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READY, MindSET, GO!
Increasing Students' Resilience in Counselor Education Programs

Eleonora Bartoli, Alexandra Mamolou, Michael T. Morrow, Lisa Brutko, Emily P. Cox, Stacey J. Herreid-Halstead, and Adam M. Levy

The process of becoming a counselor requires students to learn personal skills, the development of which can be emotionally onerous. An initial needs assessment in a counselor education program identified four areas of need associated with students' resilience during counselor training: fixed mindset, low academic self-efficacy, high anxiety, and high academic contingent self-worth. The article describes the development, delivery, and assessment of a pilot curriculum offering counseling students resilience strategies that overlap with clinical tools.

Keywords: counselor education, mindset, mindfulness, self-compassion, stereotype threat

Students are often attracted to counselor education programs because they view the counseling field as a way to give voice and expression to what they have learned through their own life struggles. Some of these students come into programs after extensive self-exploration and healing, which makes them yearn to give back and share what they have learned; others may view the program itself as an avenue to further their own journeys. These trends are noted in discussions among training directors of counselor education programs, and seem to have emerged more broadly in the field across time (e.g., Day, 1994; Stebnicki, 2016). The decision to become a counselor can be felt by students as a calling, even more than a vocation, and therefore carries deeply personal values and meaning (Scott, 2007).

Once students begin their counselor education, they are faced with challenging and novel classroom activities that prompt constructive feedback regarding their interpersonal skills (Bartoli, Morrow, Dozier, Mamolou, & Gillem, 2014; Homrich, DeLorenzi, Bloom, & Godbee, 2014). For instance, role-play presentations ask students to practice counseling skills while exposing themselves to peers' and professors' critiques about personal attributes, such as emotional expression and empathy. These classroom rehearsals are perceived as evaluative and therefore can trigger anxiety. Anxiety, in turn, has been shown to negatively relate to both self-efficacy (i.e., the belief that one is able to execute actions to achieve desired outcomes; Bandura, 1977) and academic performance (Brooks & Schweitzer, 2011; Daniels & Larson, 2001; Galla & Wood, 2012; Penney & Abbott, 2015; Stankov, 2013). Further, Larson and Daniels (1998) assert that counseling students with low self-efficacy may avoid taking risks, give up following failure, and shy-away from the learning process as a whole. High self-efficacy, on the other hand, has been linked to classroom participation and engagement (Galyon, Blondin, Yaw, Nalls, & Williams, 2012), key tasks in counselor education. The question then emerges of how counselor educators can build students' resilience to being evaluated on personal dimensions. Greater resilience makes it less likely that students will experience their learning curve as proof that they may be inherently deficient or unfit for the profession.

Martin and Marsh (2009) define academic resilience as "a student's capacity to overcome acute or chronic adversities that are seen as major assaults on educational processes" (p. 353). Counselor education asks students to invest themselves fully as human beings (e.g., their capacity for warmth, congruence, respect, non-judgment) during the learning process. The counseling work itself asks counselors to adjust their behavior and interventions on an ongoing basis following clients' feedback (Norcross, 2011).

Eleonora Bartoli, **Michael T. Morrow**, and **Adam M. Levy**, Department of Psychology, Arcadia University, Glenside, PA; **Alexandra Mamolou**, Non-Public School Services Department, CORA Services, Inc., Philadelphia, PA; **Lisa Brutko**, Career Coach and Owner, Find Your Start, Eagleville, PA; **Emily P. Cox**, Direct Services Department, Women Organized Against Rape, Philadelphia, PA; **Stacey J. Herreid-Halstead**, Addiction Treatment, Rise Above, King of Prussia, PA. Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Eleonora Bartoli, Arcadia University, Department of Psychology, 450 South Easton Road, Glenside, PA, 19038, (e-mail: bartolie@arcadia.edu).

Therefore, it appears important that counseling students not simply to withstand, but actually thrive through personal transformation, *both* during graduate work *and* in their counseling careers. To do so, students must learn to embrace and work with feedback (whether from faculty or clients) that might challenge their self-efficacy. In our program, we have witnessed how not doing so negatively impacts both students' academic learning and their work with clients.

