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High School Peer Counseling: Understanding the Impact of a Systemic Training Incorporating Bowen Concepts

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High School Peer Counseling: Understanding the Impact of a
Systemic Training Incorporating Bowen Concepts

by

Christina Elizabeth Berdebes

A Doctoral Dissertation Presented to the
College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Nova Southeastern University

2018

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by
Christina Elizabeth Berdebes
April 2018

Nova Southeastern University

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This dissertation was submitted by Christina Elizabeth Berdebes under the direction of the chair of the dissertation committee listed below. It was submitted to the Graduate College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Philosophy in the Department of Family Therapy at Nova Southeastern University.

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Abstract

Peer counseling programs benefit peer-to-peer relationships in schools through students providing active support for one another. Literature shows that peer counseling programs are effective with adolescents, especially in school-based settings. Bowen family systems theory is a model that focuses on the importance of emotional and relationship systems. Differentiation of self, a key concept in Bowen systems theory, is described as the balance between emotional and intellectual functioning; the higher the level of differentiation, the less likely one is to experience emotional and social difficulties. This dissertation I explored the potential for training high school senior counselors from a Bowenian perspective.

A project called the Archimedean peer counseling program trained 32 high school senior peer counselors in Bowen family systems theory. This study used a mixed methods approach to understand the following research question: To what extent did participation in the Archimedean peer counseling program increase overall differentiation of self among high school senior counselors, as measured by pre- and posttest scores on the differentiation of self-inventory (DSI), an instrument used to measure fusion between emotional and intellectual functioning. In addition, scores for the DSI subscales (emotional reactivity, taking an I position, reactive distancing, and fusion with parents), and archival quantitative data were examined. Paired samples t-tests were conducted to assess mean differences in baseline and posttest DSI scores. A thematic analysis of qualitative data in the form of student reflection papers, journal entries, and personal communications with school administrators was also conducted. Results from this study

help to illustrate the utility of Bowen family systems theory training in the context of an adolescent peer counseling program.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

In the education system, the guidance/school counselor assumes the role of addressing students' emotional, academic, and social struggles (ASCA, 2013). The purpose of school counseling programs then, is to supply students with the necessary skills for academic achievement. The most common traditional counseling models focus on individual techniques that teach individualism, self-actualization, and freedom of choice (Peeks, 1993). However, in April 1991, President Bush and Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander unveiled a strategy for education reform that would include restructuring the place of counseling in the school setting (Peeks, 1993). The education and counseling reform would shift the existing model to a systems perspective in which the parents, students, and administrators would be treated as part of a family unit.

According to Kraus (1998), school counselors had to be re-trained to use a family-counseling model. The re-training consisted of assessing problems within social context and through a systems perspective. This shifted the focus away from individual students and instead, included the family and school in a mutually beneficial relationship that would be pivotal to a child's success. Peeks (1993) states that "Students learn at their fullest potential when the two most important influences in life, home and school, have a positive relationship based on cooperative interactions" (p. 248).

Due to the education and counseling reform, Hinkle and Wells introduced *Family Counseling in the Schools: Effective Strategies and Interventions for Counselors, Psychologist and Therapist*, a text funded by the Educational Research and Improvement Department in 1995. This book was a compiled work of strategies and techniques for

therapeutic professionals to utilize in order to learn about systems theory and models already practiced by family therapists. It has been suggested that the family systems approach, which provides an understanding of family characteristics, interaction functions, and life cycles, can form the basis of meaningful parent-school relationships (Peeks, 1993, Turnbull & Turnbull, 1990).

Family therapy and counseling dates back to the 1930s thanks to the theories articulated by Ludwig Von Bertalanffy, the assumed father of general systems theory (Rambo & Hibel, 2013). Although many more widely known family therapy models were developed later, Von Bertalanffy's observations offered a systemic perspective to approaching many professions. As such, professionals began to recognize the potential for using systemic models in a variety of social contexts. According to the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT), marriage and family therapists (MFTs) broaden the traditional emphasis on the individual to attend to the nature and role of individuals in primary relationship networks such as marriage and the family (AAMFT, 2003).

