatekeeping by stating, “ I mean at the heart of it is to live it. Like don’t just do it, but be it.” In looking through this permanent lens, it upholds her personal values of being congruent and aligns with professional values of protecting the profession. She views the role more of a way of being or a philosophy to live by.

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Like it's not just something that you have to turn on and off, because then it falls back into that genuineness. Like if I believe it, then I'm going to live that, that's just my personal belief. If I live it—if I practice it and if I say that it's something—that if it means something me, then I'm going to hope that it becomes indoctrinated within me and it can be—you know, it can exude through me for other people to see as well. It's not just something that—my skills that I use in a therapy room and then once I'm out I'm hell on wheels. So.

The category of **Ongoing Movement** was thinner than the other four categories. This could have been attributed to the first round intensive interview questions or my lack of follow up as a researcher when other participants did touch on this concept. Consequently, I was intentional to investigate this category in the second round intensive interviews to see what may have emerged.

Interpreting Dialogue Sessions

After the first round of intensive interviews (Charmaz, 2014) were coded, analyzed, and interpreted with initial process categories taking form, interpreting dialogue sessions (Coe Smith, 2007) were scheduled with each participant. Utilizing interpreting dialogue sessions allowed for me to maintain congruency with Charmaz's (2014) constructivist thought. Although similar to member checking, interpreting dialogues are markedly different in philosophical underpinnings and structure (Coe Smith, 2007). The primary utility for these sessions were twofold; ensure participants had an opportunity to review and provide input on my interpretations thus far in the process, and add to the integrity and credibility of the grounded theorizing research. I approached these sessions as a means to collaboratively review my interpretations while simultaneously gathering more data from participants to code, analyze, and further interpret to

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inform round two questions. I gathered additional data from participants focused on eliciting their “thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and opinions on the precision of fit and representation of the emerging analyses and interpretations” (Coe Smith, 2007, p. 51).

The procedures and structure of the interpreting dialogue session included; sending each participant a one-dimensional graph of the emerging categories, sub-categories, and properties along with narrative data that provided selective supporting evidence from all participants for the category development. I utilized a variant of the interpreting dialogues as I wanted to provide all participant excerpts rather than the individual who I was interviewing. I believed this would offer a fuller and richer description for participants. This document was sent prior to the interpreting dialogue sessions for participants to review and provide time to make meaning and develop questions or curiosities. Sessions were then individually scheduled and conducted via Zoom, ranging from 20- 40 minutes in length. The sessions were structured to provide time for me as the researcher to describe in more depth the category development while providing space for questions, clarifications, confirmation, or rebuttal. I made it clear to participants that it was a working document in which I openly accepted feedback to ensure we were co-creating the theory and that the emerging categories accurately captured their process. After describing the categories and eliciting feedback, I concluded the session with three general questions (created prior to the session): Do you feel these categories speak to your process? What, if anything, may be missing for you in this process? Do you feel one category informed or is related to another? In many of the sessions, participants answered these prompts during their original feedback. I was intentional with asking about relationships among categories as my theoretical coding analysis left me with questions in which I thought best to pose and co-explore with participants, as the first round interviews did not reveal clear relationships among certain categories that would

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warrant strong evidence to present these relationships. I also inquired about the concept of ‘relationships’ in their process as round one intensive interviews revealed a common thread of relationship to self, others, and system that existed in all categories and sub-categories. How ‘relationships’ impacted the process was not clear even after theoretical coding. Therefore, interpreting dialogue sessions were an opportunity to further explore.

The interpreting dialogue sessions revealed general confirmation for all five emerging categories (**“Hands-on” Learning, Receiving/ Lacking Intentional Education, Seeing the Need/Seeing a Bigger Picture, Being Molded by Cultural Values, and Ongoing Movement**). All seven participants articulated verification that the individual categories matched their experience as a whole.

Two participants, Denise and Jane, shared their reactions of feeling ‘less alone’ in their experience and being comforted by reading through others excerpts. Denise stated, “Reading back on it...like I didn’t feel as alone anymore, because there were some commonalities in reading other people’s and—well, how you interpreted other people’s interviews.” Moreover, Denise shared that she feels comforted in knowing that she wasn’t alone in feeling “ill-prepared” in her role of gatekeeper as she once thought she was. Jane stated her feelings of reassurance seeing the similarities across participant’s process. She stated:

It felt kind of reassuring to know that other people also experience some of the same things that I’m experiencing in terms of this process, so that was kind of cool to see. Because like a lot of what the participants say they have experienced, it may be in different ways, but there were similarities.

“Hands-on” Learning was quickly agreed on as a significant piece of their process in which all participants were able to articulate their consensus for inclusion." Sandra wanted to add

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an additional experience to this category as she recently finished a teaching practicum where she experienced a student display questionable behavior during the viewing of an educational video. She shared that this student had a history of exhibiting unprofessional behavior and was currently being worked with to see if they were an appropriate fit for the profession. Sandra confirmed that it was learning in the moment and through this direct experience that will inform how she may address similar issues in the future.

Ann shared her thoughts and feedback of **“Hands-on” Learning** being a component of **Receiving Education** and direct learning opportunities as an instrumental piece of the intentional education she received. She stated, “Um hands-on has been a piece of all of the intentional education. It’s actually a component of the ten-step process that we use for teaching gatekeeping.” She believed the two categories may have more overlap and believed it may more accurately represent her process if **“Hands-on” Learning, Receiving/ Lacking Intentional Education** were merged. In reflecting upon Ann’s feedback and revisiting participants transcripts and coding this round of data, it became clear that these two categories shared ample properties to be classified as one category. For example, the property of support and transparency were pronounced features in participant’s process of **“Hands-on” Learning**. Furthermore, Ariel made a connecting overlap between **“Hands-on” Learning** and the sub-category of *acting in response*. She stated:

Because you develop those through our own experiences. So you either see the system work really well and that makes you want to work really well or you see it fail students and so you think, ‘I want to do better,’ or, ‘I think I want to do better.’

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Another piece of feedback that was given related to the property of consultation situated under “**Hands-on**” **Learning**. Robert dialogued about his process as one of *consultation and collaboration*. He stated:

Working—and I mean actually I would add ‘collaboration’ there too, just because I think sometimes we do—you know, from a departmental level, it is very collaborative in terms of that gatekeeping role, because you know, another person may see something that we didn’t necessarily see but it kind of goes hand-in-hand with what we are seeing. So the collaborative piece, just in terms of discussing what we know about students, you know, the information, but then also just working through that: okay, what are the issues involved here and how do we work through that?

The category of **Seeing the Need/ Seeing a Bigger Picture** was agreed upon as a central piece to their process. Participants spoke to how **Seeing the Need** occurred through witnessing/ experiencing impairment of peers, CITs, and/or colleagues. Robert reflected back on his doctoral education and spoke to his process of how the ‘picture developed’ in terms of the importance of his role as gatekeeper and how the need came into further focus. Sandra passionately commented on the sub-category of *recognizing and accepting the responsibility* as fitting within her process. She stated:

‘Recognizing and accepting responsibility,’ I feel like that one is just so awesome. You know, it’s just like what—two, four, five words—but it’s very loaded. You know, for example, a part of recognizing and accepting our responsibility as gatekeepers is to recognize and accept and take action when we have to gatekeep, you know what I mean? And not worry about, ‘Well, what if I’m wrong? Or what if I upset this student? What if they sue?’ We can’t worry about that and let that deter us from seeing the bigger picture.

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The category of **Being Molded by Cultural Values** was enthusiastically agreed upon as an informative piece of their process. Denise reiterated her belief that “my environment had a lot to do with how I viewed gatekeeping.” Michele and Robert asked for clarification as to how I was interpreting this category. After describing the interpreted action and significance of this category, both agreed that it fit within their own process. As I referenced an excerpt from another participant, it sparked an additional thought for Michele in terms of how she perceived new faculty in her doctoral program to be impacting the culture and dynamic, and in return influencing gatekeeping processes. She stated:

Recently there’s been a change in—there’s been an addition of a couple of faculty who are actually newly-minted Ph.D.’s from the same program. And so they’re graduates and they are—they have been given what appears to be a lot of responsibility. For instance, like sort of re-structuring the practicum and internship experience and program. And what I’m getting from other faculty is some mixed feelings about that and, you know, a lot of tiptoeing around and certainly not transparency. So that has been lacking in my program.

Michele reflected further on how past experiences earlier in her career have shown her whether or not an agency values and supports gatekeeping practices. She also described her current position as director and her power in setting the ‘mentality’ for valuing gatekeeping in order to protect clientele.

And I have had that—I have worked places where that was sort of the mentality. Like, ‘Look, we need—we need these interns,’ for example, ‘because they’re really cheap labor.’ Honestly they’re working in not-for-profits that really can’t afford to hire people but they’re taking on interns, it’s cheap labor. We don’t want to rock the boat because we

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don't want to cut that off. Also sometimes there's been relationships with—like say in a professional organization with a supervisor and someone at the trainee's institution. We don't want to extend that potential damage to some other professional relationship has been a fear of supervisors.

Robert verified this category after discussing others participants' excerpts and having me provide clarification to questions he posed. Robert stated:

I think the cultural norms, the values of the program, do a good deal in terms of shaping—shaping a person, depending on that person's buy-in, the congruence with what that stuff is. And I know for me to buy into something, I have to understand it, it has to make sense, I have to see where it's coming from. And I think—yeah, I think with my program there just happen to be—there was good congruence between how I look at things and how that program was. So I think that helped.

Robert brings to the surface an important piece that other participants spoke to as well during the interpreting dialoguing session, relationship with self. The viewpoints, perspectives, and personal philosophies one may hold regarding gatekeeping inevitably come into play in the process of becoming a gatekeeper. Taking a step back, one may see that the personal beliefs are influenced by cultural values that an agency and /or department may hold. Therefore, the culture of the system in which you are embedded and your personal beliefs and views are intricately linked. Feeding into one another. Ariel illustrates this concept by stating,

Because you know, we have our values and our biases as individuals and those inform what we do professionally, but I think that experiences that I've gone through have led me to value gatekeeping, because I've seen examples of gatekeeping not going as well as

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I feel like it should. And so that's really informed me to develop the value of transparency with my students now...

Ariel also shared how her experiences in her department have informed her use and value of transparency. Thus, recognizing how cultural norms inform how she valued and perceived different dimensions and properties of gatekeeping. She described transparency and support as 'values' adopted from her experience in her doctoral education.

Yeah, well and things like transparency and support, like you have under that intentional education piece are really values, I think. So like our program here really values transparency and really values proactive student support, and so those inform our policies.

In dialoguing about the sub-category of *dealing with power/feeling powerlessness*, Sandra noted that she could not resonate with experiencing powerlessness as her process consisted of experiences in which mentors, faculty, and colleagues have empowered her to step into the role of gatekeeper through support. She stated:

Yeah, I think the only one that kind of jumped out that I don't really identify with is 'feeling powerless': So dealing with power, feeling powerless. But the feeling powerless part, that doesn't resonate. But I can see how it could with some gatekeepers, which I think would contribute to people not engaging in gatekeeping because they feel powerless—that's what I think about when I see it. Not that I can identify with that, but yeah.

In coding the interpreting dialogue sessions, Sandra's experience of being empowered echoed other participant's process. Ariel described feeling empowered to act in her role of gatekeeper and supported through the process as a new faculty member due to the culture of her

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department and system. She reflected on how different her experience may be if she were situated within a faculty and department with differing values and priorities. She stated:

Yeah, I feel that's true as a faculty member too, because your university and the culture of your university is either really empowering and supportive of faculty—Or they're not and they're more like fearful of legal issues and things that can come up.So I think—I mean that's just as true—that power dynamic plays out as a faculty member too, a lot of times. Because it's within your own faculty, so if you're like, 'Oh, I think this is a problem,' and then your other faculty is like, 'No, I think it's fine,' then where do you go from there? Because, you know, if you don't have the support of your faculty, you're not going to be inclined to do anything, because no one's going to back you up if it comes back in your face.

Jane, who often had felt unheard or keenly aware of her lack of power as a doctoral student, illustrated the complexity of power in its many forms.

I also really resonated with that feelings of power versus powerlessness, especially as a doctoral student and knowing that we are really involved in the work that we do with our counselors-in-training, but yet the professors and everything make the ultimate decisions. And that sometimes what you say doesn't really matter and other times it does. So that—like that dynamic, I think, is really important to highlight because in some ways its inevitable and I think that speaks to, again, that idea of the politics and the dynamics and sort of you have multiple roles as a student and a gatekeeper and like a supervisor, but you know, within those power—there's elements of power in each of those.

In dialoguing about the impact of cultural norms and values set in the system they are developing and working within, it became evident that the concept of 'relationships' that I was

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interested to explore began to emerge. After coding, analysis, and interpretation of this session the connection between relationships (self, others, system) and cultural values and norms developed. Ariel spoke to relationships with colleagues in her position as a faculty and the connection between the relationships she has with them and its impact on creating a shared vision of how gatekeeping practices should be, “ So I think those relationships are important, because we’re all on the same page and share the same lens and values.”

Relationships impacting gatekeeper development are conceptualized through three layers; relationship to self (worldview, phase of professional development, theoretical orientation) others (students, supervisees, peers, colleagues) and the system one is working within (department, institution, agency). Sandra spoke to her perception of usefulness of relationships with others when encountering gatekeeping issues. She stated, “I think having—having the relationship with someone (student, supervisee, colleague) makes it easier for them to engage in gatekeeping.” Similarly, Denise spoke to how creating relationships helps you to identify whether behavior is common for an individual or ‘out of their norm’ and helps to inform gatekeeping related decisions. Michele spoke to her process of finding confidence within herself and learning from some “not so great” relationships.

Robert spoke to finding a department faculty that aligned with his beliefs surrounding gatekeeping. He stated, “So again, that kind of goes back to the congruency piece, you know, finding people that I value and respect and their promotion of values and beliefs being, something that really resonated with me.”

Sandra described the value she placed on relationships in being able to have open, transparent conversations to equal the power dynamics that may exist in certain relationships. She viewed the ‘positive’ relationships she has built with CITs as helping to decrease the power

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differential and empowering supervisees and students to use their voices. In reflecting upon relationships that have impacted her process of becoming a gatekeeper, Denise made a connection with power that is situated within a system and those that act within the system. She stated, “So in just dealing with feelings of power and powerlessness—like power—like relationship has power. Just thinking of how I felt isolated; so I felt powerless because I was isolated because I didn’t have relationships with people.”

All participants agreed that the category of **Ongoing Movement** captured their process in becoming gatekeepers. In particular, Robert resonated with this category as he stated how the concept of gatekeeping is continually evolving and so must his identity within the concept. He stated:

And then the ongoing—the ongoing movement also stood out as well, because it is something that’s constantly shifting and changing, something we constantly have to remain mindful of, something that—it’s like a living thing, because laws and ethics are updated and, you know, how we go about doing that gatekeeping or things we might want to focus on are constantly changing as well, I think, because of that.

Participants also felt connected to the sub-category of *blending identities and balancing roles*. Referring to the integration of her professional counseling identity into her role of gatekeeper and counselor educator, Michele stated, :

Well when you were talking I was thinking of ‘grounded,’ and you said the word. I think that my clinical identity has kept and keeps me grounded. That’s the thing that I can look to really help guide me and to remind myself what—who I am and what I’m doing and why I’m doing it.

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Both Jane and Ann spoke to their foundational roots as clinicians and its function in enhancing other roles they espouse as counselor educators, such as a gatekeeper. They also spoke directly to their perception of how it has strengthened their ability to identify gatekeeping issues.

The sub-category of *being guided by personal and professional ethics* resonated with participants as more of a ‘driving force’ that continued to motivate them throughout their process. This sub-category described the action of reflecting on ethics as keeping motivation high as their roles expanded and they began to see more of a clearer picture of what gatekeeping would feel and look like in their respective positions.

Implications for Round Two

After completion and analysis of the interpreting dialogue sessions, the emerging categories evolved into the following; **Engaging in Educational Practices** (merging “Hands-on” Learning and Receiving/ Lacking Intentional Education), **Seeing the Need/Seeing a Bigger Picture, Being Molded by System Values and Relationships**, and **Ongoing Movement**. I utilized clustering of ideas and categories while memoing to construct a conceptual map that began to illustrate the process visually. The conceptual map integrated feedback from the interpretive dialogue and new data that emerged. For instance, **Being Molded by System Values and Relationships** now included the interdependent connection to relationships and is placed in the map to show how it informs and supports the process as a whole (see Figure 2 which depicts the emerging conceptual map). Additionally, the title of the category was slightly altered to more closely represent participant’s process (modified **Cultural Values** to **System Values**). As connections and influences have begun to emerge in the data, further examination ensued to gather more support through thicker analyses during round two intensive interviews. Round two intensive interviews had three primary aims; move participants deeper into their process, form an

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understanding of how the process differed for participants that were situated in various phases of their professional career (doctoral students to new faculty), and focus on concepts, ideas, and influences that needed further expansion.

Intensive interview questions developed for the second round consisted of:

1. How have your motivations changed, if any, from the beginning of learning to be a gatekeeper to now?
 - a. Has anything strengthened or lessened that motivation throughout the process?
2. What is the most challenging part of where you are at right now?
 - a. Reflecting back, what were other major challenges you encountered through this process?
3. How has your idea of the role changed from then to now?
4. What has been the emotional process of navigating the nuances and complexities throughout the process?
5. What has the process been like for you in blending and balancing identities?
 - a. What identities do you see blending? Where do you feel like you are at currently?

The above questions were designed to deepen the analysis, continue the exploration of the initial categories, and focus on concepts that were merely suggested or implied. For example, many participants spoke to an emotional component of *navigating the nuances and complexities* within their role of gatekeeper. I wanted to gather a clearer picture of what this emotional experience looked like while also seeing the variation across time and point in the process.

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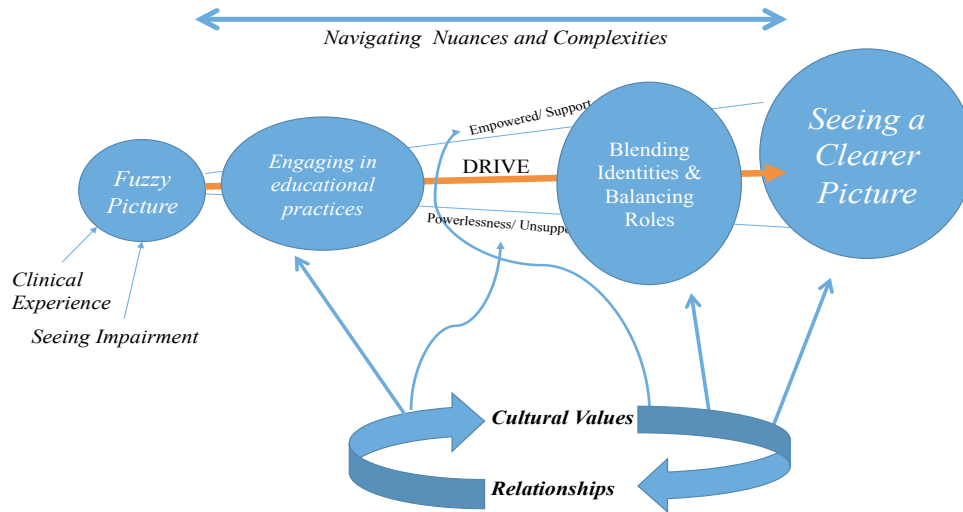


Figure 2. Emerging Conceptual Map Post R1 Interpreting Dialogue Sessions.