Research shows that one's beliefs about the nature of one's intelligence, thought of as innate or acquired, is related to one's self-efficacy (Greene, Miller, Crowson, Duke, & Akey, 2004). Dweck's (2000) work on theories of intelligence describes a direct relationship between what she calls a "growth mindset" and higher self-efficacy (Komarraju, & Nadler, 2013; Niiya, Crocker, & Bartmess, 2004), meaning that if one believes that they can develop their intelligence, they also believe that they will succeed at a given task. Therefore, grounding counselor education students in a growth mindset might enhance their academic resilience. In other words, students' belief that they can further develop their intelligence (whether emotional, analytical, or other) during graduate work—even when doing so is anxiety provoking—might allow them to persist through the personal transformation process required in learning counseling skills. The following section is a review of Dweck's theories of intelligence and their impact on students' resilience to academic tasks. Dweck's theories, and their correlates, were then used in a counselor education program as the framework to assess and intervene on challenges to counseling students' academic resilience.

Mindset in the Making of a Counselor

Dweck (1986) described people's attitudes regarding the plasticity of their own intelligence using two different theories of intelligence: "entity" (henceforth referred to as "fixed" mindset) and "incremental" (henceforth referred to as "growth" mindset). People with a fixed mindset believe that their intelligence is an inflexible trait that they cannot influence, whereas people with a growth mindset believe that their intelligence is malleable (or plastic) and can therefore change based on their effort and environment. Theories of intelligence have been found to be related to a number of variables in addition to self-efficacy, such as education goals (Dweck, 2000), anxiety (Jain & Dowson, 2009), and contingent self-worth (Niiya et al., 2004).

Individuals' theories of intelligence inform their educational goals, or goal choice. Dweck (2000) categorizes the goals of people with a fixed mindset as "performance goals", and goals of those with a growth mindset as "learning goals" or "mastery goals". Performance goals are focused on demonstrating competence by receiving favorable evaluation (e.g., a good grade) and avoiding critical judgment altogether. Conversely, mastery goals reflect the desire to acquire new knowledge and skills without concern of evaluation or comparison to peers. Students with a growth mindset are more likely than students with a fixed mindset to report seeking a challenging task that they might fail at, but also learn from (Dweck, Chiu, & Hong, 1995).

In counselor education programs, students with a fixed mindset may interpret instructors' feedback as indication that they have innate and unchangeable deficits (e.g., poor interpersonal skills). Such an interpretation could discourage them from participating in learning activities (e.g., role-plays) or make them doubt their fitness for the program or profession. Yet, students with a growth mindset may interpret the same feedback as a growth opportunity, which may motivate them to fully engage with their program. By doing so, these students may feel more hopeful about their future as counselors and persist through the learning process.

Students' theories of intelligence and goal orientation have also been linked to self-efficacy, which in turn appears inversely related to academic anxiety. For instance, high school students with more mastery-oriented goals exhibited higher levels of classroom self-efficacy (Greene et al., 2004; Komarraju & Nadler, 2013), and middle-school students with higher self-efficacy reported lower math anxiety (Jain & Dowson, 2009). Accordingly, the mastery-oriented goals associated with a growth mindset are linked to stronger beliefs of academic agency and less worry of academic failure, which may boost students' engagement and persistence (Komarraju & Nadler, 2013). Such persistence and resilience to academic and clinical challenges is what we are looking for in counseling students as well.

Individuals' theories of intelligence also impact the type of responses to negative academic feedback. Individuals with a fixed mindset tend to translate criticism as personal judgment. For example, following exposure to a hypothetical scenario about receiving negative feedback for a class presentation, college students with a fixed mindset were more likely than students with a growth mindset to "indict their whole self, saying that they would feel worthless, they would feel like losers, or they would feel like total failures" (Dweck, 2000, p. 46). Therefore, theories of intelligence seem to interact with individuals' academic contingent self-worth [i.e., the extent to which a person's self-appraisal is linked to their academic performance (Crocker, Luhtanen, Cooper, & Bouvrette, 2003)] and affect their reactions to academic failures.

Further, Niiya et al. (2004) found that individuals with high academic contingent self-worth were less likely to experience lower self-esteem and negative affect following a failure when primed with a growth mindset statement as opposed to a fixed mindset statement. Thus, a growth mindset appears to buffer some students (i.e., those whose self-worth largely stems from academics) from the impact of negative academic events. Because counseling students are asked to embody the skills they are learning (e.g., empathy), they might be even more likely to react to faculty's critiques or feedback by devaluing themselves as individuals. In their case, then, holding a growth mindset may be particularly helpful.

