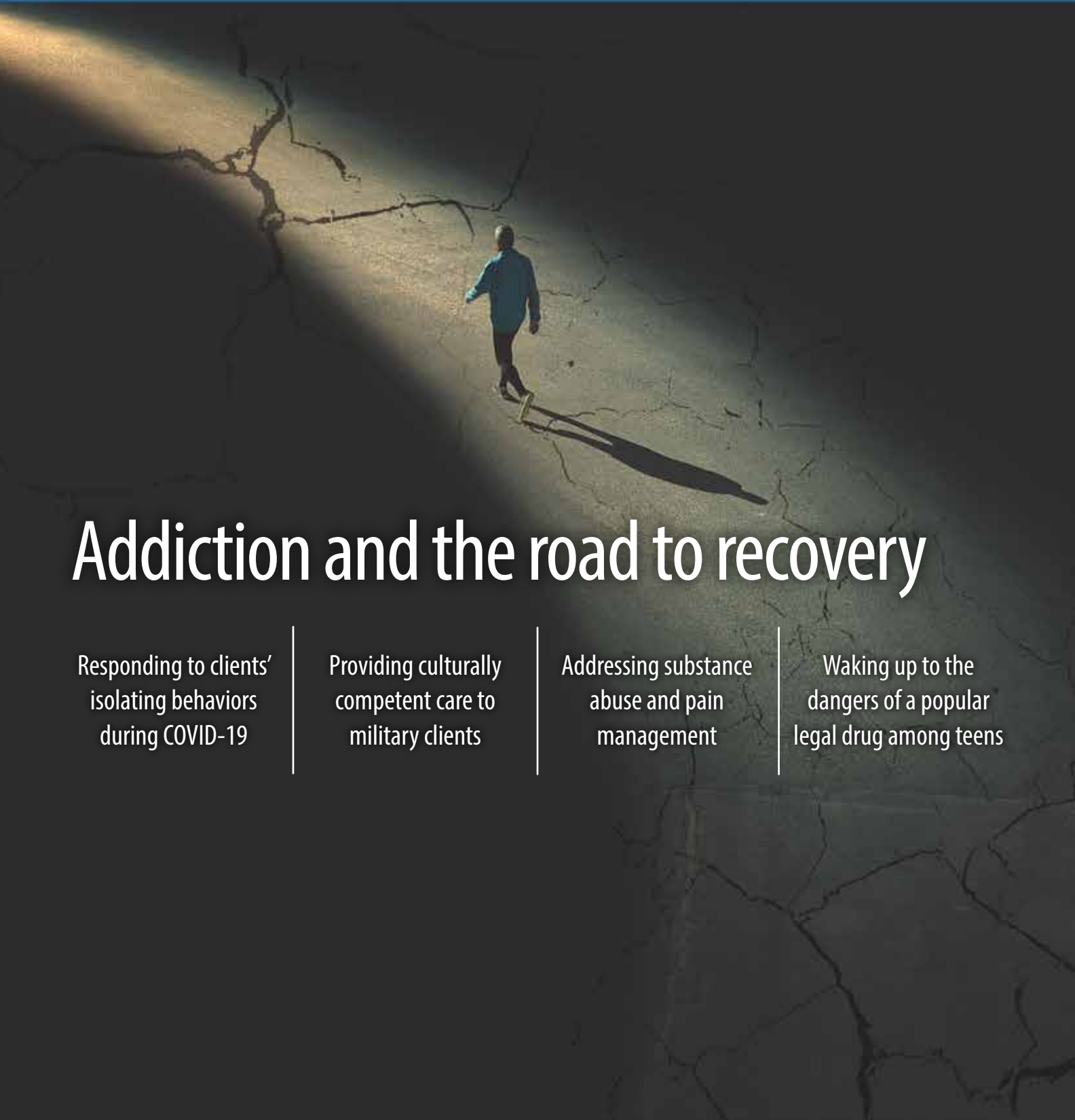


# Counseling Today

An American Counseling Association Publication

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## Addiction and the road to recovery

Responding to clients' isolating behaviors during COVID-19

Providing culturally competent care to military clients

Addressing substance abuse and pain management

Waking up to the dangers of a popular legal drug among teens



Sue Pressman

From the President

# Counseling Today

## Reasons to celebrate: Career development and mentorship

This year, as Thanksgiving approaches, I am especially grateful for my family, friends, American Counseling Association colleagues and the mentors who have supported me on my career journey. As a professional counselor who has also identified as a *career counselor* for almost 40 years, every November is extra special to me. In addition to Thanksgiving, I (and my fellow career counselors) celebrate National Career Development Month.

The intersectionality between career and mental health has never been more significant. National Career Development Month is sponsored by the National Career Development Association (NCDA), which was established in 1913 and is one of ACA's founding divisions, dating back to 1952. While every day is an opportunity for counselors to help clients with career exploration and personal goals, the month of November recognizes the importance of lifelong career development through an annual observance. Collaboration among counselors, teachers, students, families, communities, schools and businesses is a cornerstone throughout the month. Career poetry contests, the development of new posters and infographics, events such as "careerathons," and topical workshops have become the norm during November. It's all very exciting.