CHAPTER IV: FINAL ANALYSIS

Following the completion of round one intensive interviewing and interpreting dialogue sessions, round two intensive interviewing was scheduled individually with each participant. I utilized a semi-structured interview approach with round one analysis informing the construction of round two questions. Questions aligned with grounded theory, which aims to explore a phenomenon and movement through a process. Therefore, I crafted questions that sought to understand how participants' processes persisted and or evolved in becoming a gatekeeper. I also intended to further explore concepts or experiences that were implied during round one analysis, but not fully articulated. In particular, exploring the emotional experiences of participants as they 'moved through the nuances', as first round strongly hinted at movement through varying emotions. The questions were as follows:

1. How have your motivations changed, if any, from the beginning of learning to be a gatekeeper to now?
 - a. Has anything strengthened or lessened that motivation throughout the process?
2. What is the most challenging part of where you are at right now?
 - a. Reflecting back, what were other major challenges you encountered through this process?
3. How has your idea of the role changed from then to now?
4. What has been the emotional process of navigating the nuances and complexities throughout the process?
5. What has the process been like for you in blending and balancing identities?
 - a. What identities do you see blending? Where do you feel like you are at currently?

Round two intensive interviewing ranged from 30-45 minutes in length and were

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conducted using Zoom. During the second interview, I shared the conceptual map that was created after the initial interpreting dialogue. Participants' reactions to the map were recorded and included as data for this round. After all interviews were completed and professionally transcribed, I began coding. As in the first round data analysis, I used initial, focused, and theoretical coding (Charmaz, 2014) to identify salient actions within their processes and compare segments and incidents within and across participants. With this data, I supported and adjusted existing codes, created new codes, and further analyzed connections and relationships.

Second Round Intensive Interview Analysis

Coding from round two intensive interviewing revealed a sharper image of participants' process and assisted the reconstruction and refinement of the five evolving categories developed during round one. The below section will highlight the major transitions that occurred from round two intensive interview analyses in an overview. This section will be followed by reconstructed categories that are described in more depth.

Overview

The categories of **“Hands-On” Learning** and **Receiving/ Lacking Intentional Education** were consolidated into one category after round one interpreting dialogue sessions. The category was re-entitled **Engaging in Educational Practices**, and this round of analysis provided confirmation that the processes are intricately intertwined. Under this re-constructed category, the sub-categories of *learning from others experiences* and *seeking out professional discourse (self-directed learning)* were fused as the actions in both of these categories surfaced with the same underlying intention, seeking out more information and being open to learn from others. The sub-category of *experiencing proactive versus reactive intervention* initially located under **Being Molded by System Values and Relationships** is now situated within *acting in*

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response. Participants' narratives demonstrated their process of *acting in response* to their experience observing programs and faculty displaying proactive or reactive interventions related to gatekeeping. Their focus in this observation was more closely associated with how they would like to respond in the future if placed in a similar situation and reflecting on how proactive efforts have been more helpful and effective. Furthermore, the category of **Being Molded by System Values and Relationships** now informs and influences the progression of other categories, this adjustment was appropriate.

Second round data revealed the most insight and subsequent adjustments to the category of **Ongoing Movement**, which was re-entitled **Moving Toward Congruence**. This may have been due to other categories reaching saturation during the second round. Second round intensive interview questions focused more on the development of the actions present in this category. When asking participants about their experience with *blending identities and balancing roles*, all spoke to varying elements and degrees of *questioning self and encountering acceptance* throughout the process of **Moving Toward Congruence**. Second round interviews uncovered that the **ongoing movement** was the action taken by participants to move to a place that felt personally and professionally congruent. Throughout this experience, participants reflected on their efforts to make sense of and integrate personal values and conceptualizations of gatekeeping within the systems they resided. A common thread evident in participants' narrative that was frequently appearing in focused codes, was the navigation of a variety of emotions (i.e. frustration, anxiety, excitement). I titled this emergent sub-category as *traversing through emotions*. Upon completion of coding for this round of interviews, the title of this category was adjusted to **Moving Toward Congruence** to more accurately depict the concepts being captured. Lastly, participants also spoke to *moving through the nuances* that were inherent in **Moving**

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Toward Congruence. Upon revisiting round one analyses and comparative analysis of round two, the property of *moving through the nuances* was more clearly grounded in the data as a piece of participants' process that permeated through the experience as a whole. Nuances and complexities manifested in varying forms for participants as they progressed in their development. Variability in these experiences will be presented later in the chapter.

Additionally, second round intensive interviewing data provided saturation for existing categories of becoming a gatekeeper, and moved me toward the formation of an emerging theory. In particular, the data contributed to a thicker description and understanding of **Seeing the Need/ Seeing a Bigger Picture**. The property of *moving through nuances*, which was originally situated under “**Hands-on**” **Learning** in round one, emerged as a property across the process as a whole.

Similarly to Chapter 3, participants' narratives are presented below in alignment to process categories, sub-categories, and/or defining properties, as well as to one another. Supporting excerpts will demonstrate saturation for existing categories, support for modifications and adjustments that were made after round two, and evidence supporting the emergence of new actions, processes, and feelings. The section below will provide more detail for the above overview.

Being Molded by System Values and Relationships

Round two intensive interviews further supported the notion that **Being Molded by System Values and Relationships** is a pedestal in which the entire process rested upon. This influencing category resurfaced in round two and highlighted how systems inevitably shape and inform their process and experience. After the first round of interpreting dialogue sessions, the concept of relationships continued to arise and provided additional evidence of the symbiotic

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nature that existed between cultural values espoused by a system and the layers of relationship that existed within the system. Reiterating findings from the first interpreting dialogue, relationships impacting gatekeeper development are conceptualized through three layers; relationship to self (worldview, phase of professional development, theoretical orientation) others (students, supervisees, peers, colleagues) and the system one is working within (department, institution, agency) (see Figure 3).

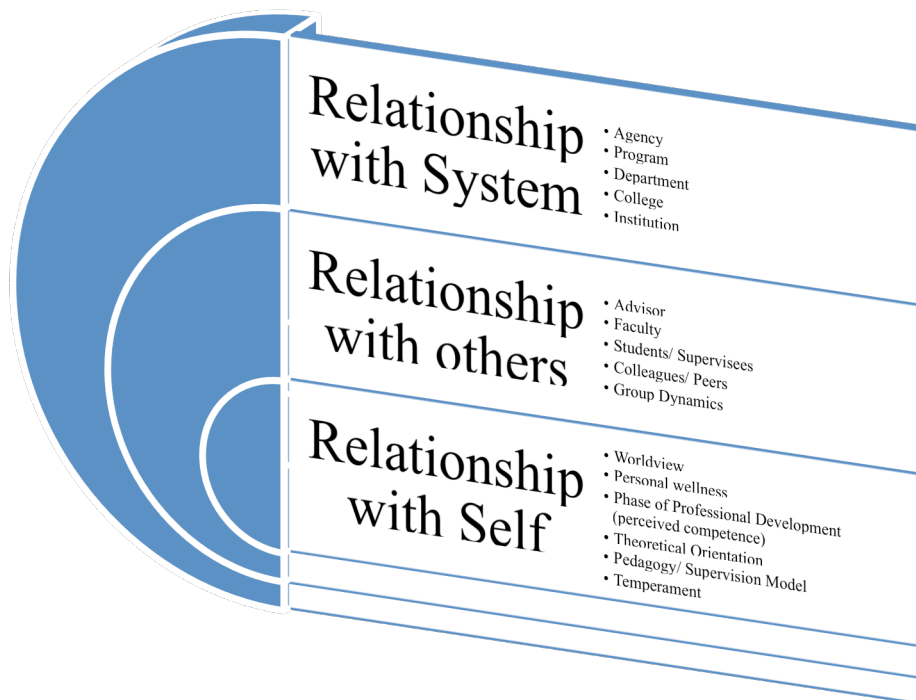


Figure 3. Three Layers of Being in Relationship.

The layers of relating to oneself, others, and your environment are involved in a dynamic process that actively creates, maintains, and projects what a program stands for and values. These values can be created intentionally or un-intentionally and made known explicitly or

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implicitly. Despite intention, a culture and values set exists and is felt and navigated by participants, resulting in more positive experiences or less than favorable experience. Robert confirmed how cultural values have influenced his process as a whole and spoke to his experience of ‘prioritizing’ certain issues based upon system values. He stated,

Yeah, I think—yeah, I think I described to you in several ways how probably the culture led to ways that I think or ways that I prioritized things or made certain things more important. So yeah, I think that cultural piece of the program is very, very important.

Jane spoke directly to the complexities of balancing personal beliefs with the attitudes and practices adopted by the system and the emotions that can accompany this balancing act. She highlights the complex, interdependent nature of integrating various levels of knowing and understanding to conceptualize an issue in a manner that honors all (relationship to self and system).

Yeah, like anxiety-provoking and emotional and having to also, you know, balance the context and like where I work and what the procedures are where you work. And you know, what the agency or the practice thinks about this, you know? Because I think it plays—both really play into it, um you know, your own personal piece and then also in the context and the environment in which you’re doing the gatekeeping. Because that’s going to—like that place inevitably is going to have procedures and a culture and a context that you have to take into account. So like integrating that is important. So I think that it would be the same; it would just be different compared on like what the context and the procedures were within that context, and the culture was within that context.

Ariel described her experience of having her physical location in her faculty capacity as often breeding isolation based upon the lack of colleagues she can consult with in spontaneously

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in person. The lack of support felt based upon university structure positions her to often feel pressure to make decisions alone.

I don't really know and I'm kind of isolated on my branch campus here. So that's probably a piece of it too, is that I feel like I'm—I put pressure on myself to make decisions alone a lot of the time because I'm isolated in my campus environment here. Whereas if somebody were just down the hall from me, I might be more inclined to just pop down there and be like, 'Hey, let me just run this by you.' Instead of there being this process of having to like pick up the phone or bring it up in a meeting or whatever the case.

Ariel connected relationship to self, others, and systems and cultural values as inherently possessing power that informs and influences one's learning to be a gatekeeper and the actual practice of gatekeeping. Ariel reflected back on her process from lacking 'voice and power' and her transition to having power in her role of a faculty member. She reflected on this change and progression and how although she is empowered now, she is navigating her power for the first time.

Um I think lack of voice and power, which is totally different now because I do have a voice and power and so I have to—I had none, and so I felt very frustrated. And now I have a lot, and so I have to decide when it's appropriate to use it and how to use it and to use it appropriately and well to support the student so they can grow.

Ariel revealed her frustration when opportunities to exercise power through gatekeeping decision-making were not given. She spoke of the difficulties being in a position of power as a faculty member with no real experience managing power appropriately. In reflecting on this

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process, she recalled how her values evolved and her transition to endorse the cultural values of her program.

Well and I think there was a shift of—and this I think has to do very much with the culture of the departments that I was a part of as I moved along in the process. But I used to see gatekeeping as more of a punitive process: you did something wrong, you should be punished. And I think now—and this has a lot to do with the culture of my department is it's seen more of a growing process and a developmental process as opposed to a punitive one. So let's be proactive, let's talk to the student early, let's figure out what's going on. What can we do to help support this student better? Instead of, 'This student messed up. Here's your punishment.' And so I mean not every student appreciates that view. They still see it as a punitive process no matter what.

Sub-Category. As the sub-category of *experiencing proactive versus reactive intervention* collapsed into another sub-category, the remaining sub-category is *dealing with power*. This sub-category was renamed as participants revealed more of their process. Although the experience of feeling empowered and feeling powerlessness still exists, a more developed picture of additional elements came to the surface.

Dealing with power. The sub-category of *dealing with power* continued to be a salient concept within participants' narrative. A shift occurred in the second round interviews that moved beyond feeling 'empowered' or 'powerlessness' as a learner or gatekeeper. This shift manifested as navigating power relative to relationships (self, others, and system). As Ariel continued to describe managing the power inherent to her role of faculty, Michele described navigating power in interdisciplinary work. She described managing additional structures, systems, and cultures that is inherent work in collaborating with others from different

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professional backgrounds. Michele described working in ‘multidisciplinary’ capacities as a major challenge she encountered in her process of becoming a gatekeeper. She recalled the challenge in learning to navigate when another professional on the team was displaying questionable ethical and professional behavior. She stated:

Um... let’s see... in the past, when I’ve worked like on multidisciplinary teams, so there’s maybe a physician, a social worker, nursing staff, um all on the same—maybe an addictions counselor—all on the same sort of treatment team, um coming at the client treatment from different perspectives with different theoretical orientations, different personalities, different levels of competence—and sometimes reporting to different supervisors—um that—that has been challenging from time to time....Um so experiences like that have been challenging, to sort of try to figure out a way to navigate around the structures of the system or the culture of the agency.

Similarly to Ariel and Michelle, Sandra described relational elements to managing power in her many capacities of gatekeeper. She described building relationships as essential to effectively deal with power that will inevitably influence the process. She stated:

Yes, and being—and feeling confident to also articulate that to a superior—you know, not just a colleague but a superior, someone who is over me. But you know, and like we talked about this in one of our other meetings, is that relationship has a lot to do with gatekeeping. If a supervisee—in this case, I’m kind of a supervisee, you know, where it’s like we have that relationship where I feel safe and I feel comfortable saying, ‘Well hey, that’s your perspective, but I challenge you to look at it from my perspective or, you know, from a bigger—it’s bigger than me and it’s bigger than you.’ You know, if you have a supervisor where you don’t feel—or a superior, not necessarily a supervisor, but a

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superior where you don't feel safe and comfortable, that you feel may trust you to be a professional and to give your opposing opinion, then a lot of times I find that people withhold what their thoughts are about being a gatekeeper.

The second round of intensive interviews heavily enforced the notion that **Being Molded by System Values and Relationships** shapes and influences the progression of becoming a gatekeeper. In particular, *dealing with power* is a consistent process that participants manage through their development. Navigating power is often described as complex as it is multifaceted with varying parties involved (self, others, system). The following category, **Engaging in Educational Practices**, is influenced by access and power, two components present in cultural values and dynamics.

Engaging in Educational Practices

Round two continued to offer ample support for the critical importance of this category. **Engaging in Educational Practices** included experiences of direct learning through “hands-on” involvement and other means of receiving education expressed by participants on a wide continuum. On one end of the spectrum is receiving more intentional educational practices or opportunities. The other end of the spectrum illustrates participants’ experiences of not being given opportunities or lacking intentional educational practices devoted to building their gatekeeper competencies and gatekeeping practices. Robert made the connection between direct experience, confidence, and increased awareness for professional identity relative to his role of gatekeeper. As a first year faculty member, he provided insight retrospectively to how his process has changed. He saw his experience as instrumental in continuing to build upon his professional identity while utilizing his professional identity as a foundation for increased confidence in his role. He stated:

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If you don't have a sure-footing in what you're doing, then there's a hesitation and you second-guess things. The more you get that experience, the more that you understand that professional identity or adopt that professional identity, I think that gives you more a sure-footing, just more confidence with which to approach those things.

Similarly, Sandra provided a response to a follow up question that echoed Robert's experience. When asked what increased her confidence in the role, she stated, "Experience, Experience, consultation, reading more about gatekeeping, and you know, kind of just internalizing what it really means. Kind of like going from that fuzzy bubble all the way to the other spectrum where you feel more confident." Her response highlighted direct learning as influential along with engaging in education in a more self-directed manner.

Jane described her desire for didactic material to be paired with experience, as she believed it provides a comprehensive education with more 'applicability' worth. Jane also considered her novice status, as she still is early in her development and the need for experience and developmentally appropriate education to continue her progression.

Because before when you just learn about it or talk about it, you don't really have that actual experience. And so the experience really, I think, helps like sort of putting—linking theory to practice. Like oh, we learn about this stuff, but now I actually have students that I'm responsible for and I'm in a meeting where we're talking about people that might be gate-kept and this is what the process looks like. So actually like engaging in those experiences and taking action towards that, I think, is helpful. But it's still a challenge because I'm still beginning. So like I think the more experiences you have, the more collaboration you do, like the more action you take like with other people and within yourself, the more you move towards sort of establishing that identity.

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Exposure to educational efforts and direct experience existed on a wide spectrum ranging from intentional, developmentally appropriate interventions to educational efforts that were implemented with little thought to professional safety for gatekeeper and or the students/colleagues they were working with. This round of intensive interviews solidified the dichotomy in participants' experiences of what has been labeled 'intentional' education and exposure versus 'un-intentional' education and exposure. Below are excerpts that will elucidate the variation of experiences that exist within this apparent dichotomy.

When asked about what challenges she has encountered in her process of becoming, Sandra reflected back to a place where she was left 'not knowing' due to a lack of exposure in training and experience. She recalled lacking direction and understanding while simultaneously speaking to her desire to move toward congruency. She stated:

Not really knowing what to do. Like I know that I have to do this, but what would it look like to do it? You know, do I tell someone? What do I do? You know, as a—even before I became a supervisor, but even as a beginning supervisor, just wanting to make sure that I had a nice—excuse me, a nice balance, you know, of maybe not being too hard-core (laughs) versus, you know, still maintaining the ethics and the standards in the profession that matches my personal and professional worldview of being a gatekeeper.

Ariel, in her second year as a faculty, articulated the need for continued exposure to sharpen gatekeeping conceptualizations and interventions. Although recognizing her growth, she still spoke to her lack of confidence. She stated, "You just have a better grasp (with experience) on what kinds of things to look for and what kinds of things you want and don't want. And I just—I haven't gotten enough experience to feel confident about that yet."

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When asked about biggest challenges she has faced thus far in her development of a gatekeeper, Jane stated that her lack of experience and exposure to remediating students has left her with questions. She can conceptualize gatekeeping and identify potential issues, but “carrying out an action” or decision is left to the unknown. She stated:

I think the most challenging is just that like I’m just starting, so having not as many experiences in actually carrying out that action, you know? Because I haven’t had as many opportunities—like hands-on opportunities to actually, you know, be a supervisor that has the ability to like bring something forward or to say, I guess I always had that ability as a peer or as a student, but it’s in a different way.

Jane further described her education lacking concrete direction or training that inhibited her from seeing a fuller picture of the process. Although she appreciated abstract concepts being introduced, she desired and needed that information to be paired with concrete knowledge and the opportunity to apply. As she was not receiving this information, she relied upon self-directed learning to seek out information she believed she was missing to fill the gaps of a comprehensive education.

But nobody actually was like, ‘Hey, this is the procedure, like the breakdown, the details, kind of the content.’ They were just sort of abstract about it and said like, ‘Oh, we have these meetings, blah blah blah.’ But nobody really was like, ‘Okay, so for example, if a student was like this, this is what happens.’ And I know it’s different for everyone and it’s based on the person and the context. And like you can’t—it’s not a one-size-fits-all. But I actually said something in our supervision class, like, what happens if someone is—you know, is a concern? What does that process look like?’ So I think for me, taking the initiative to actually ask, in a space where other people also I knew would hear that—like

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maybe some other people were thinking that, but they didn't ask. And then so I felt like that was helpful for me and for everyone else in sort of establishing like, Hey, if this happens, this is sort of our process, although we know it changes. Because I had never had an experience where I was part of that process before, so I didn't know on like a practical level what happens.