Mindset in Counselor Education Programs

Dweck's date theories of intelligence have been applied to numerous educational contexts to enhance students' academic persistence and performance, but seldom to graduate school settings, and to date there is no evidence of its use in counselor education settings. However, as argued above, it might be especially important for counseling students to ground their learning experience in a growth mindset, leading to mastery (versus performance) goals. Therefore, in the current pilot study, the mindset of students in a counselor education program was assessed with the aim of identifying and then intervening on possible barriers to learning.

An initial needs assessment was conducted to examine the extent to which each theory of intelligence, and their correlates (e.g., self-efficacy, contingency self-worth), were present among the students. This needs assessment allowed the authors to identify specific areas that might hinder students' resilience to the challenges of counseling training. Subsequently, the authors designed, delivered, and evaluated a training program targeting the identified areas of need. Generally speaking, we expected a significant portion of our students to endorse a fixed mindset and its correlates, as described in the literature.

Needs Assessment

Method

Participants. All students enrolled in one Northeast counselor education program were invited to participate in the needs assessment; 40 students (54.05% of total enrolled students) volunteered to complete the measures. Participants were not asked to report their gender because only 11% of the students in the program at the time of the study were men, thus reporting gender could identify a participant (in the context of other demographic data collected, e.g., GPA, age). For the same reason, participants were also not asked to report other standard demographic variables (e.g., ethnic background); given the relative homogeneity of the student body at the time, this information would not allow participants to remain anonymous. The program exclusively offers a master's degree; at the time of the needs assessment, about 80% of the student body was pursuing a mental health counseling degree of at least 60 credits, while 20% was pursuing a school counseling degree of at least 48 credits.

Participants' ages ranged from 22 to 57 years (M = 30.68), and they had completed between 3 and 57 course credits (M = 27.77). Forty-seven and a half percent of participants reported attending the program full-time and 52.50% part-time (at the time, exactly half of the overall student body attended the program full-time and half part-time.) Self-reported grade point average (GPA) ranged from 3.05 to 4.00 (N = 31, M = 3.67, SD = .24). About two thirds of students (76.92%) reported taking time off between their undergraduate and current graduate studies (N = 39, M = 6.10 years off; range = 1 to 30 years off), while 23.08% transitioned to graduate school immediately after completing their undergraduate studies. Four participants reported taking time off between two master's degrees (descriptive statistics are not provided for any group with less than five participants to avoid identifying students). Finally, 51.28% of participants reported that they had worked or currently work in mental health settings.

Measures. Participants were asked to complete a brief demographic questionnaire, which asked about participants' age, number of credits completed in the program, full-time vs. part-time status, cumulative Grade Point Average, years of experience in the field, whether they were currently working in the field, and whether they took time off between their bachelor's and master's program. Participants also completed a series of measures, for a total of 52 items. First, they completed Dweck's (2000) Theories of Intelligence Scale, which has demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency (Blackwell, Trzesniewski, & Dweck, 2007), convergence with an alternate measure of implicit theories (Dweck et al., 1995), discriminant validity, and sensitivity to experimental manipulation (Dweck, 2000). Second, participants completed Dweck's (2000) Goal Choice Questionnaire, which has been found to correlate in expected ways with the Theories of Intelligence Scale. Third, participants completed the Perceived Ability subscale of an Academic Self-Efficacy measure with high internal consistency and a strong factor structure (Greene et al.,

2004; Miller, Greene, Montalvo, Ravindran, & Nichols, 1996). Fourth, Spielberger's (1983) State-Trait Anxiety Index for Adults was completed; these scales have been well-validated by evidencing high internal consistency and appropriate test-retest reliability (i.e., high for trait and low for state); the trait inventory has converged with several other validated anxiety scales and was found to distinguish clinical and nonclinical populations. Fifth, participants answered one item assessing Academic Enjoyment; limited psychometric information was available for this item; however, it appears sensitive to experimental manipulations of mindset (Aronson, Fried, & Good, 2002). Finally, participants completed the Academic Competence subscale of the Academic Contingencies of Self-Worth Scale (Crocker et al., 2003); the full scale has an adequate factor structure, and the subscale has satisfactory internal consistency and reasonably high test-retest reliability. With one exception, all of the multi-item scales evidenced satisfactory internal consistency in this study (α = .70-.94). The alpha for the Goal Choice Questionnaire (.67) fell just below the typical cutoff of .70.

