

Anna Bartkowiak: Health & Human Development
Mentor: Adina Smith -- Health & Human Development
Graduate Counseling Students' Growth

The poster presentation will address the subjective experience of personal and clinical growth of graduate students in Counseling Program at Montana State University, over the span of 2 years of curriculum and training. The design of the study conducted by Adina Smith, Ph.D. and other faculty of Counseling Program, is based on grounded theory. At this point of time, the study is cross-sectional, as it includes different points of development of two cohorts, across the tracks (Mental Health, Marriage and Family and School Counseling); and over time, it will evolve into longitudinal study -- following the same cohort throughout the span of 2 years of training. The researchers conducted extensive literature review on professional development of counselors, and designed a questionnaire for focus groups that were conducted and transcribed within the last three months. The results of the initial round of focus groups indicate that there are substantial differences in experience of personal growth in students and delineated areas of the growth that students observed while enrolled in the program. The presentation will report how the students in different tracks across the cohorts perceive their personal progress, using the language aligned with the way students expressed in during focus groups.