Ann, who perceived her education as developmentally appropriate and empowering, received intentional training from her doctoral program in becoming an effective gatekeeper. Ann described developmentally appropriate education as exposing learners in a sequential fashion that aligns and compliments their ability based on prior and existing knowledge. For example, asking students in their first year of doctoral study with no prior clinical supervision experience to work with a supervisee who requires remediation, may not be helpful for the doctoral student and/ or fair to the supervisee. It should be noted that the description of 'developmentally appropriate' accounts for numerous factors and contexts that would lead an instructor to carefully cultivate a curriculum that would fit their group of learners. Ann recalled receiving and appreciating the intentional delivery of courses and experiential activities her respective university provided. Ann highlighted her program's sequence of learning moments as she reflected back to earlier in her development in what was most helpful in "grasping" her role of gatekeeper. She stated:

I think it was all the opportunities to—to really be able to start the process slowly and grow it, but having lots of hands-on opportunities for doing that work. So trusting—having—that our faculty have enough trust in the doc students to do that. Now it's scaffolded—is that the right word? Scaffolding? Based on level of experience and level of knowledge and that kind of stuff. So it's not that the faculty just say, 'Here, go do

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this.’ Because they really make sure that we are supported through the process and that we’re not doing anything that would be inappropriate for the student. But based on our experience and where we are in the program and our past experiences and knowledge level and that kind of stuff, they—they created opportunities that fit our developmental needs as we went along.

Sub-Categories. Within the category of **Engaging in Educational Practices** the sub-categories of *seeking out professional discourse and opportunities* and *acting in response* re-emerged as significant components of the process. As mentioned in the overview of this chapter, the sub-categories of *learning from others experiences* and *seeking out professional discourse (self-directed learning)* were fused as the actions in both of these categories surfaced with the same underlying intention, seeking out more information and being open to learn from others.

Seeking out professional discourse and opportunities. All participants referenced finding opportunities and professional discourse to advance their understanding of gatekeeping. Ann not only attributed her comfortability and perceived readiness to be a gatekeeper from her formal education, but also her willingness to engage in ways that were not required or expected from her. She stated:

So and I think I’ve said that in the past, that our program is very intentional about making it developmental. But I think it also is that I’ve chosen to be very involved with our Master’s students in my job, on campus. And so I have seen it work in ways that I think a doc student who’s not very involved with the Master’s students wouldn’t necessarily get to see it.

Although participants confirmed during the first interpreting dialogue the critical importance of this sub-category, round two intensive interviewing data were thin. Participants

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still described instances where the underlying action was seeking out knowledge to further their process of becoming; however, the second round interview questions prompted participants to speak more on elements related to **Moving Toward Congruence**. Similarly, *acting in response*, although deemed foundational in their learning to become a gatekeeper, revealed limited data this round.

Acting in response. This sub-category detailed participants process of rejecting ideas or actions espoused in situations that were perceived to not have been successful, compared to endorsing ways of being that were experienced as “working” in regards to the role of gatekeeper. In responding to how she navigated nuances in her role of gatekeeper, Michele responded with her practice of reflecting back on past experiences. She stated, “is there anything that I’ve dealt with in the past that is similar to this or that is in some way applicable that I could sort of transfer over that experience?” Furthermore, Michele recalled a critical incident that occurred earlier in her career that has inspired her way of being with supervisees in an effort to prevent them from experiencing the isolation and doubt she did due to an unsupportive and ill prepared supervisor. She stated:

And it was not a good experience, I mean in any way, other than a learning experience for me. And it’s preventable. I mean not entirely, but I think even when things go badly, it doesn’t have to—the experience doesn’t have to be that experience that I had. Because you can have a supportive supervisor, you can go into situations maybe feeling more confident about your documentation or procedures or policies. And so yeah, I guess that that experience helped inform my desire to have policies and procedures that are well-documented, described, everybody understands here what to do....Like I don’t want anyone to be in a situation where they’re feeling unsure of how to handle something.

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Ariel spoke to the proactive efforts her program puts into place when discussing how they can improve their screening process prior to admission. This proactive measure is a reaction to issues or concerns they had previously that they are actively trying to address and or prevent for the future. She stated:

And so we had the opportunity to sit down before we admitted a new group of doc students and talk about what did we miss in the interviews? What do we want to make sure that we talk about? What do we want to make sure we look for? How do we want to make sure that we are able to create a team-building experience for them really early on? How are we going to handle these things if they come up again? And then we got to try again the next year.

Properties. The properties of *consultation/ collaboration, transparency, and support* continued to be significant characteristic of the process as participants engaged in educational practices. These properties capture salient actions across the re-constructed category of **Engaging in Educational Practices**. Seeking, wanting, and receiving these properties were infused through participant's narrative. Participants spoke to the personal desire and professional need for *consultation/ collaboration, transparency, and support* in their gatekeeping duties and how influential it has been in their role of gatekeeper.

Consultation/ collaboration, transparency, and support. Jane spoke to her experience in collaborating to acquire support and different perspectives as a means to "check herself" when making gatekeeping decisions.

And that's why it's so important to check yourself and collaborate with other people and get different perspectives and not make the decision on your own. I think that piece is really important, because everybody has different perspectives and different biases and

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different cultures and different ways of being. And I think that it's so important to get kind of a holistic look with different perspectives when you're really making such a huge decision.

Ann had referenced being in a "good place" in her development. I inquired about what a "good place" looked like for her and what contributed to this state of mind. She responded:

I think it's really all the support and scaffolding that has happened along the way. Um that they recognize my interest and they encourage it, that they recognize my competence and honor that. So I think it really has been the support.

As stated earlier, excerpts in this round of intensive interviews were scant, but does not negate the importance of these processes in their development. All participants shared common experiences and processes in relying upon, wanting, and /or needing the three properties as they engaged in educational practices. Consultation/collaboration, transparency, and support were viewed as needed and wanted by participants to deepen understanding, find direction, and dialogue through questions or concerns.

Seeing the Need /Seeing a Bigger Picture

The emergence of this category strengthened during the second round and provided a more in depth look into participants' movement within **Seeing the Need** spanning to the "bigger picture" (Denise, round one intensive interviews). After completion of round one interpreting dialogue sessions, participants strongly indicated being driven by a force that was rooted in personal and professional ethics. Identified ethics varied from participant to participant based upon personal philosophies and the systems in which they were embedded, with commonalities resting in all participants' belief to protect clientele and provide effective training for CITs. A more focused look into this portion of their process was spurred from the questions investigating their motivation to engage in the gatekeeping role and what may have strengthened or lessened

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this motivation. In presenting a conceptual map to participants, additional discussion ensued. The evolving conceptual map illustrated the driving force that kept participants moving through the process. This driving force was participants' personal and professional ethics. Furthermore, the movement from **Seeing the Need** to **Seeing a Bigger Picture** prompted rich discussion regarding how this illustration mirrored their experience. Michele spoke directly to how the conceptual map parallels her own development while also speaking to blending various identities, such as leader and advocate. She stated:

I think it's actually a really good conceptualization of sort of what is even, to me, now seeing it laid out, really a process to get from that kind of those feelings of something isn't right here, I don't want to be a part of this, I don't want to support this to, I know exactly what isn't right or pretty much what isn't right, and I feel confident in addressing it and I feel confident in knowing the ways to address it.

Michele reflected back to earlier in her process and is able to recognize her evolving perspective and noticed how her conceptualization and awareness has deepened, alluding to **Seeing a Bigger Picture**.

It occurs to me that I look at things and can see how very complex they are now, more so than I could in the past. And that kind of scares me, that somehow I was making decisions that turned out to be good decisions, but I probably really wasn't, you know, seeing the big picture and seeing all of the complexities of the case.

Michele emphasized her growth and development further by sharing how her role initially began with a 'feeling' to now where she has the tools and knowledge to identify and act on the feeling.

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Well, actually I think probably idea is a good word, because I think initially it was just sort of an idea or a feeling. Like, something or someone needs to do something about this, or, you know, something doesn't seem right. But now it's much—it's a very solid knowledge of that it is part of my role, I have a responsibility to do something. It—me, I'm the one that should do something....Um I think it's just a much more solidified part of my professional identity now than it was when I first started.

Sandra shared how her journey toward **Seeing a Bigger Picture** intensified her understanding and awareness for the “global” impact her role of gatekeeper can play. As her understanding of the role has deepened, her driving force has expanded and strengthened demonstrating the change in the process.

I think as the role of a gatekeeper became clearer to me, it helped me to understand more about the importance of protecting clients. You know, I think when I was just a clinician and, you know, you're thinking about just your caseload—for example, you know, 'I have to protect this group of people.' But understanding now that my role as a gatekeeper is bigger than that; it's more of a global thing. Even clients that—because I don't work with clients currently, you know, I supervise people who work with clients so I'm responsible for a lot of people indirectly. But even beyond those individuals, those clients, I still have a responsibility to protect the public, you know what I mean? As a gatekeeper. And I think that's how it's grown and expanded as my understanding of my role as a gatekeeper has grown and evolved.

Ariel spoke to **Seeing a Bigger Picture** as more considerations came into focus such as student development. As participants progress from seeing the need to seeing the bigger picture, they're able to move away from black and white solutions to submersing themselves in the gray

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area that paints most gatekeeping dilemmas. Jane spoke to her process of moving into a more nuanced place in which she was able to navigate the inherent greyness.

Yeah, I think it's changed in that for me, at first I just thought gatekeepers are people who just say yes or no to people passing a program. But for me, I think it's way more than that, because it goes into your relationship with people and your values. So I guess it's just a lot bigger than I thought. Like for me, I thought when I first learned about it, I was like, 'Oh, it's kind of clear-cut, like yes or no.' But as I've kind of experienced it and been a part of the process, I've seen that it's way more complex and involved than that, and that it really is something that is another sort of role or personalized like identity piece that you have as a counselor-educator.

Sub-categories. Two sub-categories were found to be influential in **Seeing the Need/ Seeing a Bigger Picture**. These sub-categories included *recognizing and accepting the responsibility* and *helping students see the bigger picture*. The sub-category of *recognizing and accepting the responsibility* continued to persist as an active piece in their process, first recognizing the responsibility and subsequently accepting and acting upon that led them to ultimately **Seeing a Bigger Picture**. Round two questions focused more on the personal journey within role development and integration and what was changing over time for each individual. While there were less data that spoke specifically to *helping students see the bigger picture*, it was still found to be significant to the overall process of development.

Recognizing and accepting the responsibility. Ann spoke of initial challenges she encountered earlier in her process of what it may mean to *accept the responsibility*. She recalled, "Some minor challenges would probably be just wrapping my mind around what it meant and wrapping my mind about what it might entail in the future. And sort of becoming okay with

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holding that responsibility.” Robert reflected on how his level of responsibility has increased significantly since transitioning into a counselor educator role and learning how to accept the additional weight.

Well I would say the biggest change, now being a counselor-educator, is just, really understanding the gravity of and the seriousness of the process, you know, the need to do that. I think it’s—I think it’s different as a practitioner, I think it’s different as a Master’s student, even though you might understand what gatekeeping is. I think it’s different when you’re actually on that side versus when you’re a counselor educator. I think—you know, I think the level of responsibility goes up.

Similarly to Robert, Ariel is a junior faculty member still transitioning into her role. When I inquired about her motivation for gatekeeping being strengthened or lessened, Ariel responded with her motivation being strengthened due to the continual exposure to **the need** for gatekeeping.

I think—I think it’s probably having experiences with the need—or recognition for the need for gatekeeping. Because that seems to be the common thread in my story, is that like as a Master’s student I recognized other students who did not seem to be serving their clients in the way that they should be, but were also still allowed to continue in the program. In which case I didn’t even feel like I could be a whistle-blower because clearly they were being evaluated in the same way that I was and the faculty was okay with what they were doing, so who was I supposed to go to? And so I mean that probably strengthened that motivation to me and it was probably when I decided to go into a doc program, because if they weren’t going to do their jobs properly, someone needed to....But you know, seeing things going on in the field and a lot of poorly-trained

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counselors that I was in the program with and poorly-trained counselors that I was working with, I think that probably strengthened the motivation to want to have more authority as a gatekeeper in some form or fashion.

Helping students see the bigger picture. Helping students see the bigger picture was an action and/ or responsibility that followed when participants were able to see the wider ramifications of poor gatekeeping. They felt it to be vital to instill a sense of responsibility in students to monitor selves and peers as it impacted the profession as a whole. With more experience and exposure, the impetus to instill these values in students became greater. When inquiring about how her role of gatekeeper has changed, if any, from where she was until now, Sandra responded with her belief that gatekeeping is every involved party in the field, including her students.

Yes, it has. It's changed to being more on the frontline of gatekeeping. Because initially when I first learned about gatekeeping, like we talked about in our first meeting, was during graduate school, you know, learning to be a counselor, not even in a doc program. And at that point it was kind of like, 'Well yeah, this is really important and people need to gate-keep, but I'm just a counseling student.' Or, 'I'm a beginning counselor, so I really don't have an obligation to be a gatekeeper,' you know, initially. But now I'm like, 'Uh yeah, everyone has a responsibility to be a gatekeeper. (Laughs) You know, even if it's just reporting something to your superior or to a licensure board or whatever, wherever—Department of Children and Families—you know, just yeah.

When asking Denise about her motivations in gatekeeping, she responded that motivations have stayed consistent with her primary concern being protection of clients. She spoke to being at a place now as a first year faculty member where she is able to see how

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students are being taught self-care strategies, which she believed can help prevent impairment. She stated, “And so really being able to—working in this environment has helped to even see how that process begins: how do we begin even teaching about the self-care that’s needed and how that influences our—the gatekeeping?”

Moving Toward Congruence

The fifth category, originally entitled ongoing movement, underwent the most adjustments and additions based upon second round intensive interviews. **Moving Toward Congruence** describes the process that participants experience as they progress through **Seeing the Need** to **Seeing a Bigger Picture** and accepting and understanding the role of gatekeeper. As suggested in the title, **Moving Toward Congruence** embodies a movement felt by participants as they try to make sense and integrate various identities they assume, personal beliefs and philosophies, and system/ agency cultural beliefs. It is important to note that there is not a final destination or concrete place in which congruence exists permanently. It is an evolving space where participants aim to have their ideas and roles in harmony. A place of congruence may be reached and felt, but will be challenged based upon new thoughts that are continually introduced. Jane eloquently illustrated her experience with **Moving Toward Congruence**.

Sometimes I feel like I can really be myself and I feel really, you know, like, ‘Oh, what I’m doing is right and this is aligned with who I am.’ And then other times it’s like, ‘Okay, I have to balance this with also the program and who this student is.’ And you know, so I think it’s like both/and, like you have to—I think I’m trying to make it my own, but I also have to recognize the context and the program as well. So that process happens over time, and I think over time I become—the more congruent I am.

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Denise reflected on how she is being congruent in her many roles and contemplating the level of ‘self’ she brings into each role. She reflected:

And so, you know, making sure that how I identify within self, how is that translated across other areas? Like do I see myself as a—in my gatekeeping? Do I see myself in my teaching? Do I see myself in my clinical role? And how comfortable am I with myself and how that influences how comfortable I am with being in other roles or my other identities?

Ariel spoke to how her role in and idea of gatekeeping has evolved as she has learned more about the way she conceptualizes and works with students’ developments.

So it feeling less like a punitive process makes me feel less like an authoritarian, which is probably a more comfortable role for me. Because that authoritarian role is just not—that’s not an amount of power that I desire to have or that I’m comfortable with. So I think as I’ve learned more about myself and my approach to being with students, that’s probably also changed my view of gatekeeping in way that’s more congruent with my overall identity.

This round of interviews provided additional confirmation for the existing sub- categories of *being driven by personal and professional ethics* and *blending identities and balancing roles*. Furthermore, this category revealed a new category and property. The new category, *questioning self and encountering acceptance*, saturated the second round data. It became evident that the movement towards a place of ‘congruence’ included various moments where participants questioned themselves in regards to their role of gatekeeper. Through this entire category, the property of *traversing through emotion* emerged, capturing the emotional experience of participants as they work towards a place of professional and personal harmony. A

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thicker description will be included later in the chapter to illuminate the additional category and property.

Sub-Categories. As stated above, three sub-categories exist in **Moving Toward Congruence**. They include *being driven by personal and professional ethics*, *blending identities and balancing roles*, and *questioning self and encountering acceptance*. The two existing sub-categories had a wealth of rich data surface to expand their understanding. The new sub-category, *questioning self and encountering acceptance*, saturated the second round of intensive interviews.

Being driven by personal & professional ethics. Second round interviews continued to provide an abundance of codes that suggested personal and professional ethics as the motivating force that fueled participants' movement from **Seeing the Need** to **Seeing a Bigger Picture**. Robert powerfully described gatekeeping as a "motivator" in the work we do. He stated, "So I guess it (gatekeeping) becomes—like I said, it becomes a motivator almost in terms of everything that we do, in terms of our educator roles." Furthermore, he described gatekeeping as an "ever-present" consideration to guide you through your work.

I think it's a matter of making sure that things are congruent. I think it's—you know, I think you can get the idea of the need for gatekeeping or what it's important, but then you have to go back and have that as a larger umbrella and then think about, 'Okay, what do I need to do in this class to make sure that it's congruent with this idea?' So it almost becomes—(sighs) I'm not sure what the right word would be for it, but I guess it's something that's always in the back of your mind, something that you think about when you, you know, plan out a class, when you plan out activities, when you have a discussion. You know, I think—you know, I think it's always—it's like an ever-present

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thing that's there that influences the things that we do, the work that we do with students, the conversations that we have with students. I think it can change how we point certain things out to students.

Ariel described her personal ethics as fueling her force to pursue gatekeeping interventions. She engaged in gatekeeping despite what her department requires as she feels a larger commitment and obligation to the health of the profession. She stated:

If I'm feeling like something's not right and I'm feeling motivated to do something in a gatekeeping way—so remediate a student or whatever the case—I'm not really just doing it because my department tells me to: I'm doing it because I feel this greater obligation. And so if someone in my department is like, 'No, I don't think you should do that,' if I were just doing it because it was part of my job description then I'd be like, 'Okay.' But because I feel this greater sense of obligation to my profession, I'm more likely to continue to pursue it.

Blending identities and balancing roles. This round of interviews asked specific questions in how participants made sense of their process in *blending identities and balancing roles* and where they believed themselves to be in the process. I had anticipated a greater understanding of this piece of their process due to the inclusion of that specific process, however, I was surprised to hear that many participants spoke to the process of blending identities as one of the most challenging aspects of their process currently or in the past. Denise captured this challenge as she responded to the question of what is still a struggle for her currently as a first year faculty member.

