Helping Clients Deal with Grief and Loss

by Brandon Hunt, Associate Professor of Counselor Education, Penn State

Loss is a universal human condition occurring throughout life and it comes in multiple forms. Clients and counselors themselves experience grief and loss due to changes in life roles, loss of ability, loss of employment, the ending of a relationship, or death of a loved one. No one is immune, yet at the time of loss we are often unsure what to do or how to help.

Factors that Influence Grief

How people work through the grieving process—and it’s called grief work for a reason—depends on a number of factors. Personality has a big influence. Typically quiet people don’t talk much about their loss while people who anger easily are the same way when they grieve. Previous loss experiences impact how much loss is experienced, what coping strategies and supports were available during past grieving periods, and how acceptable it was to grieve that loss. For example, the death of a dog that was a family member for 14 years is a tremendous loss, but people don’t always get a lot of support when a companion animal dies. Family and cultural values and rules also influence how much and what kind of support is provided from others during periods of grief.

Developmental stage in life can have a significant effect on grief. Some adults may have difficulty talking about previous losses if those losses occurred when the person was acquiring language. And someone who is 82 generally knows multiple people who have died recently, but multiple recent deaths can be a surprise and shock for someone who is 42 or 22. (Continued on page 2)
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Grief and Loss
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The nature of the loss can influence the grieving process in a number of ways. Having a romantic relationship end, for example, because one person had an affair is very different from a situation where both people decided they wanted to end the relationship due to having grown apart. Experiencing the loss of a limb is also a very different experience if it is amputated as a result of cancer compared to someone stepping on a land mine during combat duty.

Grief and Loss Reactions

Being aware of their grief reactions is the essential first step in helping someone normalize their experience. Common emotional reactions include sadness, anger, guilt, shock, fear, and yearning. Behavioral reactions include changes in sleep and eating patterns, sighing, restlessness, alcohol, and other drug misuse or abuse, and carrying around objects related to the loss. Cognitive reaction may appear as being absent-minded, preoccupied, or confused. Physical reactions can include feeling hollow inside, weak muscles, lack of energy, crying, feeling short of breath, and if the loss is related to the death of a loved one, people may sense the presence of the deceased person. Spiritual reactions can include anger at God, depending on the deceased person.

Counseling Strategies

Many strategies can help in grief counseling, but here are a few that I and others have found most helpful.

Listen with your heart. Don’t try to “fix” the person’s pain. It’s not possible. Instead, be as present as possible and pay attention to what the person is telling you in the moment.

Give permission to talk. Many times people need to tell their story of loss more times than the people in their life want to hear it. You may have heard your client’s story of losing all her material possessions in a tornado many times, but she may need to tell it again as part of her grieving and healing process.

Accept expressions of feeling without censoring. You may not like that the client is enraged with her mother for dying, but her anger needs to be expressed and the only place she may be able to do that is in counseling with you.

Explore dreams. Grieving people often have dreams related to their loss and it is helpful to talk about them. There is no need to interpret client dreams, but instead it is the process of discussing them that is helpful when people desire to do so.

Exploring faith and spirituality of clients is appropriate if you feel comfortable doing so. If you don’t feel comfortable, then make sure your clients have a place to discuss their spirituality outside of counseling.

Suggest reading materials. Some people find reading about similar loss experiences helpful and they may appreciate book suggestions. Just be sure you have read any books you recommend.

Pay attention to significant anniversary dates. Memories of the loss and related grief reactions often reemerge around the date of the loss or some other important date—like the birthday of a child given up for adoption, for example.

Suggest support groups and networks. Some people appreciate the experience of being in groups or connected to others who have had similar loss experiences.

Use a variety of methods to explore thoughts and feelings. Drawing, music, poetry, journaling, guided imagery, and relaxation techniques are common examples as are complimentary therapies like meditation, acupuncture, or yoga.

Attend to cultural influences. Who people are and where they come from means so much. It’s okay to ask clients how grief and loss are addressed in their culture.

Be aware of your own feelings about grief and loss from personal experiences. Self-awareness helps avoid expecting clients to react like we would in a similar situation.

CONDENSED LIST OF SUGGESTED READINGS AND RESOURCES:


“LOVE AND COMPASSION ARE NECESSITIES, NOT LUXURIES. WITHOUT THEM, HUMANITY CANNOT SURVIVE.”