Results

Descriptive Statistics. For the Theories of Intelligence scale (*M* = 27.78; *SD* = 6.90), higher scores indicate a fixed mindset and lower scores indicate a growth mindset (possible range of 8 to 48). Notably, 45.90% of the sample scored between 29 and 48, revealing that just under half tended to endorse a fixed mindset and just over half tended to endorse a growth mindset. The Goal Choice scale includes three rating-scale items that were summed for a possible range of 3 to 18 (*M* = 12.08; *SD* = 2.34); for this scale, higher scores indicate preference for mastery goals (related to a growth mindset) and lower scores indicate preference for performance goals (related to a fixed mindset). On average, participants endorsed preference for mastery goals on these items. The fourth Goal Choice item was forced-choice with two options (1 = performance goal; 2 = mastery goal); 35% of participants chose preferring a performance goal, and 60% chose preferring a mastery goal (with the remaining 5% not answering this question). On the measure of Academic Self-Efficacy (*M* = 21.35; *SD* = 2.82), higher scores indicate a weaker belief in academic self-efficacy (possible range of 7 to 28). About half of the participants reported concern about their ability to succeed in the program (by disagreeing or strongly disagreeing to statements such as "I am sure about my ability to do the assignments in this program").

Possible scores for both state and trait anxiety ranged from 20 to 80, with higher scores indicating greater anxiety. Participants' scores on both scales were compared to normative data for women aged 19 to 39 years (Spielberger, 1983; as noted earlier, we did not collect data on participants' gender; thus, we chose this norm as a reference given that the program was comprised of about 90% women) via a one-sample *t* test. Relative to this norm group, participants scored

significantly higher in state anxiety (*M* = 43.24; *SD* = 11.24), $t(32) = 3.615$, $p = .001$, and in trait anxiety (*M* = 42.06; *SD* = 10.68), $t(32) = 3.179$, $p = .003$.

Academic Enjoyment (*M* = 5.93; *SD* = .78) was measured on a scale of 1 to 7 with higher scores indicating greater enjoyment. On average, participants reported high levels of academic enjoyment. Finally, Academic Contingent Self-Worth (*M* = 5.77; *SD* = .82) could range from 1 to 7. Higher scores indicate that self-worth is more contingent on academic success. In general, participants reported that their global self-worth is dependent upon their academic success.

Demographic Differences. When potential student demographic differences were explored, one difference was observed for student age. Younger participants evidenced higher academic self-efficacy than older students ($r = -.355$, $p = .031$). In addition, participants with experience working in a mental health setting (n = 18) displayed lower levels of academic self-efficacy than those with no work experience in the field (*n* = 18), $t(34) = 2.659$, $p = .01$. No other demographic differences were detected for any other measure.

Outcome of Needs Assessment

The sample was fairly evenly split between students endorsing each theory of intelligence. Further, the students in this sample demonstrated somewhat low academic self-efficacy, which was even lower for older students and students who worked in the field. It's not unusual for older students to doubt, at least initially, their ability to re-kindle their academic skills (Mercer, 2010). Older students might also experience greater pressure to succeed quickly, as they may feel that they have less time to practice their profession before retirement. However, it was surprising to find that students who worked in the field had lower academic self-efficacy as well. Should the result not be simply an artifact of our sample, it could be related to students heightened awareness of clients' needs (often a motivation for seeking additional training), and therefore of the discrepancy between their perceived pace of learning and the ultimate desired outcome.

Academic contingent self-worth scores were generally high as well, suggesting that students' global self-appraisals were dependent upon their success in

academic tasks. Finally, both trait and state anxiety were higher than comparative norms. Therefore, the four areas of need associated with students' resilience to learning were: *fixed mindset*, low *academic self-efficacy*, high *anxiety*, and high *academic contingent self-worth*. The next section describes the development, delivery, and assessment of a pilot training program addressing these four areas.