Finding balance with who I am right now and who I aspire to be as a counselor educator, as continuing to gatekeep now in this role as a counselor educator. Because I think that's

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it's multi—it's a little bit more on dimensions that have been added to it now, compared to when I was just in the clinical role. Now I have to work with other clinicians and we have to supervise this student and we have to work well together in doing that. Um and if we're not, we need to come back and revisit it. So it's a lot of—I think I'm just trying to find balance in that. So it's another one of those areas of ambiguity.

Furthermore, Denise recognized that as she moves toward congruence and actively balances various roles, she will not arrive at a static place but sees the inherent movement in these actions.

Understanding that balance does not mean having a 180-degree angle. It's not going to be a straight line. It's going to be some variation in that. Balance, it never means being straight. Because I believe that if I ever just create that homeostatic state, then it's no longer growth. So whether it feels good or it doesn't feel good, I'm still growing and I'm still balancing, because I'm still becoming. So balancing means becoming as well. It doesn't necessarily mean perfection, because I don't believe—there's no such thing.

Similarly to Denise, Robert described how *blending identities and balancing roles* is currently one of the biggest challenges he faces as a first year faculty member. He stated:

It's simply managing all the various roles I have, because I know that's a critical area for me. But at the same time, I'm still learning new stuff every day, so there's only so much space—I heard somebody phrase it the other day as, 'you only have so much bandwidth' basically making an analogy to network connections. And I think it's true: there's only so much you can hold on to in any given moment just from a cognitive perspective. And I think especially being first semester faculty, there's so many things that you're learning and trying to get acclimated, you're trying to network with people at the university,

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you're trying to think about promotion and tenure already, you're trying to get to know the students.....And I think there's only so much you can give attention to at any one point in time. So I think for me, the challenge right now is to remain mindful of that as I attend to so many other things right now.

Michele echoed many participants response in experiencing the biggest challenge as balancing different, and at times contradictory roles. She stated:

So part of the challenge for me, because I'm both a clinical supervisor and an administrative supervisor, you know, so I discipline people—or I don't very often, but that is part of my role as an administrative supervisor is to discipline people, to write them up, having them follow university policies, and having them follow some of the more administrative policies of the center. Um that said, trying to balance that with the clinical supervision, where maybe we're talking about some interactions with a client or some treatment decisions with a client that maybe went poorly or there are some questions about—separating that out from like, 'You're not in trouble. This is helping you grow,' versus, 'I'm going to write you up for this.' So it's those two hats that I am—that I'm constantly interchanging with the same people.

As Robert and Michele's narratives highlighted the struggle in balancing roles, it became evident that the act of balancing was a challenge in **Moving Toward Congruence**. Transitioning into the *blending* component of this sub-category, Jane shed light on her process in merging identities. She stated how she believes her personal worldview and ways of being are the foundation in which other identities are built upon.

Like I don't see them as separate, because like foundationally I feel like my beliefs about the world and myself and like my process are all going to be the same across. They're

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going to look different based on what role I'm in, but I think that it's really important for me to make that an integrated piece of who I am.

Ariel spoke to both processes of ***balancing*** and ***blending***. When I inquired about what identities she feels blend and what roles overlap, she responded:

Everything. (Laughs) It's all connected. I wish it weren't sometimes; that would make things so much simpler. But I mean it is. I'm their teacher and their supervisor and, you know, looking at becoming a counselor in the same small community where they're going to be counselors. And I'm on a board for the state counseling organization and I do all of these other different things. And they all blend together, because it's a small profession and it's a small community and I live in a rural place. I interact with the same people in my department that I interact with in professional organizations. And in some roles I'm a colleague but in other roles I'm a supervisor or I'm the President and so I'm in charge. Or my voice sounds a little different in all of these settings, but part of that is like my own values, is that the underlying message should be really similar no matter what I'm doing because that means that I'm doing things for the right reasons and not just because I like to slap my name on things.

Questioning self and encountering acceptance. This sub-category highlights the emergence of a dichotomy, or separation of experience for participants that they cycle through as they move toward a more congruent state. It is important to note that one experience does not proceed or follow the other, rather, these separate experiences tend to be cycled through by participants as they move toward congruence.

Questioning Self. This concept strongly emerged as an experience that happened on many levels depending upon participants place in the process of becoming. Questioning self

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manifested in various ways such as questioning your approach with students, questioning one's ability to identify problematic behavior, questioning whether your 'feeling' about a potential gatekeeping issue is accurate, and questioning whether you're overreacting or misinterpreting a student or supervisees behavior. Questioning self appeared more consistently once participants were actively accepting gatekeeping responsibilities and working directly with students and supervisees. This concept was not as present when first being introduced to the abstract idea of gatekeeping and or noticing impairment in others, as questioning was focused on the process of gatekeeping versus self. Michele illuminated the experience of questioning of self while also reflecting back on earlier decisions made in her career and emotions that it evoked currently. She stated:

And that kind of scares me, that—that somehow I was making decisions that turned out to be good decisions, but I probably really wasn't, you know, seeing the big picture and seeing all of the complexities of the case. You know, so there's that. I still feel—you know, I think there's always a sense of some degree of doubt, like, 'Is this really the answer? Is this the solution? Is this how I should address this?' I think there's always that.

Denise spoke to the "doubt" and "second-guessing" she often experienced when navigating gatekeeping related decisions or conceptualizing gatekeeping issues. She expressed questioning self while trying to find congruence. She stated:

Doubt, most definitely. Yeah. Yeah, not necessarily fear but it's that second-guessing. Am I doing, you know, things in a manner that is—that would meet the standards—you know, the standards that we're held to? Am I keeping—am I doing what I say that I'm

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going to do? So always kind of checking that, ‘What did I say that I was going to do? Am I doing it? And how have I done it?’

Denise further described experiencing doubt differently as a first year faculty. Earlier in her process, she described being “paralyzed by fear” in making a mistake. She described her experience now in questioning self to be more proportionate to the issue at hand and “more reasonable and congruent with the situations than maybe it was in the past.” How she experiences and moves through doubt has shifted and she is able to have a more realistic perspective as she can see the bigger picture.

Similarly to Denise, Ariel described the doubt and insecurity she is currently feeling as a second year faculty member and how she has experienced more questioning of self rather encountering acceptance thus far.

There’s a lot of doubt. Is this really actually an issue or am I making it too big of a deal? Or how do I handle this or what’s going to be appropriate? Is this something I even want to bring up with my peers or are they going to think that I’m just paranoid? Like there’s a lot of doubt, there’s a lot of moments of feeling like I’ve failed, because if I had trained them properly then maybe this wouldn’t have happened. And that’s not true, but it goes through my mind of feeling like, ‘Well, maybe I messed something up. Maybe it’s they somehow got the message from me that this was okay.’

Ariel did make known how the time of the interview (toward the end of her semester) was often a busy and demanding point of the academic year, potentially leading to heightened stress. When I asked what she believed to be the most challenging part of where she is at currently in her process of becoming a gatekeeper, she responded:

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Feeling like I have no clue what I'm doing. (Laughs) That's the hardest thing. Because I—if I felt confident, if I felt this place of acceptance about it, then maybe it would be a little easier. I don't know. But it's—it's difficult to have all of this—these new things I'm trying to learn, and I'm trying to apply things that I have learned in ways that I didn't learn to use them. So I have this knowledge, but I'm having to fill in gaps as I go. And things move fast. Semesters move really fast, programs move really fast. And so you don't really ever feel like you've caught up, which part of it is just the nature of what I signed up—I'm not complaining. This is what I signed up to do and as difficult and frustrating as I find it, I also really love it.

Ariel continued with this train of thought to make the connection with questioning self to the phenomenon of 'impostor syndrome,' commonly experienced by new faculty members.

So maybe somewhere in the training that I've given them, I've messed something up. But a lot of that I think feeds into the general imposter syndrome I experienced as an early faculty member anyway. So I don't—I don't know how to parse those things out, if one's feeding off of the other or if it's just a bigger piece of this whole like idea of being an imposter in general as a junior faculty member and everyone else is better at things than I am.

Encountering Acceptance. The concept of 'encountering acceptance' captured participants' feelings, process, and experience of coming to understand that there is a limit in what they can do as gatekeepers and finding a sense of assurance that they are doing the best they can. Often when encountering acceptance, a feeling of compassion for self follows. Michele, having over fifteen years in the gatekeeper role, spoke to experiencing moments of acceptance when she recognized she can only do so much.

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Recognizing the limits of what I can do, acknowledging what I have done, and that, you know, I am not going to gatekeep every person, you know? I can just try my best. I know now, with experience, that I can only do so much. And sometimes things don't go the way that I wish they would, but it's out of my control. So I'm more—I guess I'm more accepting of not being able to impact change as much as I was optimistic about it when I just started out.

Denise spoke to her process in extending empathy and compassion to self in learning and navigating her role of gatekeeper within her new role of faculty member. She reflected:

Um being okay, I think, with the newness of it and feeling as if I should know more than I do. So it's—I guess it's more so balancing that anxiety, like, 'It's okay that you don't know, because you're new and you will get to this point where you want to be.'

When inquiring about what the most challenging part of her process currently, Sandra shared her frustrations in working with colleagues who do not engage in gatekeeping efforts in an effective manner. She described encountering acceptance for coming to the realization that she only has control over her actions and being assured that she is at least upholding her obligations.

Honestly the most challenging part is that I'm actually dealing with a few gatekeeping issues right now, and just feeling a sense of responsibility to do my part, which sometimes with gatekeeping—or I guess often times with gatekeeping—it involves other people who may not be where you're at in that developmental process of what gatekeeping should look like. And even if they are, sometimes I find that people are more concerned about not wanting to get anyone in trouble or not wanting to hurt someone's feelings or appear as quote unquote 'mean' or 'rude,'—people love to say those words

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nowadays for some reason. You know, and in that—depending on where they’re at, that can compromise their level of responsibility as a gatekeeper, which to me can be very frustrating, but at least—but still comforting, because at least I know that I did my part in the process.

Property. The property, *traversing through emotions*, heavily saturated the experiences within **Moving Toward Congruence**. This property capturing the emotional experience of participants as they work towards a place of professional and personal harmony. The journey of moving toward a harmonious space, which required participants to actively attempt to make sense of how gatekeeping fits within their various roles, was described as an emotional trek.

Traversing through emotions. All participants spoke to navigating various emotions as they cycled through this category. Ann described having emotions “run the gamut” when I inquired about her emotional process in navigating the nuances and complexities. She stated:

You know, emotionally I think it runs the gamut. It goes from being super-excited when you see a student have an ‘Aha!’ moment to having this gut-wrenching feeling of, ‘Oh my gosh, is this going to be something that will blow up in this student’s face?’ ... Um I think my emotions have run the gamut too. That they often parallel what my student is experiencing along with sometimes feeling frustrated that um the process isn’t perfect. Or, you know, it’s exhilarating to watch a student and really see some great potential in them and how cool they’re going to be doing this work for the rest of their life, what a great opportunity they’re going to have and how much their clients are going to gain from it. So I think to tease out my own emotions is a little difficult, because I think they’re very much linked into my love of what I’m doing and my care for my student.

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Jane described the heaviness that can accompany certain gatekeeping related decisions as it inevitably can impact the career trajectory of students. She describes the emotions that she traverses through when considering a course of action for gatekeeping.

Um I think it is definitely an emotional process in—for whatever reason—I appreciate that you brought that up, people don't ever talk about that component. Because inevitably like changing—you could change someone's life. You could be like, you're not going to be in this, you know, profession, and that could be something—maybe the reason they're being gatekept is because they're not sure about that, but it also changes a person's life and like money and like there are all these plans.. And I think sometimes as counselors we are so about like not being directive and kind of helping and helping the person figure out where they are and kind of meeting them where they're at. And this is like such a different process, because we really do have to be like if you don't do this, this, and this, you're not going to make it. And that can be a really big and powerful thing for people. And so I guess there's some uncomfortability and uncertainty there about like, wow, my decision or what I say can really impact a person a huge deal.

Jane described her process of recognizing her anxiety as a 'good sign' and described how certain emotions can be informative and to monitor the emotions that may arise. In listening to the anxiety that arises for her, it signals how seriously she is considering certain decisions. She also pointed to the importance of collaborating and discussing within a group of colleagues, as you can also serve to help 'check' others personalizations and emotions.

I think that's anxiety-provoking and sort of also in a good way though, because you really—that means I really want to make sure that I'm doing the right thing and that I've really looked at it and talked to them and gotten perspective and so that I'm not coming

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in sort of letting my emotions take over. Like I think the emotions are good in helping you recognize like, 'Okay, this is a really big decision,' but then also being able to see, okay, what is my perspective and what biases am I bringing in? Or like what is my own transference going on here? Because I think that happens a lot. And people just aren't aware of it. And I think that's why it's important to collaborate with other people and talk about it in a team, because you know, maybe something about this person is coming up for you and that's impacting your decision.

Final Interpretive Dialogue

The final interpreting dialogue sessions (Coe Smith, 2007) were an opportunity to collaboratively review my interpretations from round two analyses while continuing to collect data and expand upon and solidify the participants' final process. These sessions were structured and approached in the same manner as the first round. The final categories emerging from round two analyses are represented in the one-dimensional graph (Figure 4) I created to present to participants during the final interpreting dialogue session.

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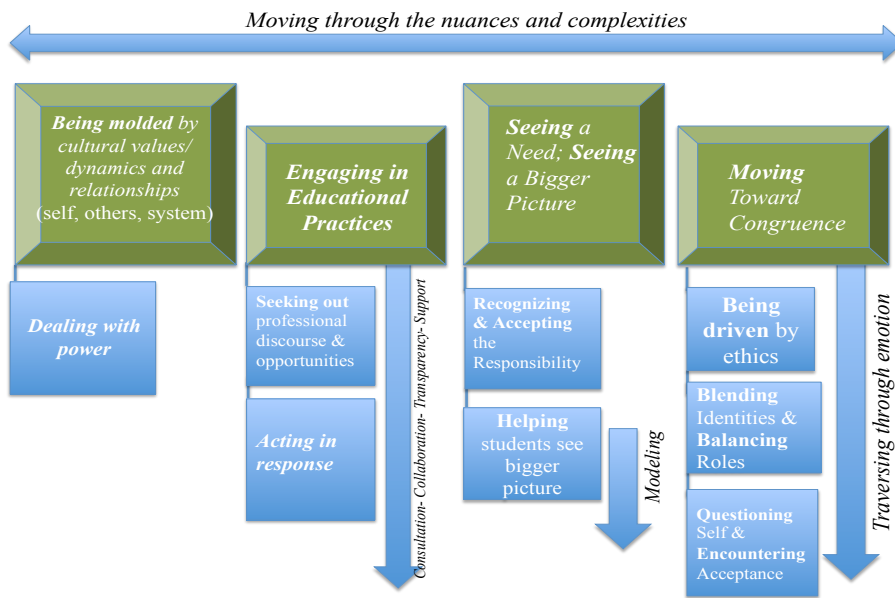


Figure 4. One-Dimensional Graph Illustrating Findings Post R2 Intensive Interviews.

I also presented the conceptual map (Figure 5) to display the merging relationships and connections as shown in the last round of intensive interviews.

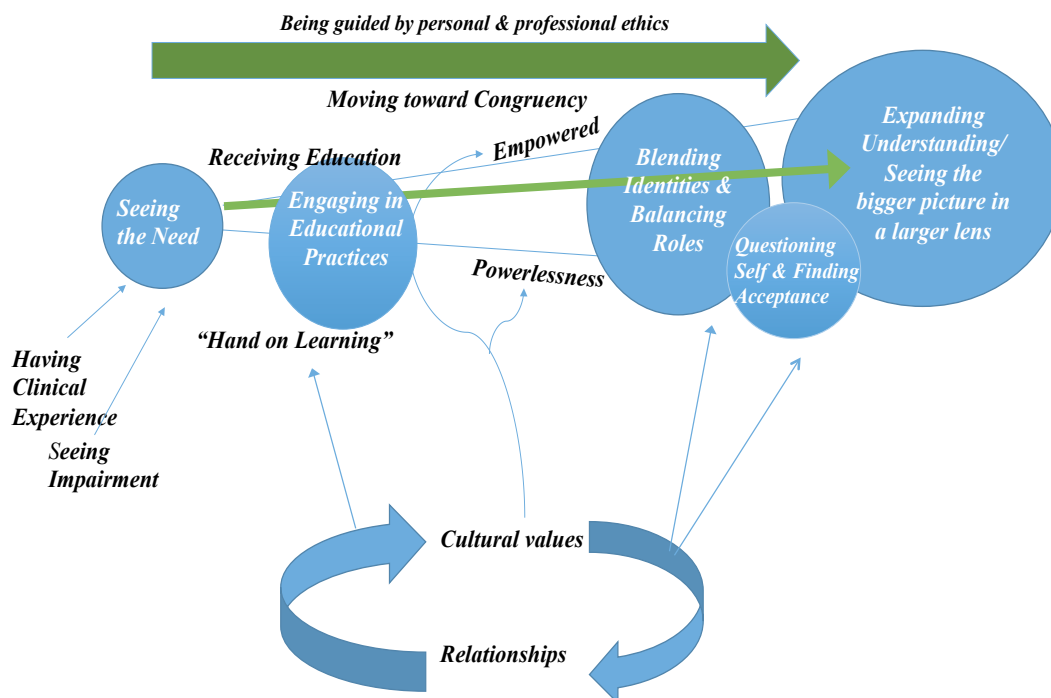


Figure 5. Evolving Conceptual Map Post R2 Intensive Interviews.

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These documents were sent before the final interpreting dialogue session for participants to review and provide time to begin to make meaning and develop questions or curiosities. Sessions were then individually scheduled and conducted via Zoom, ranging from 18- 35 minutes in length. During these sessions, I described the re-constructed categories, sub-categories, properties, and relationships among and elicited feedback for accuracy of fit. I ensured that I emphasized the new emerging sub-category of ***questioning self and encountering acceptance*** and the property of *traversing through emotions*. Not only did I intentionally inquire about their relevancy, but their placement in the process.

All participants were in agreement of the evolution of the categories and connections among categories. I ensured that participants were aware that my conceptual map demonstrating the process was still a working document. Furthermore, they understood the recorded interpreting dialogues could alter, modify, and/ or expand current categories, sub-categories, and properties. Although all participants agreed that all categories and connections fit their process, some expanded upon ideas during the dialogue alongside offering confirmation. Below are excerpts from the round two data that enhanced the vividness of the emerging picture while solidifying current connections.

Culture, Relationships, and Power

The concept of having system values and norms influencing the process of becoming a gatekeeper strongly resonated with Ariel. She spoke to these dynamics not only informing her development as a gatekeeper, but recognized how the system in which she operates impacts her gatekeeping currently as a second year faculty. In the below excerpt, Ariel brings to light questions that may impact gatekeeping decisions in the future.

Do they (higher administration) understand kind of the nuance and unique ethical situations and guidelines of my profession, or do they expect me to just follow university

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regulations to the letter and don't really care about the nuances of the work that we are training people to do?

In referencing the three layers of 'relationship' (self, others, and system) that interact with one another to inform an experience as a gatekeeper, Michele illuminated the notion of these three layers being in harmony or discord, and the consequences of both. Depending on if they are aligning or in conflict, their interaction with each will inevitably impact the culture, norms, and values being cultivated which all lead into the experience throughout the greater process of becoming a gatekeeper. For example, if struggling to make gatekeeping decisions with colleagues because of personal conflict or disagreement with approach, the course of action may be halted and delay gatekeeping.