—The Dalai Lama
Penn State Alum Continues Generating School Counseling Innovations

by Jennifer Sharp

In the early 1970s, Dr. Edwin Gerler began working as an elementary school counselor in Millville, Pa. His passion for school counseling led him to Penn State, where he expanded his counseling, teaching, and research skills by completing his doctorate degree in Counselor Education in 1975.

Thirty-plus years later he is still going strong and continuing to break new ground in school counseling.

Gerler, a faculty member at North Carolina State University for over 30 years, continues to be involved in a variety of innovative research opportunities. The journey in counseling is one he reflects on often: “I could not have made a better selection; this has been an exciting, challenging career!”

Talking with Gerler reminds you of how much people can contribute to a profession when they are perceptive, open, and actively engaged in the world around them. This individual’s commitment to counseling and ability to look continually at the world with fresh eyes exemplifies how much personal fulfillment and service to others can result.

Reflections on Trends in Counseling

Gerler’s long career in counselor education provides particularly insightful reflections on how the profession has changed since he accepted his first counseling position. “I have seen movement from an emphasis on preventive and developmental counseling in earlier guidance initiatives, to a more clinical, responsive orientation in school counseling, and now trending back again to a more prevention and developmental focus,” he said. Throughout these changing professional trends, Gerler has remained a strong proponent of training master’s students to be true advocates for preventive, developmental work in schools. “It is the truly unique role for formally trained school counselors,” he noted.

The second trend Gerler has noticed is a much greater emphasis on issues of diversity and multiculturalism. He credits professional organizations such as the Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development, American Counseling Association, and American School Counseling Association, among others, for promoting responsive actions to population and societal changes reflected in the increasing diversity in our country. “A strong commitment to crosscultural counseling has led me to see the world from a multitude of perspectives that demand the fostering of classroom environments in which learning and understanding about one another’s unique cultural experiences are welcomed and celebrated,” said Gerler.

Getting Connected: Technology and Counseling in the 21st Century

Never being fully satisfied with yourself or the world around you is something Gerler sees as critical for his development and of those students he teaches. He says, “Counselors and counselor educators must be forward thinking and continually seeking answers to the question of ‘What is it that I want to do that’s going to take our profession in a direction that will serve people better?’” Gerler’s latest project demonstrates action in exactly that direction by expanding the use of technology in school counseling.

Gerler and his colleague, Dr. Stan Baker (a former Penn State faculty member), are collaborating to develop the school counseling activity network (scan21st.com), which is an innovative technology project designed to help connect school counselors with computer applications relevant to their work. Recently, Gerler also began work funded by a National Science Foundation grant to explore how computer gaming affects students’ interest in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) careers. Currently working with a computer gaming company, Virtual Heroes, (Continued on page 4)
Rho Alpha Mu Provides Support for Students and the Community

by Lauren Robinson, Chapter President

Rho Alpha Mu Chapter of Chi Sigma Iota (CSI) has had a busy year providing professional development, service activities, and social events.

The professional development committee provided three major activities.

The traditional APA workshop presented by Brandon Hunt, associate professor of rehabilitation services, was well attended, and the participants reported that the workshop was very beneficial.

Recognizing increasing concerns about working with transgender individuals—Peggy Lorah, assistant professor of counselor education, gave a presentation that was very helpful in developing understanding of what transgender individuals may go through and how counselors can help.

A doctoral student panel was developed to share its counseling experiences.

The service committee coordinated fundraising for several organizations.

Over $100 in “bail” money was raised for the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

A “penny war” between the students and faculty/staff raised money for breast cancer awareness. The faculty/staff team won!

The Toys for Tots project collected a huge box of toys for children in our community.

A process was begun to work with Big Brothers/Big Sisters to create an event for children who are on the waiting list for a “Big.”

Out of Darkness Walk and the Autism Walk gave a number of members good exercise for good causes.

The social committee hosted a couple of events for tired students.

Bowling Night was such a big hit that there could be a second edition.

A holiday party—the only admission cost was to donate something for Toys for Tots.

The laser tag event produced some interesting and fun social dynamics.

Penn State Alum

Continued from page 3.

the researchers are developing methods for designing scientifically oriented computer games. The ultimate goal of the project is to assist high school students in developing computer games as a senior project and to examine how STEM-related games impact student achievement as well as interest in STEM careers.