Development, Delivery, and Assessment of Intervention

Method

The research team reviewed existing interventions that were found (i) effective to address each area of need identified above, (ii) manageable (in length and depth), and (iii) appropriate for delivery in an academic program (as opposed to a clinical setting). This literature review led to the development of a training program divided into three modules, each focusing on one or more areas of need identified in the initial assessment: (module 1) theories of intelligence/academic self-efficacy (teaching theories of intelligence has been found effective to address both areas); (module 2) self-compassion (as an antidote to the evaluative nature of contingent self-worth, as described by Neff, 2011; Neff, Hseih, & Dejitthirat, 2005); and (module 3) mindfulness (which has been found effective not only to reduce anxiety, but also to enhance self-efficacy in academic challenging context, as described in Hanley, Palejwala, Hanley, Canto, & Garland, 2015).

To assess the impact of the training, students were asked to complete several measures (assessing theories of intelligence, academic self-efficacy, state anxiety, academic contingency self-worth, and self-compassion) immediately before and after the program was delivered. Before and after each module, they were also asked to answer several questions to assess changes in knowledge, attitudes, and/or intentions related to the content of the training. Each module included some skill practice; however, skills are usually acquired over time. Therefore, the effectiveness of the training program in promoting skill acquisition was not assessed directly, but extrapolated from the literature. While the effectiveness of compassion and mindfulness relies on repeated practice, mindset training itself has been shown to be longitudinally effective [e.g., Blackwell et al. (2007) utilized a knowledge-based growth mindset workshop to positively change students' academic behavior up to one-year post-intervention.]

Procedures and Participants

All students enrolled in the same counselor education program surveyed during the needs assessment were invited to participate in the training program. Eleven matriculated students (about 12% of the student body at the time) attended the training. Given the small and personal nature of the training, demographic data were not collected. The training program was delivered over three hours by one recent graduate and three advanced graduate students (all part of the research team), with no faculty or staff present.

Training Curriculum

The details of the modules were developed by the advanced graduate students and the recent graduate on the research team (in collaboration with the first author), to ensure that each module was tailored to, and infused with, students' experiences.

Module 1: Mindset. The first module aimed at teaching students about theories of intelligence, with the intent to boost their academic self-efficacy. Mindset training is primarily content/lecture driven; the authors embedded in it examples from students' experiences. To begin with, participants were given the following case scenario:

> "This is your third semester in the program. You have received As and Bs on all of your assignments so far. You are taking two classes this semester and working 15 hours per week. You turn in a rough draft on a paper and get positive feedback from the professor with a few suggestions for edits. Later, you turn in your final draft and one week after that you get your assignment grade. It's a D."

Students were then asked to answer confidentially the following question on a piece of paper: "What do you think and feel about yourself, about the professor, about the class, and about the program?" The responses were shared by the presenter and general themes were identified.

Next, the presenter played a short video describing research evidence for neuroplasticity and potential growth of intelligence. The presenter then defined "growth" and "fixed" mindsets (Dweck, 2010) and asked the group to classify the themes from their original responses into each category. Research findings about the potential academic benefits of a "growth" mindset were also discussed. Finally, participants were given a worksheet titled, "Talk Back with a Growth Mindset," to practice restructuring "fixed"-oriented thoughts into "growth"-oriented thoughts.

Module 2: Self-compassion. Training in self-

compassion was meant to address academic contingent self-worth, as self-compassion highlights the importance of viewing oneself more broadly than a single outcome or set of skills, and not simply from an evaluative standpoint (Neff, 2011; Neff et al., 2005). Research shows that self-compassion is positively correlated with feeling connected and optimistic people who practice self-compassion also report lower levels of anxiety and depressive symptoms (Breines & Chen, 2012; Neff, 2009). During this module, the presenter defined self-compassion (as the act of "treating ourselves with the same kindness, caring, and compassion we would show to a good friend"; Neff, 2011), described its usefulness personally and professionally (particularly in managing difficult internal and external experiences, and in building resilience to learning from challenges and failures; Neff, 2009), and taught skills to practice self-compassion (e.g., turning negative thoughts related to an aversive experience into more compassionate statements, while identifying strategies to relieve the negative physical and emotional responses associated with the aversive experience). Self-compassion was clearly distinguished from self-indulgence, which leads individuals to avoid or "brush off", versus confront and grow through, adversity (Breines & Chen, 2012; Neff et al., 2005). Participants were also asked to compare how they respond to a friend who is struggling with a difficult experience, to how they typically respond to themselves when facing academic challenges. This was done not simply to underscore the discrepancy in participants' behavior toward a friend and themselves, but also to highlight participants' competence in being compassionate.