And then I think—and I can speak to this right—I'm in a situation right now where um actually all three of these relationship areas in some way are conflicting—are in conflict with another, one another. And so then those conflicts and the ability to resolve them or work around them or whatever also, in my experience, influence some of the gatekeeping.

Ariel provided a sharper insight into the inherent power that exists within **Being Molded by System Values and Relationships**. Power manifests itself in several ways in looking at the three layers of relationship. Looking at relationship with others, if you have a student status, your power will automatically be limited as you're still being assessed and given access to continue your education with faculty permission. As a faculty member, you clearly possess more power in making decisions and influencing the values and norms of the program you are working for, but still places within parameters of the department, college, and/or division expectations and

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mission. Ariel spoke to how power influences how she integrates those three layers of relationships.

So that it incorporates the evolution of your values and the way your relationships potentially change? Because my relationships with my peers and mentors as a student are really different from those of mine as a faculty member. Because I have a lot more autonomy, and so my relationships are going to look really different, because that power changes. And so having more of a voice and more autonomy and more power in one role—I would dialogue and connect with peers and deans and department heads really differently than I would as student with less power and less autonomy.

Ariel not only provided confirmation, but also provided additional understanding into how culture, relationships, and power inform the act and experience of *questioning self and encountering experience*, furthering the support that **Being Molded by System Values and Relationships** in indeed a pedestal that holds the entire process. She stated, “Because if I’m more validated and accepted in my environment with my decision-making process, and feeling more supported in that decision-making process, I’m probably less likely to question what I’m doing.”

Furthermore, Ariel offered thoughts that deepened the connection among **Moving Toward Congruence** and *being guided by personal and professional ethics*. As your motivation to pursue gatekeeping becomes stronger and ethics are better articulated adding fuel to your fire of motivation, you’re also moving to a place of more congruence. Congruence is defined by Ariel in feeling more “confident” and having personal beliefs align with the ‘ethics of the environment.’

Because I wonder if the congruency is—and I’m just—I’m brainstorming here, so this

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might be completely off-base with what your other participants have provided. But I wonder if the congruency is congruency between the ethical standards and your values. So you come to a place where you feel more congruent and aligned with my value system and then the ethics of my environment. So the things I'm doing make more sense to me or I feel more confident in them or they feel more genuine to me, and so I feel more confident in them.

Finally, Denise echoed her fellow participants with the sentiment of "I know that I'm there with them. I know that I am there...." when discussing the sub-category of *blending identities and balancing roles*. Denise provided awareness of the questioning that occurs in this process and her belief that the sub-categories under **Moving Toward Congruence** often occur together. She recalled some of the questions she pondered as reflecting upon her identity integration.

Identity-wise like always..... reminding myself of what role am I in now, how have my other roles influenced the current role, how can this role inform my other roles? How do they look together? How are they separate? Or like what makes them distinctive? You know, because it's a distinctive difference between all of them and it's a commonality between all of them. And so how do I balance those? When do I turn on one more than the other? Yeah. So I'm there with them as well. I agree.

Final Member Check

After the second and final round of interpreting dialogue sessions (Coe Smith, 2007) were transcribed, coded, and analyzed, I returned to the conceptual map to revise the process based upon new connections and relationships that has emerged. No novel information was introduced during the final interpreting dialogue, just further support for categories and deeper

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understanding in conceptualization of the process. I spent a significant amount of time providing detail to the conceptual map while working toward maintaining parsimony for potential readership. After consultation with my major advisor, I created a final conceptual map to present to my participants for their remaining member check. During the interpreting dialogue sessions, I provided the option for participants to conduct the final member check over Zoom or e-mail. All agreed that they felt comfortable reviewing and providing feedback over e-mail. I informed them that if any questions did arise or they wanted further clarification, a Zoom session could be scheduled upon their request. Thus, I sent the final member check containing three major elements; final conceptual map (Figure 6), narrative description, and selected excerpts. The conceptual map illustrated the process I captured from the study. The narrative description provided the process in written form that aimed to elucidate the process. Inserted in the narrative are selected excerpts from various participants that provided a rationale for each category or connection/ relationship among and between categories. I instructed participants to thoroughly review to ensure accuracy to their experience. All participants responded via email and confirmed that the conceptual map, persisting categories, and selected excerpts accurately described their process of becoming a gatekeeper.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the analysis of round two interviews and interpreting dialogue data. This second round of analysis included an intensive interview (Charmaz, 2014), an interpreting dialogue session (Coe Smith, 2007), memo-writing throughout, and a final member check. All participants agreed that the categories of **Being Molded by System Values and Relationships, Engaging in Educational Practices, Seeing the Need /Seeing a Bigger Picture,** and **Moving Toward Congruence** accurately represent their experience. Additionally, there was

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a consensus that the final conceptual map was congruent with their process of becoming gatekeepers. In the next chapter, I will describe the emergent theory through sharing a narrative description of the process and utilizing salient excerpts from participants to highlight the movement in becoming a gatekeeper.

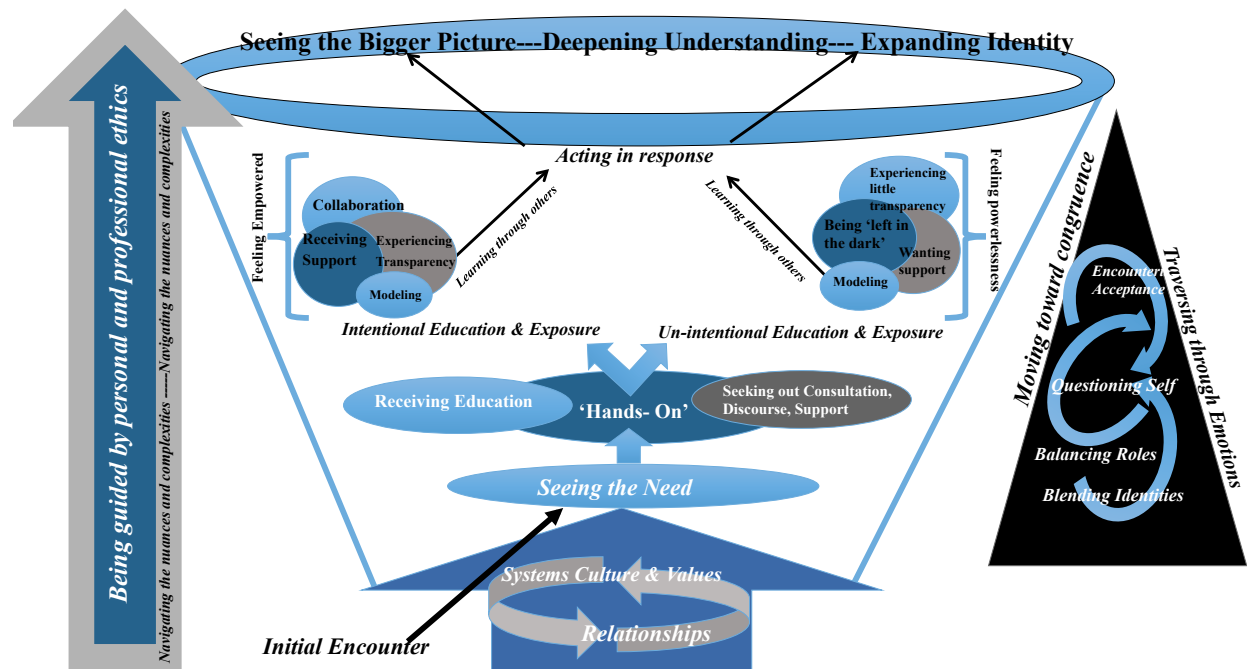


Figure 6. Process of Becoming a Gatekeeper.

CHAPTER V: AN EMERGENT GROUNDED THEORY

This chapter will present the grounded theory of becoming a gatekeeper based upon intensive interviews and interpreting dialogues with seven counselor educators-in-training and junior faculty members. The theory of CESs becoming gatekeepers includes the categories, sub-categories, and properties that inform and influence their progression in the process of becoming a gatekeeper. This study may be used as a framework to help CESs, counselor education programs, and higher administration understand the unique considerations in becoming a gatekeeper. As stated throughout the entirety of this document, the interpretations of the data were co-constructed with participants to ensure their voices were captured accurately.

Data analysis revealed four primary categories describing the process CESs experience when becoming a gatekeeper. The four major categories include: (1) **Being Molded by System Values and Relationships**; (2) **Engaging in Educational Practices**; (3) **Seeing the Need/ Seeing a Bigger Picture**; and (4) **Moving Toward Congruence**. **Being Molded by System Values and Relationships** includes the sub-category of *dealing with power*. **Engaging in Educational Practices** includes the sub-categories of *seeking out professional discourse and opportunities*, and *acting in response* with the properties of *consultation/collaboration*, *transparency*, and *support*. **Seeing the Need/ Seeing a Bigger Picture** includes the sub-categories of *recognizing and accepting the responsibility* and *helping students see the bigger picture*. **Moving Toward Congruence** includes the sub-categories of *being driven by ethics*, *blending identities and balancing roles*, and *questioning self and encountering acceptance* with the property of *traversing through emotions*. The property of *moving through nuances and complexities* was found to be a property that was present throughout the process as a whole, not specific to any one category or sub-category. This property overlapped with numerous

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categories, sub-categories, and even other properties. Although manifesting in various forms, it was ever present through the process of becoming a gatekeeper.

Figure 6 is a visual representation to illustrate the conceptual description of the process of becoming a gatekeeper. I have presented the results in alignment with how the process unfolds in Figure 6. I have included selected excerpts from various participants (across both rounds of intensive interviews and interpreting dialogues) that I believe best illuminate the meaning of each component of the dynamic process.

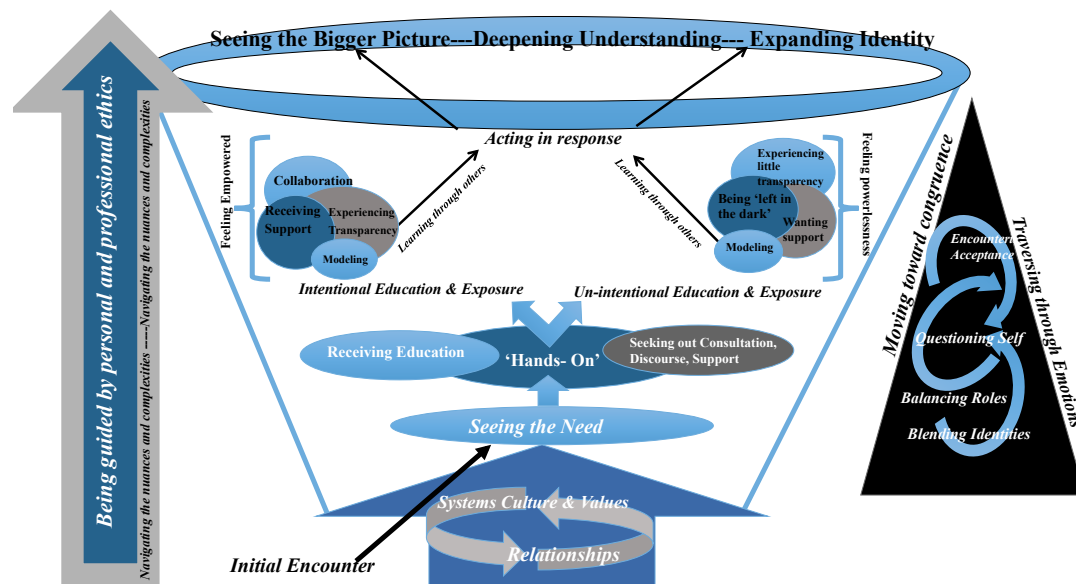


Figure 6. Process of Becoming a Gatekeeper.

Narrative Description

Figure 6 portrays the entrance into an expanding funnel. Movement from the base of the funnel to the wider rim is propelled by specific components and actions that feed upwards to the wider rim. The metaphor of a funnel was chosen as it depicts the widening of perception, an experience evident across participants' narrative. Generally, all participants spoke to seeing a

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more involved understanding of their role as gatekeeper as they progressed through certain experiences. In particular, the bottom of the funnel highlights the narrow entry where the beginning of the expanding awareness (**Seeing the Need**) arises. The widening funnel represents increasing awareness (**Seeing a Bigger Picture**) and a more involved and intricate understanding of gatekeeping and their place within. The funnel is intentionally situated upon a pedestal that represents **System Values and Relationships** that informs and influences every action and processes the emerging gatekeeper progresses through. The section below narratively describes the entrance and progression of participants' process. Organization for the section below will describe the (1) entrance into the funnel, (2) actions occurring within the funnel, and (3) expanding perception of participants as they make their way to the wide rim. In applying a metaphor of building a home, these three phases can be viewed as the frame of the home. As participants progress through these three phases, additional processes are occurring simultaneously that interact and influence their progression, further building upon the construction of the home. These separate processes include **Moving Toward Congruence** and strengthening personal and professional ethics. These processes can be conceptualized as the siding and insulation of the home.

Entry Phase: Initial Encounter

Participants began their process in becoming gatekeepers through an initial encounter with the construct of gatekeeping. Participants described an initial encounter where they observed questionable professional behavior from a peer and/or colleague in their educational or clinical setting. Initial encounters also consisted of the introduction of abstract information on gatekeeping, typically introduced in their master-level training. All participants spoke to observing dispositional, clinical, or academic deficiencies in others as propelling them to a place

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where they began **Seeing the Need** for effective gatekeeping practices. Michele spoke to her experience of having a “feeling” that intervention was needed. Furthermore, she reflected on the progression from a “feeling” to a more integrated “identity” stating:

Because I think initially it was just sort of an idea or a feeling. Like, ‘Something or someone needs to do something about this,’ or, you know, ‘Something doesn’t seem right.’ But now it’s much—it’s a very solid knowledge of that it is part of my role, I have a responsibility to do something. It—me, I’m the one that should do something. Um I think it’s just a much more solidified part of my professional identity now than it was when I first started.

After encountering a form of impairment and **Seeing the Need**, participants were left not fully understanding what their role in gatekeeping may entail. Consequently, their conceptualization of the role was narrow and unclear as they lacked experience and/or training. Despite limited understanding and narrow view, participants still possessed a desire to prevent incompetent clinicians from entering the profession at this point in their development. Ariel described working in a community mental health setting and seeing a “mixed bag” of counselors working with clients, some she viewed as “poorly trained.” She recalled observing clinical deficiencies in peers during her master’s program and clinical experience that led to strengthening her motivation “to want to have more authority as a gatekeeper in some form or fashion.” In looking at the conceptual map, the initial encounter also moves through the base of the expanding funnel. The section below will describe the influencing roots of what can be referred to as a pedestal for the entire process to unfold upon.

Foundational Pedestal. This base, which influences and supports the entire process, represents **Being Molded by System Values and Relationships. System Values** and

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Relationships feed into each other and are interdependent as depicted with the circular arrows.

A systems' makeup consists of programs' or agencies' culture that has set the tone for values, practices, and norms surrounding gatekeeping. Denise spoke to her department's culture by stating, "Gatekeeping is something that they [program] value. Being in this environment it has no choice but to trickle down, for it to influence me in some type of way. Because this is the environment that I have to function in." Relation to self, others, and system highlights the inevitable layers participants are rooted in that interacts to effect the relationship dynamics of an experience. Figure 3 symbolizes the three layers of being in relation.

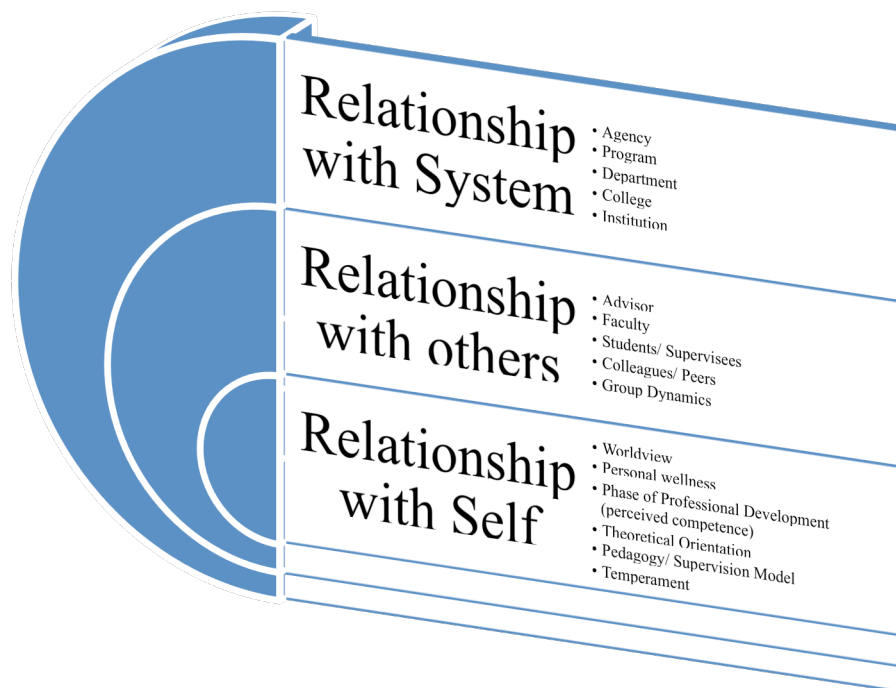


Figure 3. Three Layers of Being in Relationship.

Relationships were found to influence how a participant would interact within the system while simultaneously impacting the culture and dynamic of the agency or program; indicating the symbiotic nature of both entities. Being immersed in the systemic culture was found to inform and guide participants' entire process of becoming a gatekeeper. Jane described how

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program politics and lack of faculty support (due to budget cuts) had a “trickle down” effect, particularly impacting her development as a gatekeeper. She stated:

And my development and my support and my identity as a gatekeeper I think has suffered because of those things (program “politics”). That it’s sort of like—it’s impacting all things. It’s sort of like this trickle down like from all levels...I mean even just this year, the idea that we don’t have as many faculty I think contributes to that. Because we don’t have as many people able to support our development. We don’t have as many people who can sort of be there to have questions about or to talk about this more in depth, because they’re busy and they’re doing their own things.

Michele spoke to seeing agency values dictate the quality of gatekeeping practices and lack of encouragement to engage in gatekeeping based on the fear of losing “cheap labor.” She stated, “I have worked places where that was sort of the mentality. Like, Look, we need—we need these interns because they’re really cheap labor. Honestly they’re working in not-for-profits that really can’t afford to hire people.” Michele spoke to not “rocking the boat” with gatekeeping to safeguard professional relationships that the trainee may be connected with. Ann, who regularly praised her programs intentional gatekeeping training, described how her educational experience would be “totally different” if her program did not value and emphasize gatekeeping training. She stated:

Oh, I think it would be totally different. I don’t even know that there would be a process of becoming a gatekeeper. I think it would just be one other thing that would be assigned to me in a new job, that I would know nothing about. I mean we—we’re taught how to research, we’re taught how to teach, we’re taught how to do all of these other things that are required. And if we’re not taught how to be gatekeepers, then that’s a huge piece of

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the puzzle and the responsibilities that would just be something else for us to try and figure out on our own.