This year brings unique challenges and opportunities. For instance, how do counselors implement these activities while simultaneously keeping

spirits high with clients and practicing self-care — all in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic? The answer is not simple, and no magic formula exists. We are finding that virtual gatherings, social media platforms, the sharing of resources, telecounseling, online handshaking, online networking and working from home are among the practical ways that everyone is coping with this "new normal."

Resilience in the face of job loss, financial difficulty, trauma, stress and the other myriad issues that one encounters across a lifetime is a process that involves adapting as we transition to new beginnings. Resiliency is the ability to overcome setbacks and challenges and then grow from the experience. I often demonstrate the concept of resilience with the use of a rubber band. When a new rubber band is stretched, it demonstrates strong resilience by quickly bouncing back to its original shape. A worn rubber band that has no stretch demonstrates a lack of resilience. Metaphorically speaking, it indicates that change is needed. In many ways, that is what we are facing today.

The human spirit is being challenged. On the one hand, we are mourning our losses and the ways of life that once were. On the other hand, we are creating new ways to work, become productive and connect. As a global society going through a pandemic, we have learned to adapt by using technologies to conduct both small and

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## Advocacy Update

# Recognizing the importance of professional career counselors

Interview by Guila Todd



Kathy Evans



November is National Career Development Month, so the Government Affairs and Public Policy team chose to highlight an American Counseling Association member who is a professional career counselor. We interviewed current National Career Development Association (NCDA) President Kathy Evans on the role of career counselors, life-work issues and key legislation surrounding the profession.

Evans has been an active member of ACA since 1980. She is professor emerita of counselor education at the University of South Carolina. Before receiving her doctorate from Penn State, Evans held career counseling positions in high schools, community and four-year colleges and universities, and a nonprofit organization. She has been a counselor educator for more than 25 years and has taught the career counseling course for 20 of those years. In addition, she teaches doctoral courses in multicultural counseling/advocacy, supervision and pedagogy. She has also developed a graduate certificate program for career development facilitators.

Evans has published extensively and decided to write *Gaining Cultural Competence in Career Counseling* in 2007 because there were no available texts that helped students understand the synthesis of culture and career. The second edition is due out soon from NCDA. For some of the same reasoning, she also co-authored *Experiential Approach for Developing Multicultural Counseling Competence*

with Mary Fawcett of Winona State University.

Evans has been a leader in counselor education. Her highest national office, until her current position as president of NCDA, was as secretary for Chi Sigma Iota, the international honor society for counselors. She has also held office as president of the Southern Association for Counselor Education and Supervision and, as such, served on the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) executive board. Evans also co-chaired the ACES/NCDA Joint Commission for the Preparation of Career Counselors from 2008-2014.

### What is a career counselor?

Good question. People have a lot of confusion about career professionals. At NCDA, we have actually designed credentials that outline the education, training and expertise for the various career professionals. As defined by NCDA, career counselors are those who have “trained as counselors, who specialize in the delivery of career counseling services.” They have an advanced degree (master’s or higher) in counselor education, counseling psychology, rehabilitation counseling or a closely related counseling degree and are engaged primarily in a career counseling practice or other career counseling-related services.

### What are the education requirements for becoming a career counselor?

Entry level for a career counselor is a master’s degree. There are other career

practitioners who work with people with career concerns, but to be a career counselor, one has to have a master’s degree in counseling.

### How do career counselors benefit those in the community?

Career counselors assist people with determining and achieving their work and career goals, help them to choose a life path that will determine their lifestyle, help improve their relationships at work, and help individuals resolve home-work conflicts.

### What made you decide to become a career counselor?

I had a career crisis myself. I hated the first job I had after graduation from college and ended up talking to a career counselor at the university where my father worked. I felt inspired after talking with her about what else I could do with my psychology major and applied for graduate school. It so happened that almost half of my graduate curriculum was devoted to career counseling, and I loved it.

**How long have you been a career counselor?**

I started career counseling 42 years ago.

**How can we help promote the career counseling profession?**

As [part of] the American Counseling Association, promoting career counseling as a profession within the counseling field is always helpful. It would also be helpful to promote the career counseling specialty by devoting journals, newsletters and social media to the topic of life-work issues. The time is ripe for this with the global pandemic putting so many people out of work.