Love What You Do

Over such a long and active career, Gerler has produced numerous textbooks, far too lengthy of a list to identify here. Just a sample speaks volumes about his contributions to the profession. He and Baker have co-authored one of the most popular school counseling textbooks, School Counseling in the Twenty-First Century (5th edition). He has published other books, produced numerous professional journal articles, edited major journals, and was the founding editor of the Journal of School Violence.

How does a person do so much, so creatively, for so long? Gerler puts it simply: “I love the work I’ve done in the past and what I am doing now. People and the world are always changing and growing so that as counselors and counselor educators, we have an effect on more people’s daily lives than cancer research does. You just can’t ask for much more excitement about the work of a professional counselor than that.”

Love What You Do

“DARE TO LIVE THE LIFE YOU HAVE DREAMED FOR YOURSELF. GO FORWARD AND MAKE YOUR DREAMS COME TRUE.”
—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Love What You Do

“GREAT EFFORT SPRINGS NATURALLY FROM A GREAT ATTITUDE.” —Pat Riley

The Counselor Education Newsletter April 2009
President Barack Obama’s Inauguration Day brought so many emotions to so many people that the Department’s Diversity Enhancement Committee (DEC) decided to have a meeting for people to discuss their thoughts and feelings. Thirty students and faculty attended the meeting, which was moderated by Keith Wilson (faculty) and Rachael Wix (student).

The meeting kicked off with a review of the range of views that had already been expressed in the media about Barack Obama being elected to the office of U.S. President. These ranged from fairness of questions to the presidential candidates to perceptions of biased media coverage. One example was the following comment from one Web site: “Conservative media analyst Brian Fitzpatrick says the mainstream press has engaged in ‘adulatory worship’ of Democratic presidential frontrunner Barack Obama, heaping praise on the first-term Illinois senator rather than scrutinizing his record and policy positions” (see www.onenewsnow.com/Election2008/Default.aspx?id=67367).

An example of the other side of media coverage talked about the salability of Barack Obama. One particular Web page (no longer available) stated, “It’s been interesting to see how Barack Obama has really captured people’s interest,” says Marc Cowlin, spokesperson for the online retailer cafepress.com. “For the first time ever, wearing a presidential candidate’s face on your T-shirt is cool.”

There were also those in the media who questioned the fairness of questions to Sarah Palin when compared to those asked of Barack Obama. For example, one Web site used the following paraphrased comment about questioning: “Governor Sarah Palin was remembering questions like the last six kings of Swaziland for her interviews. However, Obama only needed to say pleasant things about his parents to be considered presidential” (see smalltalkwith.blogspot.com/2009/01/matt-lauers-guilty.html).

During the meeting, participants expressed their varied opinions and impressions about the election of Barack Obama as the 44th President of the United States. Hope and trust were common themes: “I am glad that he was elected president because he gives us hope for the future.” Another participant commented, “I find renewed trust, as well as a sense of strength, possibility, and community purpose in mutual responsibility through citizenship as we move into this presidency.”

(Continued on page 6)

"BE THE CHANGE YOU WANT TO SEE IN THE WORLD." — Mahatma Gandhi
A desire to delve deeper into the issues this presidency invokes was another theme of participants’ expressions: “We have to be careful not to be lulled to sleep by the accomplishment of Barack Obama. Many have chalked up his success to exceptionalism, that is, President Obama represents the exception for African Americans, not the rule. In many cases the fact still remains that the material reality of many minorities has scarcely changed since the election. This is the discourse I am interested in having, one that pertains to the intersection of race and class in America.”

When one participant brought up the idea of a post-racist society, another responded, “I think that if we attempt to return to the ‘color-blind’ ideals of the 1970s, we are forgetting that many of us have a great deal of pride bound up in our identities as marginalized people.”

Overall, it seems that the purpose of the gathering was met. Students, staff, and faculty came together and voiced a wide variety of opinions about the election of Barack Obama. Hopefully, this is just the beginning of students, staff, and faculty discussing divergent, but important views on issues relevant to our professional development and our society at large. A follow-up from the DEC also indicated that the event was a success.