Second Phase: Engagement, Exposure, and Acting in Response

As participants moved into doctoral programs and/ or clinical supervisor positions, they began **Engaging in Educational Practices**. Participants were exposed to two primary means of educational practices; “hands-on” learning and receiving education through doctoral- level course work and professional discourse. “Hands-on” learning was experiential and absorbing information through direct experiences interacting with students, supervisees, peers, and/ or colleagues as a gatekeeper. Michele spoke to her “hands-on” learning that echoed other participants’ experiences. “Hands-on” was an in-vivo code that permeated all participants’ experiences. Michele recalled, “Um really it’s been kind of learning as—learning as I go, as situations arise and dealing with those situations in the moment, kind of on a case-by-case basis.”

Participants experienced receiving education through more traditional educational efforts (course curriculum). Receiving education also includes self-directed learning such as seeking out professional discourse (e.g., literature, professional workshops, conferences) and being open to learn through consultation. A duality began to emerge that highlighted the process of participants receiving more intentional education efforts and exposure and those receiving less deliberate and planned training. Intentional education and exposure were described as being developmentally appropriate. The delivery of content and exposure to responsibilities was done in a “scaffolding” fashion that participant’s perceived as helpful. Ann recalled her educational experience “There’s lots of scaffolding of the knowledge, so we’re not expected to just do it on our own.” She reflected on the education she received as “very intentional process of teaching gatekeeping and dispositions.”

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In contrast, other participants shared instances of developmentally inappropriate practices or little exposure to gatekeeping material. Denise even characterized the education she received as “hands-off.” Denise shared having limited exposure and training as the responsibilities of the gatekeeper role were “assumed” to be understood, which was not the case for Denise. She stated:

And so gatekeeping—for some reason, that was just not one of the topics that was discussed, I guess because it was assumed—That we knew what gatekeeping was and how that would look for us as, you know, coming in and wanting to be counselor educators. And so that—I guess that’s—from my experience, that was what I got from it: not a lot.

Unsurprisingly, those who received more intentional exposure felt more *supported* through the difficult role of gatekeeping and experienced a level of *transparency* from the system they were embedded within. Robert spoke to the level of transparency he received pertaining to gatekeeping expectations placed upon him as a doctoral student and the learning that occurred through this experience. He recalled the transparency that his department provided stating, “I think it was made very, very clear at the beginning that regardless of what skills we brought to the program, there were certain dispositions that we needed to possess if we were to be successful.” These conditions resulted in participants feeling more empowered in their role of gatekeeper. Both *transparency* and *support* were found to be properties of **Engaging in Educational Practices** that existed on a continuum for participants. Ann, who represents one end of the spectrum, described her experience of *support* by stating, “And so I’ve never felt like I’ve just been thrown to the wolves related to it. It’s always been very much, Let’s sit down, let’s talk about this process.” At times, support is like what Ann described as “Never feeling alone, at all.” In other instances, support can be like what Ariel

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described as “reinforcement.” She recalled bringing a plagiarism issue to her dean and receiving validation and support for her decision. She stated, “And I brought it to my dean and my dean was like, You did the right thing. I’m so glad you brought this to me and didn’t try to handle it on your own.”

The participants who spoke to feeling as though they received “little” educational exposure or developmentally inappropriate responsibilities spoke to the other end of the spectrum in which they felt like they were “left in the dark,” lacking *support* and feeling powerless in their role. Denise recalled an experience in which she was left feeling unsupported and “isolated.” She stated, “What else is coming to me next? Like it was just a lot of fireballs, I guess, that you had to continue to just put out. And it was like, ‘I need help from somebody and where is that help?’ And nobody was kind of around. And so just navigating that—feelings of loneliness, feelings of isolation.”

Acting in Response. Both ways of receiving education (intentional or un-intentional) provided participants valuable learning opportunities to *act in response* to perceptions of “what worked” or “didn’t work.” Participants either endorsed ways of being that they perceived as conducive for effective gatekeeping or rejected behaviors and cultures that they believed were not conducive for gatekeeping. Jane recalled how she actively attempted to be transparent with supervisees when evaluating their clinical skills and professional disposition. She reflected, “So I think that was part of the reason why I really am committed to being transparent and open and clear with them throughout the process about how they’re doing and letting them know that if there’s a concern.” She shared earlier in her interview the lasting impact a negative experience with a supervisor had in motivating how she interacts with supervisees. She stated, “Like I don’t

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want to do that to my students or my supervisees in the future.... I'm going to make sure that I communicate that so it's not like a surprise when we have the evaluations."

Similarly, Michele shared how much of her development is attributed to learning through relationships, both "good and bad." She described her learning and the meaning she made through the experience. She stated:

But in terms of relationships with other people, my experience has been molded by relation—by some not-so-great relationships that showed me what I didn't want to do... But also some good relationships, where there was a lot of transparency and there was open-door policy for consultation. And there was up-front discussion, frank discussion about expectations and what would happen—sort of what the process might be if something—if there was a problem. So relationships, good and bad, I think have molded the gatekeeper that I am now and will continue to.

Ariel spoke of *acting in response* to her experiences and observations during her master and doctoral counseling programs. She stated, "So you either see the system work really well and that makes you want to work really well or you see it fail students and so you think, I want to do better." Furthermore, Ariel reflected on how she would like to *act in response* to future work once dealing more directly with doctoral students in her faculty role. She reflected:

....And I haven't quite figured that out yet. But it's something that's on my radar of how do I—so how do I navigate these potential issues with them in a way that's more empowering and more transparent, as much as I can be, as opposed to what I experienced which was just, 'We'll handle it. Don't worry about it anymore.'

Regardless of experiencing and/or observing effective gatekeeping measures, all shared the commonality of being motivated to pursue their role of gatekeeper to assist students in their

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development and protect clientele from incompetent clinicians. *Consultation, support, and transparency* were all perceived as needed and helpful in navigating one's role of gatekeeper. If participants were provided these properties during their development, they mindfully moved through future gatekeeping responsibilities with these characteristics in mind. If they lacked these properties, they were cognizant to seek out these experiences and or provide these elements to their own students, colleagues, and peers. Thus, both experiences led to action toward better understanding the role and shaping how they view themselves as gatekeepers.

Third and Final Phase: Expanding Understanding

The positioning of **Seeing a Bigger Picture** at the wide end of the funnel not only represents participants expanding understanding of the role, but also the growing recognition for the complexities in their role of gatekeeper. Sandra described her evolving awareness of how far reaching her role of gatekeeper can ultimately have. She stated:

I think as the role of a gatekeeper became clearer to me, it helped me to understand more about the importance of protecting clients. I think when I was just a clinician and you're thinking about just your caseload—for example, you know, 'I have to protect this group of people.' But understanding now that my role as a gatekeeper is bigger than that; it's more of a global thing. Even clients that—because I don't work with clients currently, you know, I supervise people who work with clients so I'm responsible for a lot of people indirectly. But even beyond those individuals, those clients, I still have a responsibility to protect the public. As a gatekeeper. And I think that's how it's grown and expanded as my understanding of my role as a gatekeeper has grown and evolved.

Robert echoed Sandra's realization of how stepping into a counselor educator role has opened his eyes to the “gravity” and “seriousness of the process” his role of gatekeeper entailed. He stated, “I think the level of responsibility goes up. When you think about all the students that

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you have. I mean I've got 70 students across three classes....I would say that's the thing that has changed, is the level of responsibility."

This phase brings participants to a place of deepened understanding, expanded identity, and a clearer and more involved image of what gatekeeping may entail for them personally. It is important to note that participants do not have an exit point of the process, as the rim continue to widen revealing more intricacies with experience. The funnel continues to widen and they may re-experience processes, such as **Engaging in Educational Practices** and *acting in response*, that continues to move them to a deeper understanding. It can be viewed as a forward moving cyclical process.

Additional Processes

The blue arrow, positioned to the left of the funnel, represents the driving force that propels momentum and movement throughout the process and reflects participants' personal and professional ethics. Participants' ethics were described as the values and actions they believed protect the integrity of the profession and client welfare. The underlying motivator in both professional and personal ethics is to deliver quality service to clientele and to help ensure those they are training are providing competent services. Robert spoke directly to gatekeeping as a motivating force in his work as a faculty member. He stated, "So I guess it (gatekeeping) becomes—like I said, it becomes a motivator almost in terms of everything that we do, in terms of our educator roles." Ariel, in her second year as a faculty member, spoke to carrying out ways of being and actions that she learned as working (e.g., being proactive, providing support, being open to consult) during her time as a doctoral student and first year faculty member. She passionately pointed out, that certain ways of being are not expectations of her job per se, but personal expectations stemmed from her own values. She stated:

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And being proactive and trying to be supportive and being open with and consulting and things like that. Which are things I'm supposed to do, but not really required to do. You know, it's not as though I would get into trouble if I didn't do those things; I do them because they're important to me.

It became clear that the driving force is strengthened as participants' progress through the process and begin to see a clearer, wider, and more involved "picture" of what their role may entail. They also begin to see a more "global" impact their role of gatekeeper may have as they continue to accept the responsibility. The driving force is strengthened through direct experience (whether positive or negative). For example, if successful remediation was observed, participants are inspired to believe that gatekeeping measures can be effective. If gate slippage is observed or experienced, participants' motivation are fueled to prevent similar instances from happening in the future. The notion of an expanding and strengthened driving force is represented in Figure 7 below.

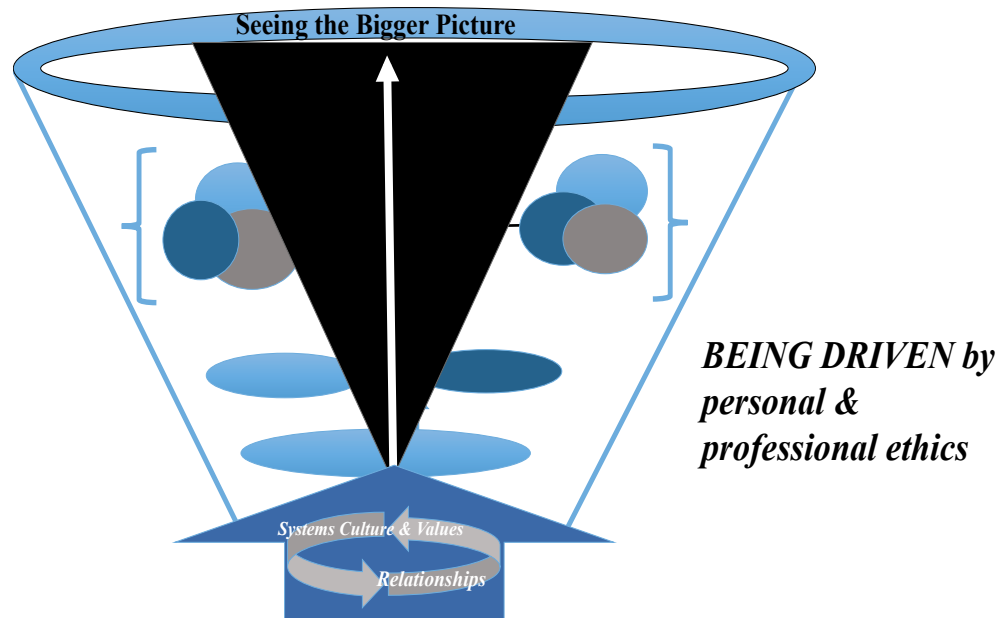


Figure 7. Expanding Motivation.

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Ariel highlighted the concept of a strengthening and expanding drive through her observation of “poorly-trained” counselors. Additionally, she continued to recognize the need for effective gatekeeping through the funnel as it led her to **Seeing a Bigger Picture**.

I think it’s probably having experiences with the need—or recognition for the need for gatekeeping. Because that seems to be the common thread in my story, is that as a Master’s student I recognized other students who did not seem to be serving their clients in the way that they should be, but were also still allowed to continue in the program. In which case I didn’t even feel like I could be a whistle-blower because clearly they were being evaluated in the same way that I was and the faculty was okay with what they were doing, so who was I supposed to go to? And so I mean that probably strengthened that motivation to me and it was probably when I decided to go into a doc program, because if they weren’t going to do their jobs properly, someone needed to.

As this driving force maintains movement throughout the development, the action of *navigating the nuances and complexities* endures throughout their process as well. As participants progressed and gained training and experience, it was still evident of their action in navigating the nuances inherent in gatekeeping. These nuances manifested in many ways (institutional policies, individual student development, evolving ethics) with participants having to identify, sift through, seek consultation, and reflect upon the many complexities they encounter in their role of gatekeeper. Moreover, **Seeing a Bigger Picture** opened participants’ eyes to various layers of complexities, and how it no longer felt like a simplistic role of granting access to the profession. Robert shared his experience of **Seeing a Bigger Picture** while simultaneously navigating his first year as a faculty member. He stated:

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I mean even though I was very secure in that decision, I still had to figure out, ‘Okay, what’s the best way to approach this?’ Because being new again I have limited information on the site, I have limited information on the people there or the history at that site for students. So some of that I had to check in with other people, ‘Okay, have you heard about this? Or, you know, have we had students at this site before? What’s been their experience there?’ So again, I think that’s some of the—you know, speaking to nuance and complexity, that’s some of that.

Moving Toward Congruence. The black triangle located to the left of the funnel, represents the process that is occurring for participants as they move toward **Seeing a Bigger Picture**. This process represents **Moving Toward Congruence** as they began to blend identities (clinician, educator, supervisor, gatekeeper, researcher, leader) and try to balance the various roles placed upon them. In actively blending and balancing, they are cycling through questioning oneself as they are attempting to move to a place that feels congruent for them personally and professionally (Figure 8).

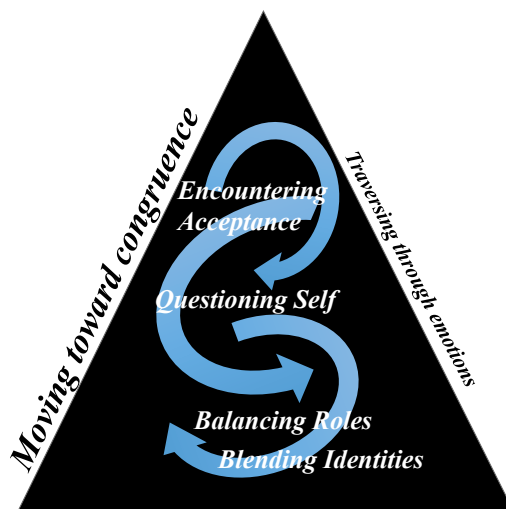


Figure 8. Moving Toward Congruence.

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Denise spoke to the most challenging part of where she is at currently in her process. She stated, “Finding balance with who I am right now and who I aspire to be as a counselor educator, as continuing to gatekeep now in this role as a counselor educator.” Jane echoed Denise’s sentiment while speaking to her process of blending identities and her belief of the importance of movement toward a congruent place where personal and professional philosophies align. She stated:

Well I think that for me, in general, with any of my identities as a counselor, that I try to integrate them. Like I don’t see them as separate, because like foundationally I feel like my beliefs about the world and myself and like my process are all going to be the same across. They’re going to look different based on what role I’m in, but I think that it’s really important for me to make that an integrated piece of who I am.

Ariel described questioning herself and the emotion of doubt that accompanied this piece of her process. She stated:

There’s a lot of doubt. Is this really actually an issue or am I making it too big of a deal? Or how do I handle this or what’s going to be appropriate? Is this something I even want to bring up with my peers or are they going to think that I’m just paranoid? Like there’s a lot of doubt, there’s a lot of moments of feeling like I’ve failed, because if I had trained them properly then maybe this wouldn’t have happened. And that’s not true, but it goes through my mind of feeling like, ‘Well, maybe I messed something up.’

Building upon Ariel’s experience, Denise recalled feeling doubt when questioning herself in the role of gatekeeper while simultaneously questioning if she stayed congruent with personal and professional ethics. She stated:

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Doubt, most definitely. Yeah. Yeah, not necessarily fear but it's that second-guessing.

Am I doing, you know, things in a manner that is—that would meet the standards—you know, the standards that we're held to? Am I keeping—am I doing what I say that I'm going to do? So always kind of checking that, 'What did I say that I was going to do? Am I doing it? And how have I done it?'

As the act of *questioning self* saturated participants narrative in **Moving Toward Congruence**, *encountering acceptance* emerged as the other side of the coin per se.

Encountering acceptance encapsulates participants' moments of recognizing and accepting the limitations in blending roles, finding compassion for oneself, and being patient as they make sense of their development. Denise highlighted her compassion toward self after recognizing that her role of gatekeeper is still fairly new and providing perspective for herself through reflection. She stated:

Um being okay, I think, with the newness of it and feeling as if I should know more than I do. So it's—I guess it's more so balancing that anxiety, like, 'It's okay that you don't know, because you're new and you will get to this point where you want to be.'

Sandra spoke of her experience in recognizing her limitations in gatekeeping and coming to accept that she only has control over her actions and doing her "part." She stated:

Honestly the most challenging part is that I'm actually dealing with a few gatekeeping issues right now, and just feeling a sense of responsibility to do my part, which sometimes with gatekeeping—or I guess often times with gatekeeping—it involves other people who may not be where you're at in that developmental process of what gatekeeping should look like. Depending on where they're at, that can compromise their

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level of responsibility as a gatekeeper, which to me can be very frustrating, but at least—but still comforting, because at least I know that I did my part in the process.

As represented in the triangle- blending identities, balancing roles, questioning self, and encountering acceptance are linked and influence and inform the other moving pieces. At any time throughout the process, the inner pieces of the triangle are playing off of each other to move participants to a more **congruent** place. While these inner pieces are interacting, the process of moving through emotion became evident for participants as they began **Moving Toward Congruence**. When I asked Ann about her emotional process in navigating the nuances in gatekeeping, her response fully captured the essence of the property *traversing through emotions*. She stated:

You know, emotionally I think it runs the gamut. It goes from being super-excited when you see a student have an ‘Aha!’ moment to having this gut-wrenching feeling of, ‘Oh my gosh, is this going to be something that will blow up in this student’s face?’ Um so I think it really—I think it’s just the human experience, because it’s developmental and the human experience is developmental. And so as you’re supporting these people through the process, you get to see every aspect of their development and help support them along the way. Um I think my emotions have run the gamut too. That they often parallel what my student is experiencing along with sometimes feeling frustrated that um the process isn’t perfect. So I think to tease out my own emotions is a little difficult, because I think they’re very much linked into my love of what I’m doing and my care for my student.

Emotions “ran the gamut” from frustration, anger, anxiety, fear, to excitement as participants’ circle through the many pieces of the inner triangle. Although Figure 8 utilizes the shape of a triangle to depict the process of **Moving Toward Congruence**, participants’ process

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did not reveal an end point where they reached the tip of the triangle and congruence was reached indefinitely. Rather, they continue to strive for congruence knowing that total congruence (tip of triangle) may only be fleeting and viewed as a fluid journey versus a destination. The triangle is useful in illustrating their identities and roles becoming more blended and integrated as they progress through their training and experience. Figure 9 provides a visual image of the overlap in three moving processes happening concurrently within the funnel; the strengthening of *being guided by personal and professional ethics*, the focusing of roles and identities as they **Move Toward Congruence**, and the broadening of perception in **Seeing a Bigger Picture**.

