ABSTRACT

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CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING STUDENTS’ VIEWS OF SERIOUS MENTAL ILLNESS AND PERSONS WITH SERIOUS MENTAL ILLNESS (146 pp.)

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The purpose of this study was to explore the views of clinical mental health counseling (CMHC) students’ views regarding serious mental illness and persons with serious mental illness (SMI) and identify gaps in counselor education. Surveys of other mental health professionals have been conducted, but only recently has there been an examination of views specific to the counseling profession (Smith & Cashwell, 2010). A Q methodology design was used to investigate CMHC students’ views and identify any common factors, or themes. A concourse of statements was gathered to represent different views regarding SMI from the academic literature. A Q set of 46 statements was then administered to 30 CMHC students from a graduate program at a Midwestern university. The Q-sorts were compared through factor analysis in the software program PQ Method 2.35 (Schmolck & Atkinson, 2014). The factor analysis revealed the common views that CMHC student participants had regarding SMI and persons with SMI.

Results of the current study included two factors accounting for 66% of the variance and one residual case that did not correlate with Factors 1 or 2. Twenty-nine of the 30 participants loaded on Factor 1 and may indicate a common trait or personality
type that is drawn to the counseling profession. Factor 2 was a bipolar factor and three participants loaded on this factor. Recommendations for counselor education, the practice of counseling, supervision, and leadership are provided.