Module 3: Mindfulness. Practicing mindfulness facilitates emotion regulation and time management by increasing awareness of one's cognitions, affect, and motivations (Stahl & Goldstein, 2010). Mindfulness has been found to promote life satisfaction (Hülsheger, Alberts, Feinholdt, & Lang, 2013) and decrease anxiety (e.g., Collard, Avny, & Boniwell, 2008; Fulton & Cashwell, 2015). This module began with presenters defining mindfulness as "the practice of cultivating nonjudgmental awareness in everyday life" (Stahl & Goldstein, 2010, Introduction section, para 2). Presenters also described Nilsson's (2014) four dimensions of mindfulness: physical (approaching the body's various states with heightened sensory attention), mental (noticing non-judgmentally one's thoughts and feelings, allowing them to pass), social (cultivating empathy and compassion for oneself and others), and existential (acknowledging that we are constantly changing, as do the life meanings we construct).

Participants were then invited to consider how mindfulness can support the acquisition of counseling skills, such as empathy and compassion (Fulton & Cashwell, 2015), the use of "external skills" (e.g., validating statements) and "internal skills" (e.g., attention and presence), as well as attending to one's countertransference reactions. Without these skills, counselors exhibit more apprehension in session, along with less self-efficacy, openness to learning, and effectiveness in their actual counseling performance (Greason & Cashwell, 2009). The module concluded with a brief body scan (i.e., bringing one's attention to different parts of the body to practice present-moment awareness), as an example of a mindfulness practice.

Measures

To evaluate the effectiveness of the training program, immediately before and after the training program, participants were asked to complete a subset of measures from the needs assessment [i.e., The Theories of Intelligence Scale (Dweck, 2000), the measure of Academic Self-efficacy (Greene et al., 2004), The State (but not Trait) Anxiety Index for Adults (Spielberger, 1983), and the Academic Contingencies of Self-Worth Scale (Crocker et al., 2003)], as well as the Short Form of the Self-Compassion Scale (Raes, Pommier, Neff, & Van Gucht, 2011), which has demonstrated adequate internal consistency and has been found to correlate nearly perfectly with the Long Form. Participants' scores were expected to change from pre- to post-training on all variables, with the exception of self-compassion, which is conceptualized as a relatively stable trait. Nonetheless, the researchers were interested in testing whether even a brief training could yield a positive trend in this construct.

Before and after each module, participants were asked to answer several content-based questions to assess their knowledge, attitudes, and/or intentions about key concepts from the training. Three separate five-item measures were created to evaluate each module. Items for Module 1 asked participants to explain the difference between a fixed and a growth mindset, estimate the extent to which research suggests benefits for a growth mindset, and rate their ability to identify when they exhibited one mindset or the other. The items for Module 2 asked participants to rate how familiar they were with the personal and professional applications of self-compassion, how familiar they were with specific ways to monitor and practice self-compassion, and their intention to practice self-compassion in the future. The items for Module 3 asked participants to select the correct definition of mindfulness, rate how familiar they were with specific mindfulness practices, rate how useful they believed mindfulness practices to be both personally and

professionally, and indicate how likely they were to practice mindfulness in the future.

Results

To evaluate change in the variables from pre- to post-training, we performed paired-samples *t* tests. Arguments have been posed against using *t* tests with small samples, such as the current sample (N = 11). However, simulation studies suggest that it is generally acceptable to use paired-sample *t* tests with small and even extremely small samples (e.g., N < 5). Specifically, Type 1 error rates do not appear inflated when testing small samples, but power is sacrificed in cases where effect sizes are not particularly large (de Winter, 2013). Since it is difficult to estimate the effect sizes for the variables in this study, particularly for the measures developed specifically for this project, adequate power may be lacking for some analyses. Effect sizes (Cohen's d_z) were also computed for each comparison (Lakens, 2013; Rosenthal, 1991). Effect sizes for all pre-post comparisons are presented in Table 1, and effect sizes for significant findings are described next following Cohen's (1992) guidelines.