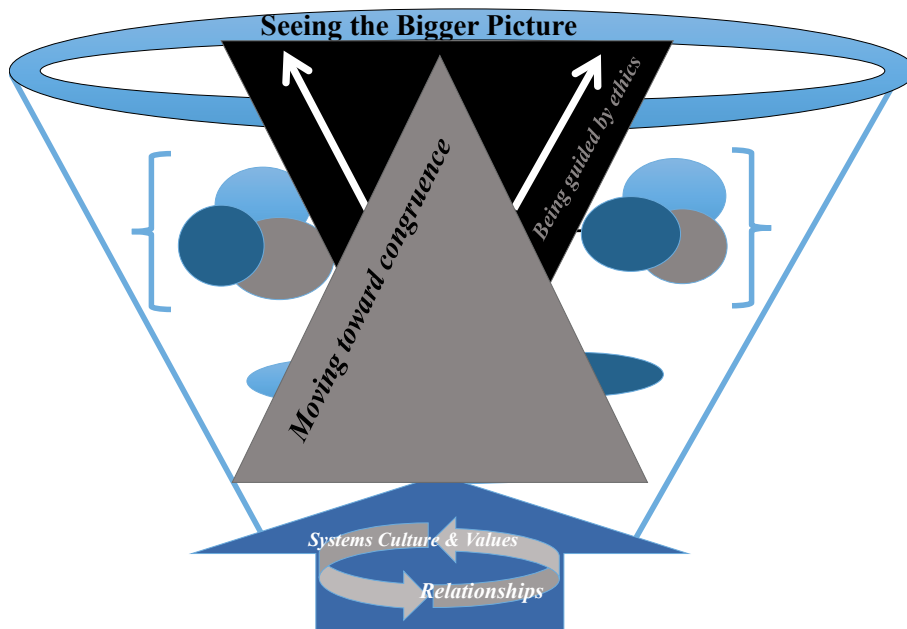


Figure 9. Overlapping Processes in Becoming a Gatekeeper.

Results Summary

Participants' processes of becoming gatekeepers were best captured through a funnel metaphor and the many processes happening concurrently both within and outside the funnel. The base of the funnel illustrates the entrance into the process, the deep entrenchment and influence of system and relationships, and the limited understanding of the role. As participants

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progressed through the center of the funnel, multiple processes, experiences, and elements began to unfold that lends to a much broader, fuller picture. These processes consisted of being exposed to educational practices (receiving either intentional or unintentional education and exposure), experiential learning, and consultation and self-directed learning. Depending on the experience of these educational opportunities, participants either found themselves feeling empowered or feeling powerless in their role of gatekeeper. Through managing power, all participants were propelled to act in response to what was perceived as working or not working, moving them all to a place where they continued to engage in gatekeeping and aspired to be an effective gatekeeper. The next and final chapter will provide a brief summary of the study, provide implications for professional counseling and counselor education, explore future areas of research, and present limitations of the findings.

CHAPTER VI: DISCUSSION

I began this study with the question: What is the process of doctoral students and junior faculty becoming gatekeepers within counselor education? Effective gatekeeping is well documented in the professional counseling literature as an essential function serving to protect client welfare and the integrity of the profession (Brown-Rice & Furr, 2014, 2015, 2016). Professional standards and ethical codes have articulated the need for counselor educators and supervisors to engage in gatekeeping (ACA, 2014; CACREP, 2016). The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) highlighted the necessity of doctoral students to graduate with a foundational understanding of their duties and roles as a gatekeeper; however, the professional community is left not knowing *how* this happens or the process by which CESs learn and engage in their gatekeeper role. Although a scholarly consensus exists that the role of gatekeeper is complex and CESs often feel unprepared (Brear & Dorrian, 2010; Brown-Rice & Furr, 2014, 2016; McAdams, Foster, & Ward, 2007), little is known about the educational experiences or process of becoming that precedes gatekeeping duties as faculty. This study explored the process of becoming a gatekeeper for counselor educators-in-training and junior CESs faculty to address the disparity that exists in the literature, professional discourse, and professional standards.

Review of Procedures

I used qualitative inquiry to uncover the gatekeeping process and experience of CESs. Constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014) was an ideal methodology to illuminate the development and movement of participants' process. Staying congruent with the philosophical and methodological foundation for the study, participants were active contributors to the evolving analyses and co-construction of the grounded theory. I utilized collaborative data

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gathering methods (intensive interviews, interpreting dialogue sessions, and final member check) that allowed for co-construction and opportunities for participants to ensure accuracy and fit of their experience.

Seven CESs participated in this study. Purposeful selection and maximum variation were employed in recruiting and obtaining participants. I utilized purposeful selection to ensure participants had prior experience as a gatekeeper in clinical and/or academic setting. Maximum variation was achieved as participants represented a diverse population of CESs. Diversity included gender, age, race, number of years in the field, and geographical location. I was able to secure participants who represented every region of the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES), providing a rich inclusion of training and experience. Two participants represented the Southern region (SACES), two represented the Rocky Mountain region (RMACES), one from the Western region (WACES), one from the North Atlantic region (NARACES), and finally one participant from the North Central region (NCACES). Additionally, I was able to secure participants who represented different phases in the process of becoming a gatekeeper. Participants ranged from a second year doctoral student to a second year faculty member.

Data collection consisted of two rounds of intensive interviews (Charmaz, 2014), two rounds of interpreting dialogue sessions following each interview (Coe Smith, 2007), and a final member check. Interviews and interpretive dialogues were conducted using Zoom software. Each session was recorded and sent to a professional transcriptionist. On average, I spent 2.5 hours with each participant over the span of four months (November to February). The final member check was conducted via e-mail with the option to meet using Zoom. All participants responded over e-mail and chose not to meet, as they believed the theory accurately represented their

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process, with no questions or feedback left to offer. Memo-writing was continuous through the entire process including the formation of my conceptual framework, data collection, and data analyses. My memo-writing process primarily included typed entries, clustering of concepts via PowerPoint, and conceptual maps created with PowerPoint. I was cognizant to exclude identifying information in memos to protect participant confidentiality. Memo-writing was an essential element of my process as I continually wrote about my biases, values, and assumptions. My memos proved to be central in conceptualizing relationships among categories and organizing my hypothesis through theoretical coding.

Data analyses consisted of three phases of coding; initial, focused, and theoretical coding (Charmaz, 2014). By engaging in all three of these phases, I was able to thoroughly explore individual transcripts and begin a comparative analysis across all transcripts. Initial coding began with a line-by-line analysis using gerunds that captured the participants' actions, keeping as close to the data as possible. Line-by-line analyses were followed by segment-by-segment analyses to produce codes capturing larger amounts of data. During focused coding, I analyzed the initial codes to see what actions or processes were most salient to elevate to a focused code (Charmaz, 2014). During this phase, I aimed to organize and synthesize the data. Focused coding provided a sharper image of the process unfolding. Finally, I employed theoretical coding to conceptualize how focused codes may interact and/or be related. During this phase, I grouped focused codes and attempted to make sense of their connection through memoing. I utilized cluster and conceptual maps throughout theoretical coding as a way to visually represent my conceptualizations and make sense of the emerging data. All of the above procedures and processes informed and influenced this study and culminated in a comprehensive theory of an emerging gatekeeper.

Findings

Data analysis revealed four primary categories describing the process CESs have experienced when becoming a gatekeeper. The four major categories included: (1) **Being Molded by System Values and Relationships**; (2) **Engaging in Educational Practices**; (3) **Seeing a Need/Seeing a Bigger Picture**; and (4) **Moving Toward Congruence**. **Being Molded by System Values and Relationships** included the sub-category of *dealing with power*. **Engaging in Educational Practices** included the sub-categories of *seeking out professional discourse and opportunities*, and *acting in response* with the properties of *consultation/ collaboration, transparency, and support*. **Seeing the Need/ Seeing a Bigger Picture** included the sub-categories of *recognizing and accepting the responsibility* and *helping students see the bigger picture*. And finally, **Moving Toward Congruence** included the sub-categories of *being driven by ethics, blending identities and balancing roles*, and *questioning self and encountering acceptance* with the property of *traversing through emotions*. Figure 4 represents a one-dimensional graph outlining the final categories, sub-categories, and properties. Figure 6 is a visual representation to illustrate the conceptual description of the process. Results provided an in-depth exploration of the varying elements and intricacies of the theory. The below sections will revisit trustworthiness procedures, examine how results build upon and support existing literature, discuss implications, outline limitations, and present future areas of research.

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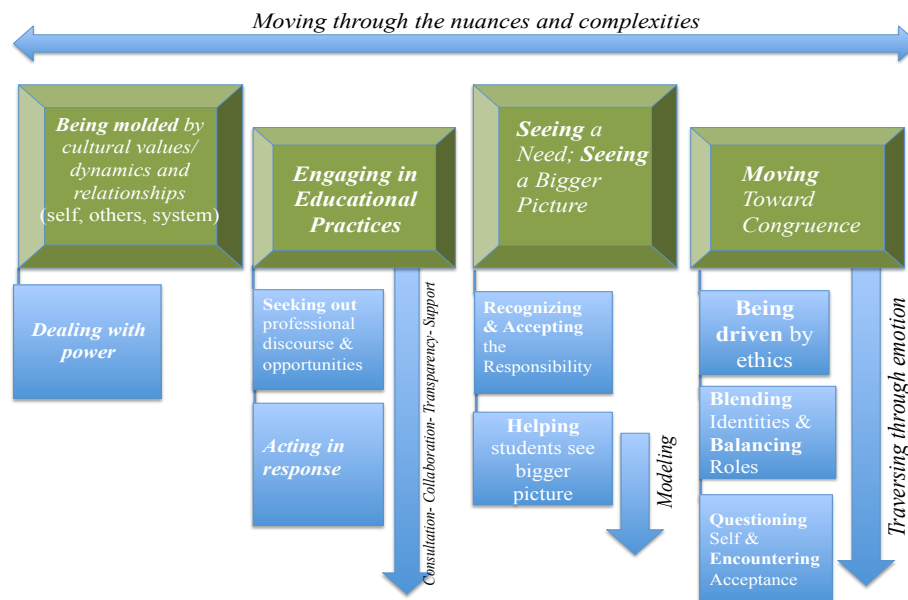


Figure 4. One-Dimensional Graph Illustrating Final Categories, Sub-Categories, and Properties.

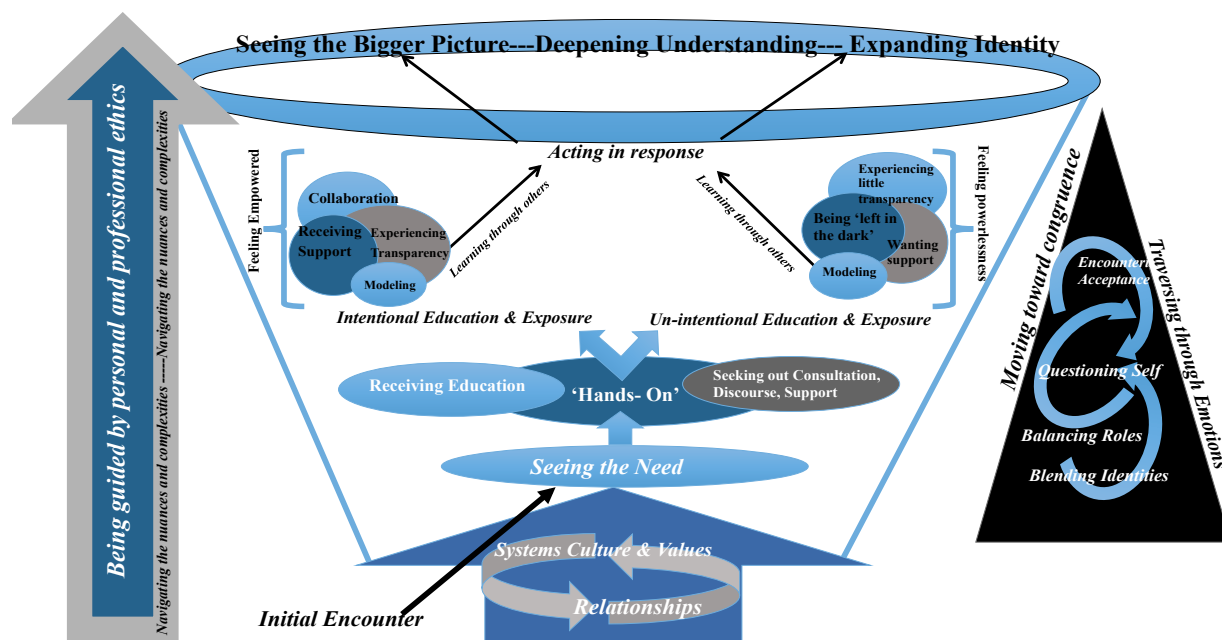


Figure 6. The Process of Becoming a Gatekeeper.

Trustworthiness

I implemented multiple procedures to establish trustworthiness and credibility to ensure the integrity and accuracy of the data interpretation and theory emergence. As described in Chapter two, these procedures included memo writing, triangulation, interpretive dialogues, a final member check, and prolonged engagement with the data. In executing these procedures, I believe I was able to stay congruent with constructivist thought and enhance the credibility of my findings.

Consistent memo-writing proved to be central in helping explore my beliefs, assumptions, values, and biases and how it may be interacting with the interpretation of data or my interactions with participants. In particular, reflective journaling following each interview was immensely helpful in conceptualizing my initial reactions to participant experiences and responses to interview questions. I was able to raise awareness by reflecting on my reactions, disappointments, surprises, and overall thoughts. Additionally, my reflexive journaling and memo writing served as an audit trail for my data analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In conjunction with memo- writing, triangulation was employed. Primary triangulation efforts occurred with my major advisor, Dr. Steven Moody. I would often lean upon Dr. Moody as my inquiry auditor to verify and support the interpretations of my data through presenting evolving conceptual maps, providing organization of excerpts, and through dialogue. I also consulted with Dr. David Kleist early in my coding process to ensure my conceptualization of Charmaz's (2014) coding procedures were accurate and appropriate.

Interpreting dialogue sessions (Coe Smith, 2007) were employed as a third procedure to enhance trustworthiness and credibility. Implementing Coe Smith's (2007) collaborative interpreting sessions provided participants the opportunity to co-construct the meaning of the

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analysis. These sessions deepened my understanding of the analysis. I felt strong rapport was built with each participant leading to their comfort in confronting and challenging any aspect of the theory that did not fit their experience or process. Not only did I perceive these sessions as enhancing the credibility of the study, but also participants being empowered through co-constructing the theory.

Finally, I spent several months in contact with participants. Lincoln and Guba (1985) described prolonged engagement as a strategy that ensures enough time has been spent on a study to safeguard its quality. Once I recruited and selected participants, I was able to allocate time before interviews and interpreting dialogues to build rapport and trust with participants. Spending time with the topic of study, existing literature, and building rapport with participants provided me sufficient and quality time to become intimately immersed in my study.

Contributions to Existing Literature

Results of this study offer a rich contribution to existing research that will continue professional discourse in the counseling profession. Findings support, expand upon, and challenge the professional communities current understanding of gatekeeping and the role of gatekeeper. The below sections are organized into three primary contributions: reinforcing, extending, and challenging.

Reinforcing Literature. Brown-Rice and Furr's (2014) assertion that gate slippage not only impacts client care, but other CITs and the profession, was reinforced through my findings. All participants in the current study spoke to encountering "poor counselors" or impairment in peers and colleagues. These instances were described as helping them **See the Need** for effective gatekeeping and even served as motivation to pursue doctoral education, as they wanted to be positioned to train competent counselors. Secondly, feelings of uncertainty and hesitation have been found to be common experiences of CES's when engaging in gatekeeping practices (Glance

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et al., 2014; Kerl & Eichler, 2005). The sub-category of *questioning self* and property of *traversing through emotions* confirm this previous finding. Additionally, results from this study add potential logic behind the identified hesitation, as it was evident through the findings that participants who received less intentional exposure and educational practices lacked support, transparency, and guidance that led to feelings of powerlessness and hesitation. Participants' process of *navigating the nuances and complexities* supports the well-documented body of knowledge speaking to the complexities of the role (Brear & Dorrian, 2010; Gizara & Forrest, 2004; Homrich et al., 2014; Wissel, 2014). Numerous authors discussed the challenges gatekeepers must navigate (Brear & Dorrian, 2010; Brown-Rice & Furr, 2014, 2016) with participants confirming this experience in the current study. Challenges included policies from the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), CITs' rights, institutional pressures such as desired enrollment, client protection issues, and inadequate training on how to be a gatekeeper. Participants shared personal experiences with each of these challenges.

Extending Literature. Not only do findings support existing literature, they build upon and extend the professions' understanding of being a gatekeeper. To begin, results expand DeDiego and Burgins' (2016) assertion that doctoral students serving as supervisors may be unclear of the overall construct of gatekeeping, what the role may mean for them, and logistics of intervening when an issue is identified. Many participants in this study spoke directly to this lack of direction when entering into and progressing through doctoral programs and/or supervising CITs. Moreover, all participants spoke to their desire in *wanting* developmentally appropriate training and experience in gatekeeping to fulfill their duties effectively. These results indicate a need and want for focused attention on training pertaining to gatekeeping. Secondly, DeDiego and Burgins (2016) drew attention to the lack of empirical research; specifically, in examining

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doctoral supervisory roles in program gatekeeping and the developmental process as university supervisors. Results from this study provide insight into doctoral students and junior faculty training, experience, and development as they began to assume gatekeeping duties. All participants had direct experience in supervising CITs during their doctoral education, beginning to answer DeDiego and Burgins' (2016) inquiry into the role doctoral students play in master-level supervision. This finding is critical, as doctoral students must be receiving adequate training prior to engagement in gatekeeping to minimize instances of gate slippage.

Becoming a gatekeeper was heavily influenced and informed by **System Values and Relationships** (self, others, system). Gaubatz and Vera (2002) reported more incidents of gate slippage by faculty who reported fear of legal reprisal, negative teaching evaluations, and institutional pressures not to screen CITs pre-admission. Results from this study indicate that systems you gatekeep within have an influence in molding values and attitudes regarding gatekeeping. This, in turn, can lead to action or delays in moving forward. Consequently, these results bring deeper understanding of faculty's hesitancy or fear to succumb to institutional pressures.

Homrich (2009) previously provided suggestions to improve gatekeeping practices in counseling programs, which included consistent faculty enforcement, establishment of expectations, and explicit communication. Results of this study extend these recommendations by revealing the central importance of established norms in a system. Results build upon the notion that faculty consensus (i.e. faculty enforcement, clear expectations) not only impacts current practices but also the *development and training* of emerging gatekeepers. Results provide insight into how cultivation of norms, values, and beliefs surrounding gatekeeping shape the development and training of gatekeepers. Best practices recommended by Homrich (2009)

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assume system values are explicit and the relationships within the system are conducive to these practices. As many participants stated throughout their narrative, it is difficult to have consistent faculty enforcement when faculty are not in agreement regarding gatekeeping beliefs and practices; consequently, the lack of consensus can impact practices and training.