“\"I HAVE A DREAM THAT ONE DAY THIS NATION WILL RISE UP, LIVE OUT THE TRUE MEANING OF ITS CREED—WE HOLD THESE TRUTHS TO BE SELF-EVIDENT, THAT ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL.\" —Martin Luther King

Kaprea Johnson Wins First-Place Research Award

by Tamara Hinojosa and Jason Gines

Kaprea Johnson, doctoral candidate in Counselor Education, won first place during the 2009 Achievement Conference Research Exhibition, held Feb. 20–21 at the Nittany Lion Inn.

Students who display their work as part of this research conference receive constructive feedback from peers and mentors, as Johnson did on her research titled Career Counseling with Ex-offenders through Liberation and Applying Self Determination Theory (SDT) to Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT).

Johnson pointed out that in 2002 over 600,000 individuals left state and federal prisons to return to communities across the United States. Many of these individuals have emotional problems, limited work experience, social skills, and support. “I have worked with ex-offenders who have axis one and two diagnosis who told horrendous stories of maltreatment and discrimination when it comes to career counseling,” said Johnson. “These experiences brought me to the conclusion that there should be a model of career counseling for ex-offenders that is holistic and addresses core concerns of social and emotional issues along with specific career concerns related to stigma, employability, and readiness.”

Self-determination theory emphasizes building autonomy, relatedness, and connectedness, which makes an ex-offender feel like a person again. Johnson related that, “as simple as it sounds, feeling like somebody leads to feeling like you can accomplish anything despite barriers, and this is a particular problem for most ex-offenders.”

The liberation process is a key aspect of Johnson’s proposal—anyone who is oppressed mentally, physically, or emotionally will not be ready for positive interventions. Because the prison system creates a stigma for ex-offenders, “they can be viewed as an oppressed group, and the liberation process is needed to free a person from the resulting oppressed mind-set,” said Johnson.

Johnson notes that this model also has potential value for others who can be considered oppressed. “People with disabilities, minorities, LGBT people, abused and battered women, and juvenile offenders are examples of others who can develop an oppressed mindset,” she said. “These are other groups that I would like to work more with in the future.”

The conference theme was Outside the Box, Beyond the Book: Strategies for Learning. It is designed to foster relationships among juniors, seniors, and graduate students of color, along with faculty and administrators in order to provide across-campus research exposure and potential collaboration opportunities.

Congratulations Kaprea on this recognition of scholarship excellence and the willingness to share it with others!
Improving Quality of Life of People Living with HIV/AIDS through Understanding Vocational Development and Employment Needs

by Paul Datti

Most individuals with chronic illnesses and disabilities find challenges when considering work and training options, but people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) often have additional challenges to consider.

Beyond dealing with developing vocational skills and interests, functional limitations, and the devastating impact of the economy on employment opportunities, PLWHA often have the added concerns of pervasive HIV-related stigma, negotiating episodic health problems, and a significant lack of specialized vocational services to address their complex needs. The vast majority of PLWHA are also poor and face structural barriers (poor education, unstable housing, unemployment), which may fuel the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Many PLWHA receive medical and case-management services from AIDS Service Organizations (ASOs), which are logical places to integrate vocational development and employment services. However, their main federal funding source, the Ryan White Care Act, prohibits the use of funds for such services. While state vocational rehabilitation programs may be a viable option for some, issues such as lack of eligibility, awareness of the services, HIV stigma, and discomfort with disclosure of HIV status often inhibit many from using them.

It is these and other HIV/AIDS-related needs that Liza Conyers, associate professor of rehabilitation, is exploring in her current research. A successful study involving an online survey on the employment needs of PLWHA in 2004 has lead to a larger national survey titled the National Working Positive Coalition’s Vocational Development and Employment Needs Survey, funded by a National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research Mary Switzer Fellowship.

The project came to fruition through Conyers’ involvement with the National Working Positive Coalition (NWPC), a coalition of people living with HIV, researchers, educators, service providers, and advocates committed to improving the financial and personal well-being of individuals who have the disease. Conyers helped establish the coalition in 2003, is the chairperson of its research working group, and along other members of the NWPC recently wrote a memo to President Obama’s transition team, outlining key employment-related concerns of PLWHA (see www.workingpositive.net).

Conyers started the current project by coordinating focus groups of HIV-positive people of color and women across the country to ask about their specific vocational and training needs and experiences. The survey takes about 20–30 minutes to complete, is available in paper and Internet formats, and has been translated into Spanish. Respondents to the survey receive information on resources to assist with their vocational development. (Continued on page 8)
Outreach efforts are in full force by Conyers and about a dozen Penn State students who make up her research team. Organizations across the country are providing data and receiving support from Conyers, who provides response summaries specific to their agency. The survey is already getting nationwide recognition, and many agencies and organizations have come on board with the desire to utilize their response summaries to address critical unmet vocational development needs of their consumers. Conyers’ work has also created requests for her collaboration with the Positive Women’s Network to address the specific employment challenges of HIV-positive women, and the New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute to examine specific policy recommendations for the state.

Asked about important aspects of this topic that counselors should consider, Conyers stated, “From a multicultural perspective, we need to consider structural and cultural issues that clients face in addition to individual aspects, since many counselors attribute the spread of HIV exclusively to individual behaviors. While individual behaviors are critical, it is important to also consider the structural and cultural dynamics that fuel the epidemic and be actively involved in advocacy and research designed to improve the lives of our clients.

“Counselors who work to alleviate social injustice and poverty issues are already making contributions to HIV/AIDS prevention, since these issues are so closely related,” continued Conyers. “This includes school counselors and faculty who do research to improve educational outcomes of elementary and secondary students or who research at-risk teens.”

Conyers added that, “Last but not least, it is important to reflect on how you may be promoting or alleviating HIV-related stigma. Each of us needs to examine our own thoughts, words, and deeds regarding HIV/AIDS and what affect they may have. We all need to become more educated about the issues and find assertive ways to combat discrimination faced by those most affected.”

Paul Datti
Receives Pennsylvania Counseling Association Outstanding Student Award

Paul is completing his Ph.D. in Counselor Education and has previous experience as a rehabilitation counselor and as an instructor. Just a few of the many nominators’ statements provide a small sample of the unique aspects of Paul’s achievements while at Penn State.

“Paul is an exemplary student who has immersed himself in his program, his department, and his community. As a strong advocate, he has taken leadership roles on his college and department diversity/climate committees.”

“Volunteer work with the AIDS Project has made him an invaluable part of that program in the community where he has helped clients focus on their strengths and resilience by examining employment options and future possibilities.”

“He has presented at PCA and other conferences and has taken on leadership roles with the Pennsylvania Association for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues in Counseling.”

Congratulations to Paul Datti, who was selected for the Pennsylvania Counseling Association Outstanding Student Award at the state conference held in fall 2008.
Professional Development in Counseling
Summer Institute 2009

Counseling Across the Lifespan: Best Practices and Emerging Techniques
This year’s theme highlights topics related to developmental stages and accompanying transitions. Penn State faculty members, as well as practitioners and scholars from all over the United States, will provide insight and expertise to help you improve your diagnostic, treatment, and counseling skills. Seminars are available for graduate credit or continuing education.

Topics include:
—youth at risk
—grief counseling
—life transitions
—legal issues

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Cindy Bierly is the new administrative support coordinator in the department, and she is doing a great job. Cindy lives in Rebersburg, Pa., with her husband Jon and two children, Alicia and Mark. We asked Cindy to let us in on a piece of her home life and she gave us a favorite recipe. Here’s what she said and it sounds great!

“I have quite a few favorites so it was hard to pick just one,” she says. “I’ve chosen the following recipe because it is simple, quick, and delicious to make during the week when I don’t have a lot of time to cook for my family. It’s especially good on cold winter days. My kids are picky eaters, but they cheer when I make this.”

**Beefy Chili Mac**

1. Cut beef steaks lengthwise into 1-inch wide strips and then crosswise into 1-inch pieces. Spray Dutch oven with cooking spray; heat over medium-high heat until hot. Add beef and onion to pan; cook and stir 3 minutes. (I season beef lightly with salt and pepper while it’s cooking.)

2. Stir tomatoes, pasta, and water into pan. Bring to a boil; reduce heat to low. Cover tightly and simmer 20 minutes or until pasta is tender. Sprinkle with cheese before serving. Makes 4 servings.