Several significant pre-to-post differences were found, and the size of each significant effect was large in magnitude. As seen in Table 1, significant changes were found for Theories of Intelligence, Academic Self-Efficacy, and State Anxiety. Academic Contingent Self-Worth also decreased; this effect was medium in size and marginally significant (p = .07). Self-Compassion did not change significantly. Participants' ratings for all five Module 1 (mindset) items increased; however, only one (how much research suggests benefits for a growth mindset) changed significantly. Participants' ratings for all six Module 2 (self-compassion) items increased significantly. Participants' ratings for four Module 3 (mindfulness) items increased, three of which increased significantly: familiarity with mindfulness practices and how useful mindfulness was both personally and professionally (rated separately). The increase for the fourth item (intention to practice mindfulness in the future) was small-to-medium in magnitude and marginally significant (p = .09). One Module 3 item is categorical (0 = incorrect answer, viewing mindfulness as a way to accomplish a specific behavioral goal; 1 = correct answer, viewing mindfulness as the ability to pay attention to the present without judgment). To evaluate change in this item, McNemar's chi-square test for paired categorical data was conducted. Significantly more participants endorsed the correct answer at post than at pre (p = .004).

Outcome of Intervention

Overall, the findings suggest that the training positively impacts the areas of need identified in the initial needs assessment. Participants who completed the training program evidenced increases in growth mindset and academic self-efficacy, along with decreases in academic contingent self-worth and state anxiety. Such findings are consistent with previous research outcomes for comparable interventions (Dweck, 1986; Greason & Cashwell, 2009; Neff et al., 2005; Niiya et al., 2004). In addition, participants displayed increased knowledge and familiarity with the material presented for further practice.

Discussion

The results of this study demonstrate the potential for counselor educators to develop training programs, based on their students' specific needs, that enhance areas of knowledge connected to academic resilience. A fixed mindset and its correlates were found to be relevant and potentially detrimental concepts among students in a counselor education program, and a pilot training program was found helpful in addressing this difficulty. It is crucial for programs to find ways to identify challenges to, and then facilitate, students' learning. Counselor education students not only look for programs to provide the courses and experiences they need to achieve licensure or certification; they also need programs to provide them with the supportive context and specific tools to *transform* themselves into professional counselors.

Excellence in counseling does not simply rely on the accurate application of a set of interventions, but is embedded in a way of being. In fact, counselors' ability to create strong therapeutic relationships (via empathic attunement, positive regard, congruence/genuineness, for instance) accounts for up to 30% of the effectiveness of treatments (Norcross, 2011). These same relational qualities are essential to the appropriate delivery of specific interventions. In this context, supporting the development of the *whole* student should be a key aspect of all counselor education programs.

The question then becomes how to craft, deliver, and assess co-curricular experiences most appropriate to support the personal growth of students, so that they may persist through the process of developing interpersonal (and not simply knowledge-based) counseling skills. This project focused on enhancing skills associated with academic resilience. Depending on the needs of a program's unique student population, the needs addressed and co-curricular experiences developed might differ. Whatever the focus of the training, ideally it would create a common language and culture within the program for both faculty and students to lean on in challenging moments.

It is important to remember that students' needs are

impacted by a number of factors, including sociopolitical and demographic characteristics. Therefore, students' needs should be assessed considering the characteristics of a program's student body in the context of the faculty, staff, and institution they interact with. For example, students of color, students from working class backgrounds, or older students, might experience various degrees of stereotype threat simply by virtue of attending a primarily White institution, being first generation college students, or being in class with students with more recent academic experiences (Steele, 2010). Stereotype threat increases students' anxiety in situations in which they might fear being perceived in stereotypical ways, solely based on their race, class background, or other marginalized identity. Stereotype threat impairs students' performance by diverting cognitive functions from the task at hand to disproving the stereotype. In some contexts, then, assessing the potential role and impact of stereotype threat (in addition to, or instead of, mindset) would be important.