Freeman et al. (2016) found consultation with other professionals to be the most frequently employed remediation and gatekeeping strategy site supervisors utilize. This study extends upon these results as the theory found the act of *consultation* to be a critical piece in *learning* how to be a gatekeeper. Results indicate a continual process of seeking out professional discourse throughout the development of becoming a gatekeeper (early stages into junior faculty). The quality of consultation received and the process behind seeking discourse looked differently depending on the culture of the environment.

Challenging Literature. Results reinforced, built upon, and also challenged existing literature. In terms of opposing results, the notion of the ‘empathy veil’ (Brown-Rice & Furr, 2014) used to describe counselor educators’ initial pull to empathize with CITs, which may keep the counselor educator from engaging in “ethical and competent gatekeeping” (p.1) was challenged through participants’ narratives. Although participants spoke to difficult emotions that may arise when engaging in remediation or identifying gatekeeping, they ultimately considered the “global” impact and were driven by personal and professional ethics that often trumped fear of coming across as un-empathetic. It is not clear as to whether the phase of their progression in becoming a gatekeeper lends to more protection from the phenomenon of the ‘empathy veil.’ It is important to note that participants’ driving force (personal and professional ethics) to be a gatekeeper were informed and influenced by the culture, values, dynamics, and relationships within the system they were gatekeeping. Thus, it is left unclear of whether the

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program culture influences ‘empathy veil.’

Participants spoke in contrast to the findings from McAdams et al. (2007) where counselor educators hoped gatekeeping related issues would resolve themselves, which resulted in delayed remediation action. All participants spoke to **Seeing the Need** followed by the *desire* to take action. Participants commented on the appreciation of systems that did act and address gatekeeping issues in a proactive versus reactive manner. For example, Ariel described a supervisee displaying questionable ethical behavior and her frustration, feelings of powerlessness, and “lack of voice” when attempting to bring the issues to faculty. This difference may be due to doctoral students undeveloped picture of the intricacies and time commitment remediation may require for a faculty. Since McAdams et al.’s (2007) publication, the professional discourse has shifted with many CESs recognizing the importance of proactive measures. If and how programs are implementing proactive efforts is left unknown.

Implications

Results of this study provide the first examination of becoming a gatekeeper in counselor education. Existing literature has offered direction in the practice of gatekeeping and experience of gatekeepers, but no literature has explored the preceding action of becoming. Results of this study lend to rich implications that pertain to CESs, counselor education programs (master and doctoral level), and professional counselors.

Counselor Educators and Supervisors

Counselor educators and supervisors can benefit from the results of this study to better understand their own progression in becoming a gatekeeper. The conceptual map can serve as a point of reference and a tool for reflection in comparing experiences. The theory can also potentially normalize and validate their experience. For instance, the sub-category of

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questioning self & encountering acceptance may provide comfort to CESs as it was found to be a common experience shared by all participants. Denise, when reviewing emerging categories reported feeling less alone and more connected to other participants knowing they had similar processes. As the theory provided a strong understanding of how participants were **Being Molded by System Values and Relationships**, CESs can examine their relationship to self, others, and the system they work within. This assessment can aim to explore alignment of gatekeeping values and/or begin to articulate what their values may even be, helping them to seek out environments where they feel supported. Additionally, *consultation, transparency, and support* were related to feelings of empowerment for participants. These properties produced an experience that participants wanted to emulate in the future rather than reject. CESs can seek out faculty and/or colleagues who embody these properties and work toward espousing these properties personally. This theory can also serve to help CESs reflect upon where they are in the process of **Moving Toward Congruence**. How are they balancing roles and blending identities? What roles do they see balancing?

Counselor educators and supervisors can use findings to advocate for mentoring relationships and healthy dynamics among students, faculty, and administration. Results indicate how power in relationships influences the learning and development of gatekeepers; thus, open discourse surrounding relationships may be fruitful. Assessing their systems' culture could raise awareness for *their* contribution to system and what they may do differently to better support effective gatekeeping. Assessment and increased awareness of program and/or agency may lend insight into power dynamics and how power may impact the various levels of their system including master-level students, doctoral-level students, faculty, and administration. Lastly, participants emphasized the importance of *helping students see the bigger picture*, and instilling

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the responsibility of gatekeeping into master-level clinicians. Current educators and supervisors can reflect upon how they are introducing gatekeeping concepts to CITs and how they can continue to share this responsibility. For instance, Ariel spoke to “charging” students with the responsibility by introducing gatekeeping and remaining accessible for consultation if a student has concerns. Denise spoke to introducing gatekeeping responsibilities to CITs through the lens of self-care and self-monitoring. Counselor educators and supervisors can reflect upon the findings to assess their role as gatekeepers. The following section outlines how counselor education programs can utilize the findings to improve programmatic training.

Counselor Education Programs

The results of this study can be applied from a programmatic stance to enhance the process of growth and development for emerging gatekeepers. Counselor education programs, can read the results to assess and implement changes to confirm their programs are (1) supporting the development of doctoral students and adequately preparing them for their faculty and supervisor roles and (2) cultivating norms, values, and attitudes within their system that support effective gatekeepers and gatekeeping procedures. To ensure adequate preparation for doctoral-level training, programmatic initiatives can include curriculum review, orientation specific to gatekeeping, developmentally appropriate opportunities for “hands-on” learning, and faculty accessible for consultation. These program initiatives reflect findings from the study that provided insight into what was helpful in participants’ development such as opportunity for experiential learning, scaffolding of information, and consultation.

Counselor education programs can work toward educating institutional administration on the purpose of gatekeeping, gatekeeping protocol, and support for the program’s gatekeeping efforts. Discussion would be more useful proactively rather than reactively when responding to

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an issue. The results of the study can be utilized to show higher administration of the importance of collaboration and shared value in gatekeeping. Presenting higher administration with the multitude of benefits (e.g., decreasing gate slippage, protecting client welfare, upholding integrity of profession, effectively training gatekeepers) based on their support and collaboration may provide the impetus to continue the dialogue.

Professional Counselors

Clinicians in the counseling profession can greatly benefit from the results of this study. There was a consensus among participants that gatekeeping should be the responsibility of *all* in the profession. Participants spoke to their process of recognizing the responsibility followed by actions of helping others see and accept their responsibility in gatekeeping, particularly the students and supervisees they worked with. Professional counselors can use this theory to assess their own learned values of gatekeeping, re-evaluate their role in monitoring self and colleagues, and evaluate the culture and norms of their work systems. They can initiate discourse within their clinical agency to examine how they are promoting clinician wellness, preventing burnout, and developing procedures if impairment is identified. Clinical supervisors not enrolled in doctoral programs can use this theory to examine their own development as a gatekeeper and potentially be validated for actions they are already engaging in (i.e. *seeking out professional discourse and opportunities*) or serve as a framework to advance their learning.

Future Areas of Research

There are several recommendations for research as the grounded theory results are rich in potential for future scholarly pursuit. Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies could be employed to contribute to the literature. Quantitative research would be helpful in examining how many programs are currently providing gatekeeping educational experiences or gatekeeping

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curricula. Although the grounded theory reveals how *intentional education* or *un-intentional education* both result in participants engaging in their role of gatekeeper, it is unclear if (1) gate slippage occurs when participants are receiving one form of education and (2) if there are varying levels of competency based upon the type of education received. Investigation into the relationship between training and curriculum with successful and unsuccessful (gate slippage) gatekeeping would be informative for training standards and curriculum creation. Additionally, focusing on a larger sample of CESs to explore their satisfaction with doctoral preparation and the type and format of training received would also lend considerable insight. Considering the number of CACREP accredited doctoral programs within the United States, an investigation to explore trends in accredited programs or educational experiences would be advantageous.

A natural extension for future research would be to further advance the process of becoming a gatekeeper to capture a developmental model and identity of a gatekeeper. Many participants spoke to their conceptualization of gatekeeper as a role, others as an identity, and others viewing their perception of gatekeeper as a “guiding motivator” that is a larger umbrella for all identities. A more thorough and developed picture on the consensus among the professional community is needed. Is being a gatekeeper one function of a counselor educator identity? Or rather, is gatekeeping a separate identity/ role/ responsibility that informs the professional identity? These questions were unfortunately outside the scope of the current study but worthy of future pursuit. Both qualitative and quantitative inquiry could help address these questions. Moreover, investigations comparing the results to existing developmental and identity model are needed. These comparisons may serve to understand potential overlap or provide the ability to conceptualize the process through more of a developmental lens.

This grounded theory explored counselors-in-training and junior faculty’s development,

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capturing varying phases of the process. It would be fruitful to qualitatively investigate individual phases to capture a deeper representation. A deeper understanding of each individual phase may provide recommendations unique to each period of development (i.e. second year of doctoral study, third year, first year faculty member, second year faculty member). Exploring the intersection of cultural identities with the process of becoming a gatekeeper is also needed to understand how race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender identity may interface with this process.

A research consideration in examining the developmental phase of junior faculty is the interface with impostor syndrome, a common phenomenon experienced by pre-tenure faculty (Reybold & Alamia, 2008). Having a study to delineate what may be influenced by ‘newness’ of academia and what may be influenced by their emerging gatekeeper identity would provide greater insight. Future inquiry can build upon this grounded theory to examine the process of more seasoned faculty; thus, what is the experience and process of tenured CESs in their role of gatekeeper. Additionally, I did not include entering doctoral students in their first year of study as I aimed to investigate the process once they have completed a year of study. Examining incoming gatekeeping knowledge and efficacy of entering doctoral students would also provide direction for training and curriculum needs. Development of an instrument to assess for gatekeeping knowledge and efficacy is also warranted.

Future researchers may pursue examining how systems (e.g., agencies, programs, institutions) impact gatekeeping related decisions and if system relationships are correlated with instances of gate slippage. It may be valuable to look at ways relationships with department faculty and university-level administrators influence gatekeeping. Lastly, extending these findings to continue to explore how helping professions (e.g., nursing, pharmacy, social work,

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medicine) are training and preparing gatekeepers. How may their systems (e.g., licensing boards, educational programs, health agencies) implement screening and entry of helping professionals? Future interdisciplinary work would be fruitful to collaborate on gatekeeping standards and competencies across the helping professions.

Limitations

The intent of this study was to explore CES's process of becoming gatekeepers resulting in a rich analyses and maximum variation being achieved. Despite these strengths, and my intentional effort toward ensuring trustworthiness, several limitations exist. To begin, although maximum variation was met, there remains a small gap in gender as only one participant self-identified as male. Having another male voice could have deepened the study and provided a richer description. Further heterogeneity may have been achieved by having more ethnic diversity. Moreover, there was only one participant in their second year of doctoral study. All other phases of the process (i.e., third year, fourth year/ ABD, pre-tenure faculty) had at least two participants speaking to their experience. Jane was the only participant in the beginning stage of her process; consequently, data were only related to this time period based on one individual's perspective. An additional participant just entering the process may have provided a deeper exploration of considerations pertinent to this phase of the process.

Conclusion

Seven participants provided insight into the process of becoming a gatekeeper in counselor education. Participants represented varying phases of the process from a second year doctoral student to a second year faculty member (pre-tenure). I employed constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014) to illuminate their process through prolonged engagement. Their perspectives were gathered through two rounds of intensive interviews (Charmaz, 2014),

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two rounds of interpreting dialogues (Coe Smith, 2007), and a final member check. Through data analysis, a grounded theory emerged. The theory consists of four primary categories. The four major categories include: (1) **Being Molded by System Values and Relationships**; (2) **Engaging in Educational Practices**; (3) **Seeing the Need/ Seeing a Bigger Picture**; and (4) **Moving toward Congruence**. Results indicate that the process is characterized by continual momentum fueled by participants' personal and professional ethics. Participants move toward personal and professional congruence as they see a widening perspective of what gatekeeping will entail as a counselor educator. Counselor education programs can use this theory as a framework to ensure they are supporting the development of gatekeepers and providing education that enhances their effectiveness. Both qualitative and quantitative research could lend greater insight into understanding the process of becoming a gatekeeper and any gaps in training that may be leading to gate slippage.

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Appendix A

Idaho State University Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Research Study Title: The Process of Becoming a Gatekeeper in Counselor Education: A Grounded Theory

Introduction

You have been asked to participate in a research study as described below. The researcher will describe the project to you in detail. If you have further questions later, Marisa Rapp will discuss them with you to your satisfaction. Dr. Steven Moody can also be contacted if you have any further questions.

Description of the Research

The purpose of this study is to investigate the process of becoming a gatekeeper in the counseling education and supervision field. Constructivist Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2014) will be employed and data will be gathered utilizing two rounds of intensive interviews (Charmaz, 2014) and two rounds of interpretive dialogues (Coe-Smith, 2007). The estimated time expected of participation is between 2-4 hours.

Risks

There are no foreseen risks for participation in this research study. You understand that it is your right to stop the interviewing process at any time you feel uncomfortable participating or if you change your mind about participation. You also understand that if you choose to withdraw from the research study, you do so without any penalty or repercussion.

Benefits of Participation in the Study

Although there may be no direct benefits to you from participating in this study, you will be providing relevant information to the field of Counselor Education and Supervision and the area of gatekeeping. The information you provide may increase understanding of the process of becoming a gatekeeper in counselor education and aims to better inform training competencies in gatekeeping for doctoral students. Information gleaned from this study could benefit future students, faculty, and clients.

Compensation

As incentives for participation in the research project, you will be given a \$30.00 Amazon gift card after the completion of the study along with paying one year of regional ACES membership dues (\$15.00 value). I will e-mail you an electronic gift card (at an e-mail address you provide) after the final interview along with physically mailing a personal check to your university office/place of employment for regional ACES membership dues.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality will be protected through the use of pseudonyms, in which you will be allowed to choose. Recordings of interviews and interpretive dialogues will be conducted via online video communication (Zoom), then securely transcribed through professional services. The recordings

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and transcriptions will be securely stored in a confidential location to maintain participant privacy. The researcher will take all reasonable steps to protect your identity.

Voluntary Participation

The decision to participate in this study is voluntary on your part. **There are no negative consequences for declining to participate.** If at any point, you decide to terminate your involvement in this research, you may contact Marisa Rapp.

Contact Information

Principal Investigator: Marisa C. Rapp
Address: Department of Counseling
921 S 8th Ave-Stop 8120
Pocatello, ID 83209-8120
Telephone: 636-485-6116
Email: rappmari@isu.edu

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Steven J. Moody
Address: Department of Counseling
921 S 8th Ave-Stop 8120
Pocatello, ID 83209-8120
Telephone: 618-282-3156
Email: moodste2@isu.edu

YOU HAVE READ THE CONSENT FORM. YOUR QUESTIONS HAVE BEEN ANSWERED. YOUR SIGNATURE ON THIS FORM MEANS THAT YOU UNDERSTAND THE INFORMATION AND YOU CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY. A COPY OF THIS FORM WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE TO YOU FOR THE RELEVANT INFORMATION AND PHONE NUMBERS.

Signature of Participant

Date

Printed Name of Participant

Appendix B

Idaho State University Call for Participation

Research Study Title: The Process of Becoming a Gatekeeper in Counselor Education: A Grounded Theory

CES doctoral students & junior faculty members-

My name is Marisa Rapp and I am a doctoral candidate in the Department of Counseling at Idaho State University. I am in the process of collecting data for my dissertation under the advisement of Dr. Steven Moody. *Do you have insight into the process of becoming a gatekeeper? What's your experience been in navigating the role of gatekeeper?* I would love to have your voice represented in my dissertation research! I know how busy this time of year is and happy to provide **every participant with a \$30.00 Amazon gift card and one year of regional ACES membership PAID (\$15 Value)** to show my appreciation for your participation.

Current doctoral students are eligible to participate in this study if you have completed:

1. *At least one academic year of doctoral study in counselor education and supervision at a CACREP- accredited program*
2. *Experience in co-teaching and/or experience in supervising a CIT*
 - a. Co-teaching is defined by teaching at least one course in which you assisted the instructor of record or shared responsibility for academic grading, evaluating, and present for every class period for the entirety of the course
 - b. Supervision is defined as supervising at least one CIT in which you provided regular supervision meetings spanning across a period of time (not a one-time consultation and/or one-time supervision session) and provided the supervisee with evaluations.

Junior faculty members are eligible to participate in this study if you are:

1. *Employed at a CACREP- accredited program as a counselor educator with less than two years experience (recent graduate of a doctoral program in counselor education and supervision).*

If you choose to participate in this study, there will be two rounds of interviews and member checks with the total time for participation estimated to be between 2-4 hours.

This study has been approved by the Idaho State University Human Subject Committee and the reference number is IRB-

Please feel free to forward this email announcement to eligible friends, colleagues, and other relevant listservs. ***If you are interested in participating, please contact me directly (rappmari@isu.edu).***

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Thank you in advance for your help with this project! By participating, you are contributing to our knowledge of counselor educators and supervisors. As appreciation, of your time and effort I'll provide every participant with a **\$30 Amazon gift card and regional ACES membership dues!** I appreciate your willingness to use your time to help our profession better understand the process of becoming a gatekeeper.

Sincerely,

Marisa C. Rapp, MA, LPC, NCC
Doctoral Candidate
Department of Counseling
Idaho State University

Appendix C

Idaho State University
Participant Screening Questionnaire
Example questionnaire of what will appear in Qualtrics

1. Are you a current doctoral student or currently employed junior faculty member? (yes or no)
2. If a junior faculty member, are you pre-tenure? (yes or no)
3. If a doctoral student, have you successfully completed one year in your program? (yes or no)
 - a. If yes, what year are you currently in? (2nd, 3rd, 4th, ABD)
 - b. Have you taught/ co-instructed **at least one** master level course in which you evaluated students, lectured, and helped assign grades? (yes or no)
 - c. Have you provided weekly/bi-weekly supervision for at least one master level student? (yes or no)
4. Have you experienced gatekeeping related issues with master-level students you work with as an educator and supervisor? (yes or no)
5. Region of current employment/doctoral study: (SACES, RMACES, WACES, NARACES, NCACES)
6. University affiliation:
7. CACREP- accredited? (yes or no)
8. Gender identity (male, female, gender fluid)
9. Age:
10. Race:
11. Ethnicity:

Appendix D

Idaho State University

TRANSCRIBER CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

Research Study Title: The Process of Becoming a Gatekeeper in Counselor Education: A Grounded Theory

I, _____, agree to transcribe data for this study. I agree that I will:

1. Keep all research information shared with me confidential by not discussing or sharing the information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) with anyone other than Maris C. Rapp, the principal investigator on this study;
2. Keep all research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) secure while it is in my possession. This includes:
 - using closed headphones when transcribing audio-taped interviews;
 - keeping all transcript documents and digitized interviews in computer password-protected files;
 - closing any transcription programs and documents when temporarily away from the computer;
 - keeping any printed transcripts in a secure location such as a locked file cabinet; and
 - permanently deleting any e-mail communication containing the data;
3. Give all research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) to the primary investigator when I have completed the research tasks;
4. Erase or destroy all research information in any form or format that is not returnable to the primary investigator (e.g., information stored on my computer hard drive) upon completion of the research tasks.

Signature of transcriber

Date

Signature of principal investigator

Date