In 2008, Connecticut became the first state in the United States to have an established certification for MFTs in schools (AAMFT, 2013). Marriage and family therapists in schools can maintain a family system perspective when consulting with parents, school administration, teachers, and students. Kraus (1998) asserts, "The missing piece—counseling towards student's behavioral change—is effectively addressed in the family-counseling model" (p. 1). Family systems theory and practice can enhance the field of counseling programs in schools. School professionals are recognizing the need to address family issues with children in schools as part of a holistic approach (Peeks,

1993). Abucewicz, Laundry, and Nelson (2011) suggest that in today's educational system, more schools should build on incorporating on-site marriage and family therapists. As a result of this recognition, schools nationwide are embracing the benefits of family therapy (Metcalf, 2013).

Self as a Researcher

My experience as a school counselor and family therapist in the educational system has led me to combine the two roles and develop a new position within an existing charter school system. In working with children and families in schools since 2004, I saw the importance of systemic thinking and utilizing the Bowen family model in particular within the schools. The Bowen model, a systemic approach that emphasizes awareness of natural family systems, is based on how the emotional system within the family reacts as a result of individuality and togetherness among members (Bowen & Kerr, 1988). When anxiety or emotion is increased, individuals tend to respond through seeking closeness with another person or social unit. This emotional process plays out in a similar manner within a group setting such as school.

In December 2012, I was hired at a charter school in Miami that had no counseling programs in place. With the trust of administration, I created and developed the Archimedean Student Support Services Department. The mission of Archimedean Student Support Services is to provide services and support to students and their families in order to attain the greatest level of academic, social, and emotional success. The department facilitates the creation of a support system to ensure all students in the Archimedean School system have access to, and are prepared with, the knowledge and skills to contribute at the highest level as productive members of society. Our mission is

to work systemically and collaboratively with parents, teachers, administration, and the community to help facilitate student development in educational, social, personal, and emotional domains. My primary goal as the Archimedean student support counselor is to support the success of all students by providing a personally, socially, and emotionally safe climate.

As the student support counselor, my role is functioning as a balanced, self-aware, reflective person in the school system. With a systemic foundation as my basis to work with children and their families in the context of the educational system, I utilize a family-school system theoretical orientation. Throughout the year, my goal is to systematically identify the needs in the school and guide the students, families, and community to become a more positive and emotionally safe school climate.

My education and knowledge of systemic thinking prompted me to first enter the Archimedean system as an observer. I observed the culture and the context of the environment, including academic expectations, cultural boundaries, administrative structure, and gender roles. My functional position during the first year was to take notice of the emotional process in the school in order to assess the specific systemic needs. It was important for me to understand that the Archimedean School system has never had any school-based support for students' emotional needs. Since Archimedean is a charter school, funding is low for therapeutic services. As a result, I entered the Archimedean system with care, confidence, and admiration for what they built. The administrators of the educational system of Archimedean were willing to understand and, more importantly, trust my philosophy in working on what would be best for the school. My family systems perspective allowed for me to create a new option for change in the

school through shifting the focus from the individual student to understanding each student within the numerous contextual layers in which they are living in relation to (i.e., family, friends, teachers, school officials, school culture, etc.).

Supporting school success while working for three schools -- elementary, middle and high school -- brings many challenges, including modifying the way I work based on the different ages of the students. In addition, the labor demands of a counselor are challenging, and meeting with each individual student can be time consuming. Despite these difficulties, educators are always seeking ways to bring change into their schools. After two years of using my systemic viewpoint in the school, I realized I could potentially work more effectively through utilizing peers. Perhaps a systemic approach incorporating Bowen family systems theory ideas could bring value by training older students to help coach younger students in the areas of personal growth and responsibility. This sparked my desire to launch a peer counseling program.

Pilot Phase-The First Year

After noticing a major disconnect between the freshman and seniors in the high school, I decided to pilot test a peer counseling program in the upper school. Furthermore, given that Archimedean High School is a college preparatory academy with a rigorous academic program, the seniors have valuable knowledge about the college admissions process, as well as secrets to academic success to impart to freshman in order to help them maneuver through high school. The Archimedean pilot project was introduced in May of 2015 with the goal of allowing adolescents to make a meaningful impact for themselves and others, thereby improving the school's overall culture. My objectives were: (a) to encourage student thinking about larger systems, process

interactions, and patterns; (b) to improve the school culture; (c) to enable the freshmen to create connections with each other, as well as with the seniors; and (d) to allow students to enjoy the process itself via these freshman-senior collaborations. Petosa and Smith (2014) stated, “School-based mentoring programs benefit not only the teenager and peer mentor, but also the school and communities by establishing social networks that integrate positive role models as mentors from the same community in the school” (pg. 351). In addition, peer programs allow for these connections to develop much more rapidly. In my experience, a peer program can enhance school spirit and the give a sense of belonging to the school community, which in turn, can have a positive impact on academic outcomes. In addition, the program enables the seniors to reflect on their experiences, challenges, and successes, which has a positive impact short term on their senior year performance, and long term on their overall development.