Further, the interventions considered by a counselor education program should match the cultural preferences of its student body. For instance, mindfulness skills might be more appealing to women or might be less welcomed by students who might view them as attempts to steer them towards specific spiritual practices. The language and examples used in the training should reflect the realities of students' lives—depending on social class or geographical location. Further, theories of intelligence fit an individualistic Western worldview, and might not be as applicable to, or effective for, students who hold collectivist views. Thus, the results of this study are probably most relevant to a female, White, middle-class, suburban population (the predominant demographic layout of the program in question).

The current project has additional limitations that warrant attention. First, this study was embedded in the daily operation of a counselor education program and followed a single-sample pre-post design; thus, it lacked both random assignment and a comparison group. Accordingly, it is not possible to draw conclusions about causal effects of the training program. Second, while the assessment project was developed on the basis of consistent concerns expressed by faculty, administrators, and students over a number of years, the students who completed the needs assessment were not necessarily the same students who attended the training program. Third, the number of participants who attended the training program was quite small, as the training was framed to students as new and optional, rather than a requirement of the program. Therefore, the positive pre-to-post training results should be considered as preliminary. Fourth, the content-based measures for each module were novel scales developed specifically for this study; thus, they lacked previous psychometric assessment. Accordingly, these measures' findings should be interpreted cautiously, pending evaluation of their reliability and validity.

Further, even though this project was designed to identify and address needs in one program, future research on building students' resilience in counselor education programs should include multiple institutions with similar concerns, as it is likely that there is overlap in the challenges experienced by students across programs, given the very nature of the field and the training. A larger multi-site study would provide additional data across contexts and potentially lead to the development and refinement of more effective training. Such a larger study would grant the opportunity to investigate additional demographics variables without the risk of compromising confidentiality. Variables such as race/ethnicity, religious/spiritual background, or socioeconomic status might influence mindset, anxiety management strategies, the effectiveness and relevance of given interventions (e.g., mindfulness), as well as the exact nature of academic difficulties. Finally, although the current training yielded some immediate positive results, its long-term effects as well as its impact on actual students' learning are not clear. The implementation of any training should include ongoing assessment to evaluate its impact over time and determine needed modifications to maximize effectiveness.

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Table 1

Paired-Sample Tests of Pre-to-Post Changes

Comparison of Pre and Post Variables	*n*	df	*t*	*SE*	d_z
Theory of Intelligence	11	10	3.59**	.22	1.08
Academic Self-Efficacy	11	10	3.95**	.06	1.19
Post State Anxiety	11	10	2.91*	.08	0.88
Self-Compassion	11	10	-.65	.13	-0.20
Academic Contingent Self-Worth	11	10	2.06	.26	0.62
Mindset 1: Difference between fixed and growth mindset	11	10	-1.66	.27	-0.50
Mindset 2: Research support for fixed mindset	10	9	1.56	.77	0.49
Mindset 3: Research support for growth mindset	10	9	-6.03***	.35	-1.91
Mindset 4: Ability to identify when using fixed mindset	11	10	-1.27	.93	-0.38
Mindset 5: Ability to identify when using growth mindset	11	10	-1.61	.85	-0.49
Self-Compassion 1: Familiarity with concept of self-compassion	11	10	-4.22**	.39	-1.27
Self-Compassion 2: Familiarity with personal applications of self-compassion	11	10	-4.49**	.53	-1.35
Self-Compassion 3: Familiarity with professional applications of self-compassion	11	10	-3.03*	.66	-0.91
Self-Compassion 4: Familiarity with ways to monitor self-compassion	11	10	-5.85***	.62	-1.76
Self-Compassion 5: Familiarity with the practice of self-compassion	11	10	-3.82**	.79	-1.15
Self-Compassion 6: Plan to practice self-compassion	11	10	-2.32*	.78	-0.70
Mindful 2: Familiarity with specific mindfulness practices	11	10	-3.83**	.28	-1.15
Mindful 3: Belief in personal usefulness of mindfulness	11	10	-4.35**	.25	-1.31
Mindful 4: Belief in professional usefulness of mindfulness	11	10	-3.18*	.34	-0.96
Mindful 5: Likelihood of practicing mindfulness in the future	11	10	-1.88	.34	-0.57

Note. df. is degrees of freedom. *t* is *t* statistic. *SE* is standard error of the mean difference. d_z = Cohen's effect size for paired samples. Mindful 1 is a dichotomous variable, and its analysis is described in the text. ***$p < .001$. **$p < .01$. *$p < .05$.