### Resources for Parents and Professionals

**Raising Resilient Children: Fostering Strength, Hope, and Optimism in Your Child** by Robert Brooks, Ph.D. and Sam Goldstein, Ph.D. This book outlines a process of parenting in which the parent/child interactions aim at strengthening the child’s ability to be resilient and to meet life’s challenges with thoughtfulness, confidence, purpose, hope, and empathy.

**Setting Limits with Your Strong-Willed Child** by Robert J. MacKenzie, Ed.D. helps parents understand their strong-willed child, show empathy without giving in, set clear and firm limits, and eliminate power struggles with their children.

**Straight Talk about Psychiatric Medications for Kids** by Timothy W. Wilens, MD is an informative and straightforward resource on the use of medication in treating a child with emotional, developmental, and behavioral disorders. It provides answers to common parent questions surrounding the risks and benefits of psychiatric medicine.

**Schoolfamilyeducation.com/**

This is a good resource for parents, as well as child-adolescent counselors. It is a user-friendly site that contains information on educational issues affecting children from preschool through high school. There is a special section on helping students with special needs. Other sections include homework help, skill-building tips in every school subject, printable charts, and educational worksheets.

“Perhaps the greatest social service that can be rendered by anybody to this country and to mankind is to bring up a family.” —George Bernard Shaw
Faculty & Staff Updates

Honors:

Congratulations… to Keith Wilson for being selected for the 2008–09 College of Education Climate Enhancement Award for contributions to the College’s diversity agenda.

Congratulations… to Elizabeth Mellin on being honored as an Emerging Engaged Scholar by the National Center for the Study of University Engagement (2009).

Congratulations… to Elizabeth Mellin on receiving the 2008–2009 Excellence in Curricular Integration Appreciation Award by the Penn State Commission on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Equity (CLGBTE).

Congratulations… to Richard Hazler, who was selected as an American Counseling Association Fellow for significant and unique contributions to the counseling profession at the ACA National Convention in Charlotte, N.C. (2009).

Congratulations… to JoLynn Carney, who won the Youngstown State University Outstanding Graduate Award for Contributions to the Counseling Profession (2009).

Some Publications and Grants:


Elizabeth Mellin was awarded College of Education Research Incentive Grant funding for a study with Mark Weist (director of the Center for School Mental Health and professor, School of Medicine, University of Maryland), titled Interdisciplinary collaboration in school mental health: Model expansion and instrument development.
Favorite Books

Elizabeth McDonald
(doctoral student)

*When You are Engulfed in Flames* (2008) by David Sedaris is always a joy to read: smart comedy in small packages. This group of short stories will make you laugh out loud at our seemingly mundane life. When drudging through heavy academic literature or my life is generally stressful, this is a light read of short stories that don’t stress the brain and are easy to put aside for a week and pick them up again as though you had never left. Your laughing out loud while reading can cause concern in certain groups.

LaRee BonJo
(Secondary School Counseling, Class of 2009)

*Man’s Search for Meaning* by Victor Frankl is a book I read for the first time when I was 14 or 15—and I had the profound experience of feeling that the course of my life would be changed by the book. I try to go back to it every so often to regenerate the sense of peace and faith in personal meaning that I find within its pages. The story how this man’s experience in a World War II concentration camp taught him the extraordinary human value of seeking meaning in any life situation is inspiring and can change the way you experience life.

Anna Moore
(Rehabilitation Counseling master’s student, Class of 2010)

*Don Quixote* by Miguel Cervantes is my favorite book. I can take my time reading it because it is broken into hilarious short stories. Reading about this pseudo-knight and his journeys helps me let down my guard and just laugh at the follies of being human. Pride and fantasy coexist with wisdom and foolishness to remind me that problems happen in life and sometimes laughter is the only medicine. I guess if the Nobel Institute voted it the Greatest Book of All Time, that is a good sign.

Brandon Hunt
(faculty member)

*Note to Self: On Keeping a Journal and Other Dangerous Pursuits* by Samara O’Shea is a great book for people who want to keep a journal, for those already keeping a journal, and for all the voyeurs who like to read other people’s secret thoughts and experiences (I think many counselors at least fit into this last group). Using excerpts from her own and other people’s journals, Samara shows how keeping a journal can help maintain your sanity while providing a way to go back and see who you were at different phases of your life. She’s a strong, funny, sensitive writer, and the book is an easy pleasure to read.

“Reading is a basic tool in the living of a good life.”  
—Mortimer J. Adler