**Are there key pieces of legislation related to career counseling that you would like to see pushed through Congress?**

Congressmen Jim Langevin (D-Rhode Island) and Glenn “GT” Thompson (R-Pennsylvania) stand apart as a bipartisan team that champions improving the workforce by supporting and funding programs like Perkins [the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act, which was reauthorized as the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century (Perkins V) Act in 2018]. They serve as the co-chairs of the Congressional Career and Technical Education Caucus, and last year they introduced the Counseling for Career Choice Act, which makes critical new investments in school counseling to help students make informed career choices. The task of building career counseling frameworks requires targeted, significant funding, and we hope that congressional leaders will recognize this and prioritize passage of the Counseling for Career Choice Act. ❖

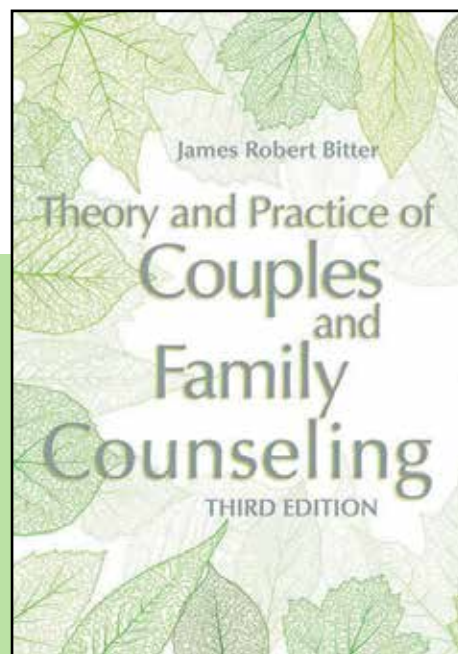
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**DIJ:** In what ways has the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on you and the Kansas City Chiefs players?

**ST:** COVID-19 had a big impact on my role this offseason. Due to the pandemic, I was unable to see any of our players and coaches in person prior to the start of training camp. There was a five-month period where I could only meet with people via Zoom, phone or text. It is very tough to establish or build relationships with players through these mediums, but it was the only option that we had.

**DIJ:** How are the Chiefs and the NFL prioritizing and implementing player safety during the pandemic? Player safety is a main objective for the NFL this season.

**ST:** The safety measures that our team and the league have implemented are second to none. Our testing protocol, PPE (personal protective equipment) requirements and physical distancing regulations have enabled us to have a successful beginning of the season.

**DIJ:** The sports seasons will look different due to the ongoing pandemic. Do you envision this having an impact on the mental health of athletes across the nation at the high school, collegiate and professional levels?

**ST:** Absolutely. Sports are a microcosm of society, and everyone in our country has been impacted by this virus. Athletes have the same stressors as the rest of society, and they have the added pressure and responsibility of competing in their sport. It does not matter what level, all athletes will be forced to train differently this year as a result of COVID-19, and many athletes will have their seasons canceled, postponed or shortened due to the pandemic.

Even though the numbers of NFL players who have contracted COVID-19 is relatively low at the moment, that does not mean these players aren't impacted. Many players that you are watching on Sundays have close family and friends who have been ill or passed away due to the virus.

**DIJ:** What type of assessments and modalities are administered to assess and assist team players?

**ST:** During the draft process, prospective players take a battery of personality and aptitude assessments. However, the teams are not allowed to administer assessments to players after they have been drafted to a particular team.

**DIJ:** You have a unique opportunity. How would you advise a prospective student who is interested in taking a similar path?

**ST:** There are two things that I think are really important in the field today. First, make sure that you get licensed. The NCAA, NFL and NBA have mandated that their athletes have access to licensed mental health practitioners. The number of full-time therapists working for colleges and professional sports teams has significantly increased in the last five years, and it will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

My second piece of advice is to get as much experience as you can working with athletes. Working with athletes at any level can be challenging, but once you learn the nuances of the various sports and the expectations associated with athletics, you can create a niche for yourself that is extremely rewarding.

**DIJ:** The American Counseling Association has more than 50,000 members. Is there anything else that you would like to share about yourself or your work?

**ST:** Getting started in this industry can be challenging, but the field is growing rapidly. Athletes at all levels need support, and coaches and athletic directors are starting to understand the overall importance of mental health. ❖

Danielle Irving-Johnson is the content project manager at the American Counseling Association. Contact her at [dirving@counseling.org](mailto:dirving@counseling.org).

## From the President

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large gatherings online. We have learned that telework actually works and that telecounseling (“distance” counseling) is not as distant as it once was. We are serving our clients — the world — in new and creative ways. We have also found that traditional programs still offer viable means for learning and to continue lifelong learning.

I am happy to report that in conjunction with National Career Development Month, ACA is launching the ACA Mentorship Program. Collaborating with me on implementation of the program is a team composed of representatives from the ACA Graduate Student Committee, Jan Gay, Reginald “Reggie” W. Holt and Alyx MacTernan; Anaid Shaver, a Virginia Tech counselor education and supervision doctoral intern/assistant; and Danielle Irving-Johnson, the content project manager at ACA.

The ACA Mentorship Program is designed with the intention of building relationships while strengthening and empowering participants. The program provides the opportunity for both graduate students who are currently enrolled in counseling programs and newer professionals to be mentored by accomplished counseling leaders. Mentors guide, support, encourage and empower mentees to further develop and enhance their professional counselor identity. This initiative supports ACA’s mission to “promote the professional development of counselors, advocate for the profession, and ensure ethical, culturally inclusive practices that protect those using counseling services.” It also supports ACA’s vision that “every person has access to quality professional counseling to thrive.” ❖