Once I decided to implement a peer counseling program through providing training to seniors, I had to figure out what to include in the curriculum. What skill sets could be most useful to enrich not only the seniors, but also the freshman? In much of my practice as a marriage and family therapist, I found that Bowen family systems concepts were extremely helpful in assisting clients to develop an awareness of the impact of emotional processes. I thought these ideas could be beneficial to adolescents, particularly freshman and seniors, because they typically are in the process of transitioning. For example, freshmen are adjusting to high school, and seniors are preparing for a transition to college. Since Bowen theory assists in developing an increased sense of self, it could be a useful tool to help the students manage transitions and life challenges.

Creating a unique peer program incorporating systemic ideas and Bowen theory concepts was challenging. After researching information, I arranged to meet with the principals of the high school in order to propose the program. The proposal outlined my plan to implement a 12-week systemic and Bowen inspired training program for seniors. Seniors received one-hour trainings once a week for 12 weeks after school. The day after each training, the seniors would meet with their freshman group at lunch. Toward the end of the year, the group meetings were weaned to one time a month. The trainings consisted of learning systemic concepts including Bowen theory. In addition, it provided seniors with strategies to teach the freshman what would assist them in navigating the Archimedean culture, as well as tools for achieving academic success. The program was reviewed and approved by the principals to begin in 2015.

An announcement of the peer-counseling program was given via an open seminar where all high school seniors were invited to sign up. Following the open seminar, seniors were emailed a questionnaire (see Appendix A). After completing the questionnaire, an interview was scheduled. Of the 45 seniors that applied, 20 were selected. One peer counselor was assigned to a group of five freshman, forming a ratio of 1:5 in each peer counseling group. Students and parents signed an informed consent form, a participation letter, an adolescent assent form, and a peer counseling school contract. As described above, peer counselors received one-hour trainings once a week for twelve weeks, and met with their groups once a week and eventually, once a month. At the end of the year (and the program), program satisfaction surveys were distributed to all freshmen (see Appendix B). The survey consisted of eleven questions that were geared toward group, school and program satisfaction.

The program satisfaction survey did not show any noticeable deficiency in any area. The completion rate of the survey was 92%. (N=88). Based on the observations and discussions with the senior students, it was discovered that I could further improve the quality and the impact of the program by providing additional training to the seniors. On the last day of training, during a discussion with the seniors about the overall program, I was informed that many of them felt they had improved who they were as people, had better relationships with friends and parents, engaged in better decision making, felt comfortable with approaching others, and were less concerned about the opinions of others. Some spoke of a desire to continue mentoring in college, and most indicated that they would have liked more training on Bowen concepts in order to improve their relationships with others as well as their overall quality of life. This feedback from the students encouraged me to make program enhancements and conduct additional research on next year's program.

National Association of Peer Program Professionals

During my research of peer counseling programs, I came across the National Association of Peer Program Professionals (NAPPP). I called and got in touch via phone communication with Dr. Judith Tindall, the president of the NAPPP and author of several books and articles related to peer programs. In our conversation, I informed her of my interest in Bowen theory and my creation of a Bowen inspired peer-counseling program. She guided me and notified me that our program could be nationally certified and recognized by NAPPP. She sent me an application, which I completed for first year pilot program.

The mission statement of the National Association of Peer Program Professionals is to help adults establish, train, supervise, maintain, and evaluate peer programs so that peers may help each other with the maximum effectiveness (www.peerprofesionals.com). In order to be certified, a submission of an application alongside the programs curriculum was mailed to NAPPP. In October 2016, the NAPPP certified and recognized Archimedean peer counseling program. The Archimedean peer program is the 45th school to be recognized.

The Experimental Phase –Year Two

After the first year of the pilot project was over, I decided to continue my research during year two. Several new major components were added. First, the training program was expanded from a 12 week to a 20-week training course (see Appendix C for a copy of the training manual). This extended curriculum encompassed the original components, plus the additional training related to Bowen concepts that was requested by the seniors. The added Bowen concepts included topics such as emotional reactivity, emotional cutoff, and fusion with others. Second, in order to examine the impact of the Bowen training on the seniors, I decided to administer a survey. In my examination of research related to Bowen concepts, I came across the 43-item differentiation of self inventory (DSI, Appendix D) (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998). This questionnaire focused on important relationships, including relationships with family of origin (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998). Although the questionnaire was originally designed for use with adults, it has since been studied, validated, and adapted for use among adolescents ages 14-19 (Knauth & Skowron, 2004). This instrument would be given to the seniors before

the training program began, and again after it was complete. Third, I also wanted to increase the number of senior counselors.

An announcement of the peer counseling program was given via an open seminar to all current high school juniors during the Spring of 2016 to sign up for training to begin in the Fall of 2016. Following the open seminar, students were emailed a questionnaire to be filled out and an interview was scheduled. Forty-five seniors applied and 33 were selected to form a ratio of one senior to four freshmen in each peer counseling group. An email was sent to each accepted senior, followed by a date to meet for documentation to be signed. Students and parents needed to sign an informed consent form, a participation letter, an adolescent assent form, and a peer-counseling school contract in order to participate. On the first day of training, before the training began, the seniors completed the Pre-DSI (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998). Similar to the pilot project procedures, the trainings for the seniors took place once a week for one hour after school, and the following day the peer counselors would meet with their groups. At the end of the year at their last training session, seniors were once again given the post -DSI questionnaire to complete, and there was an open discussion with students about what they felt was most valuable about the program, and what aspects they might use in the future. In addition, seniors were invited to submit an optional one-page reflection paper about their experience in the program.

Statement of the Problem

The initial pilot project introduced a peer-to-peer program that incurred a unique outcome of freshman success through meeting the program goals. The first goal of the pilot project was to expand the freshman and senior connection for academic, social, and

emotional success. The second goal was for the seniors to be trained in systemic thinking and Bowen theory. Evaluations were implemented in order to determine the validity of the project. At the end of the year, this evaluation was administered through Survey Monkey in order to measure the attitudes of the freshmen participating in the program at Archimedean High School. Results from the surveys collected from the freshman following the pilot project showed that the freshman felt they were more successful in connecting with others. In addition, they believed the program helped to enhance their academic success.

As a result of this success, questions related to natural thinking systems came forth in terms of how these ideas could be used in a natural school setting. In speaking with the pilot group of counselors months after the conclusion of the study, I ascertained that the former counselors (the seniors) were either signing up to be peer mentors, counselors, and / or tutors when entering college. These meetings with the seniors sparked a new study that would focus on whether receiving a longer training in Bowen theory would result in the seniors having a better understanding of Bowen family systems concepts, including emotional reactivity, emotional cutoff, and fusion with others.

Despite existing evidence documenting the effectiveness of Bowen theory in clinical practice (Bowen, 1978; Kerr & Bowen, 1998; Knauth & Skowron 2004), few systemic studies have provided empirical evidence on its effectiveness in other settings. Although the DSI was collected for the seniors both before and after the trainings during year two, the results from these surveys were never analyzed. In addition, student reflection papers, and my journal entries and personal communications with Archimedean administrators related to the program and Bowen concepts were never

examined. Findings from a mixed methods study of survey data, reflection papers, my journal, and notes from my communications with school administrators can provide important information regarding the impact of learning Bowen concepts within the context of a peer-counseling program. In addition, this project incorporates a unique view of peer counseling from multiple perspectives: the perspective of the peer counselors, the perspective of the student support counselor, and the perspective of the school administration.

During the transitions from middle school to high school and high school to college, students typically face many challenges such as family issues, academic and peer demands, and pressure stemming from social media. The systemic concepts taught in within a peer counseling program can offer a frame that infuses the exploration of cause and effect thinking in peer and family relationships. Examining pre and posttest DSI scores and student reflection papers from adolescents participating in a Bowen infused peer counseling program could provide needed information about the connections between systemic concepts and their application to everyday life among high school students. This program was the first to attempt to train high school seniors from a Bowen systems perspective for peer counseling with freshman. This study would also be the first to examine the effects of a Bowen inspired peer counseling program on the counselors themselves. Furthermore, this study can provide student support counselors and school administrators a greater understanding of how the application a peer counseling program using Bowen concepts can impact an existing high school system.

Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study is to analyze archival quantitative pre and post DSI scale survey data of high school senior counselors trained in Bowen systems theory, and qualitative data collected from student reflection papers, notes from a debriefing discussion with counselors, personal journal entries, and notes from personal communications with the school principals. Findings from this study would allow for an examination of the potential effects of this training on student emotional functioning and the overall emotional system of the high school. This project addresses the limited research on interventions linking peer counseling with systems thinking from a Bowenian perspective. The dissertation study will use a mixed methods design to understand the following research question: To what extent did participation in the Archimedean peer counseling program increase overall differentiation of self among high school senior counselors, as measured by pre and posttest scores on the DSI inventory. In addition, I will examine scores for the individual DSI subscales (emotional reactivity, taking an I position, reactive distancing, and fusion with parents) in order to assess potential differences among these factors. Additional research questions for these factors include: (a) to what extent did participation in the Archimedean peer counseling program increase emotional reactivity among high school senior counselors; (b) to what extent did participation in the Archimedean peer counseling program increase taking an I position among high school senior counselors; (c) to what extent did participation in the Archimedean peer counseling program increase reactive distancing among high school senior counselors; and (d) to what extent did participation in the Archimedean peer counseling program increase fusion with parents among high school senior counselors? A

thematic analysis of qualitative data, including student reflection papers, notes from my personal journal and counselor debriefing meeting, and notes from my personal communications with the school principals will be examined in order understand how participating in the Bowen program impacted the students in their personal lives as well as in their role as counselors. Moreover, qualitative data collected from the school principals will provide information about how school administrators perceived the program, and how they believe it impacted the school overall.

Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of the development and implementation of the Archimedean peer counseling program. It also provides the rationale and purpose of this dissertation study: to examine how a Bowen family systems theory training impacted seniors taking part in a peer counseling program. Chapter two will outline the history of guidance counseling, peer support, the use of family therapy in schools. In chapter three I will outline the study procedures, as well as the quantitative analysis plan.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

History of Guidance Counseling

Vocational Guidance was the term used to describe school guidance and counseling in the early 20th century during a time when the field focused on young people's adjustment to "economic, education and social" concerns (Gysbers & Henderson, 2006, p. 5). In 1908, the term guidance and counseling was introduced in the Civic Service House in Boston, Massachusetts. Frank Parson's work as an educator and reformer focused on society's inability to transition students from school to work. His work became known across the nation, and it began the movement of the First National Conference on Vocational Guidance in 1910 (Gysbers & Henderson, 2006, p. 5). Vocational counselors were added to the school staff through the approval from Boston School Committee's to enhance Boston's Schools. There were three aims for vocational guidance according to Bloomfield (as cited by Gysbers & Henderson, 2006),

Three aims have stood out above all others; first, to secure thoughtful consideration, on the part of parents, pupils, and teachers, and the importance of life-career move; second, to assist in every way possible in placing pupils in some remunerative work on leaving school; and third, to keep in touch with the help them thereafter, suggesting means of improvement and watching the advancement of those who need such aid.

(Bloomfield, 1915, p. 36)

Before this movement, vocational counseling was provided by teachers with no extra pay. Now the aims of vocational counseling were to provide basic guidelines for all counselors to focus on in secondary and elementary schools. The U.S Bureau of

Education reported in 1914 that over 100 public schools had organized plans for vocational guidance (Gysbers & Henderson, 2006).

In the 1920's, schools began the immersion of guidance and counseling for additional purposes. Mental health was influencing guidance programs, as well as measurement and the introduction of cumulative records. According to Gysbers and Henderson (2006), "Vocational guidance practice began to emphasize a more personal, diagnostic, and clinical orientation to students, with an increasing emphasis on psychological measurement" (p. 9). Here began the shift from counseling focused on vocational success, to counseling steeped in personal development; by the twenties and thirties, there was also a shift from a fairly uncoordinated approach predicated on training *teachers* to be counselors. Rather, school systems began to take a systematic approach that focused on counselors with training in therapy. Child guidance clinics were introduced as an early intervention with school involvement for healthy development. However, there was not much information that differentially categorized vocational, guidance, and personal counseling.

By the end of the forties and the beginning of fifties, the terms guidance and counseling were defined as "problems of adjustment to health, religion, recreation, to family and friends, to school and work, and vocational guidance as assisting the individual to choose an occupation" (Gysbers & Henderson, 2006, p.11). This focus led to the growing interest of psychotherapy and counseling in schools, which began with the work of Carl Rogers.

By the sixties, Pupil Personnel Services introduced goals for life long self-direction for the student. Whereas the twenties and thirties inaugurated a necessary shift

to counseling as a practice based in therapeutic techniques, the sixties saw a paradigm shift. The impact of Pupil Personnel Services had many state departments and schools using this term to service students and organize guidance in schools. Also in this era, the function of school counselors was largely undefined, leading to an emphasis on the title of a professional school counselor. Following this, the seventies were about integrating guidance programs, which included goals, objectives, program implementation, and plans and designs for systematic evaluations (Gysbers, 2010). These programs were geared toward a decision-making model. Students were inclined to think about choices for the future. As a result of this focus, career development was introduced in the guidance programs.

In the 1980's, 90's, and 2000's, school guidance programs gained acceptance and were fully implemented in the United States. In fact, guidelines informing guidance and its practice were published. Gysbers and Henderson (2009) introduced the organizational framework for guidance programs. Within this framework, the guidance counselor shifts to the actual role of a school counselor. Despite published guidelines, a constant debate remains in publications related to the identity of the school counselor and their specific role and function within schools. Hence, in research, there are numerous titles for school counselors.

The term and defined role of a *Counselor* dates back to 1881 in a book titled *Vocophy: The New Profession*, by Lyander Salmon Richards. The author explains the roles of a vocopher and wants to begin teaching individuals. In 1811, the term *Vocophy* was introduced by Lysanders Richards as a "new profession to help individuals find vocation" (Gysbers, 2010, p. 3). This is the earliest record of counseling in terms of

services and vocational counseling. His goal was to “establish a system to enable a person to find the most fitting pursuit in which he can reap the greatest success that is possible for him individually to gain” (Gysbers, 2010, p. 3). As a result of the many titles that exist for counselors, Glassi and Akos (2007) provided a definition of a traditional vs. contemporary school counselor:

The traditional role of school counselor focuses on the services of counseling, consultation, and coordination (the three C’s). Classroom guidance often replaces coordination, at the elementary level. Typically, the services are remedial in nature, lack clear objectives, are programmatic, and are inefficient because they target individuals rather than groups. Additional duties assigned by the principal may also be included in the traditional role of a school counselor. . . . The role of a contemporary school counselor includes an organized comprehensive developmental program that is integral to education, is based on a developmental framework, services the entire student population, and is concerned with demonstrating accountability. The contemporary role includes the additional functions of advocacy, collaboration and teaming, and leadership. (p. 99)

These distinctions are widely utilized within school settings today. In addition to support provided by school counselors, much emphasis has been placed recently on the use of peers for providing needed counseling and support in schools.

History of Peer Support

The first mention of peer support was recorded in the 18th century Yale School of Medicine by Larry Davidson, professor of psychiatry (Davidson, Bellamy, Guy, & Miller, 2012). Here there was a description of hiring recovered patients in order to shift attitudes toward treatment in the hospital setting. Later, during the 1960's, peers were distinguished as paraprofessionals in counseling settings. Peer counselors fall under the general rubric of paraprofessionals -- those without extended professional training who are selected from the group to be served. The selected individuals were trained and given ongoing supervision to perform some key function generally performed by a professional (Mamarchev, 1981).

More recently, it has been discovered that peer programs in schools can offer opportunities for youth to experience a responsible self, gain autonomy, and connect with others on a one to one level. Peer programs bring meaning to one's life (Tindall, 1984). Although the majority of school districts have specialized programs that cater to the needs in their particular school or district, there are a wide variety of examples of peer programs examined in the literature. The key to implementing an effective peer program is to know the school's populations. Tindall (1984) stated:

Peer programs have been shown to be an effective strategy to meet some of society's problems such as falling academic standards, loneliness, health problems such as AIDS, teenage pregnancy, smoking, substance abuse, eating disorders, conflict, cultural diversity, stress, lack of support groups for individuals and families facing chronic illness, ageing parents,

genetic disorders, addictive problems. The research indicated that a peer is often the most effective in influencing behaviors in others. (p. 2)

Moreover, Black, Foster and Tindall (2005) examined the research and listed the following six reasons youth are effective in peer counseling:

- Peer helpers can have more credibility with the target audience than can adult professionals (Finn; Klep, Halper, & Perry, as cited in Tindall, Foster & Black 2005). Peers have tremendous influence over other young people (Forouzeshe et al. as cited in Tindall, Foster & Black 2005).
- Peers may have a better understanding of the concerns and the pressures facing the target group than an adult professional might. This understanding enhances their ability to engage the target group in a discussion for purposes of changing behavior or transmitting information (Anagran & Beckwith; Anticoli, as cited in Tindall, Foster & Black 2005; Finn; Perry, Klepp, Halper, Hawkins, & