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KENT STATE UNIVERSITY

College of Education, Health and Human Services

Doctoral Dissertation Defense
of

Michele Schmidt (Skolnicki)

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Major: Counselor Education and Supervision

**THE EFFECT OF AN ONLINE FORGIVENESS IN
COUNSELING WORKSHOP ON LICENSED
COUNSELORS' KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEFS
ABOUT USING INTERPERSONAL FORGIVENESS
IN COUNSELING**

Monday, September 26, 2016

12:45 PM

403 White Hall

Kent State University

Michele Schmidt (Skolnicki)

M.A. Clinical Psychology,
Illinois School of Professional Psychology, 1994

B.A. Psychology,
Bowling Green State University, 1990

Michele has over 10 years of clinical experience working with children, adolescents and families in a variety of settings, including community mental health, a hospital, an adolescent prison, and schools. Her current research interests focus on addressing anger issues with Forgiveness Therapy. She is currently employed by a mental health agency. Michele is providing school-based counseling to high school students and teaches her clients the process of forgiveness (if they choose to forgive). She plans to conduct a forgiveness group for students struggling with anger issues.

The Effect of an Online Forgiveness in Counseling Workshop on Counselors' Beliefs and Knowledge About Using Interpersonal Forgiveness in Counseling

The purpose of the current study was to examine the effects of an asynchronous two-hour online forgiveness in counseling workshop on licensed counselors' knowledge and beliefs about using interpersonal forgiveness in counseling. Research suggests that Forgiveness Therapy or using forgiveness in counseling decreases trait anger and aggression and helps to decrease anger with many kinds or hurts or offenses (Enright, 2015). However, it appears that most clinicians do not address forgiveness as a practice with their clients.

Participants were 75 licensed counselors (ages 23- 73) who completed the *Knowledge of Forgiveness in Counseling Survey* developed for this study and Part 2 of the *Forgiveness Attitudes Questionnaire (FAQ, Kanz, 2000)*. Dependent *t*-tests were conducted and results suggest that licensed counselors through completing the workshop gained knowledge about forgiveness, their beliefs became more similar to researchers' beliefs about forgiveness, found forgiveness in counseling more useful, and reported a greater likelihood to use a forgiveness approach in counseling. Pearson *r* analyses indicated that an increase in knowledge did not suggest that counselors found forgiveness more useful, nor were they more likely to use forgiveness. Results suggested when counselors' beliefs became more similar to researchers' beliefs, they found forgiveness more useful (but not more likely to use it). Hence, more research is needed to determine which variable(s) contributed to counselors' likelihood to use forgiveness.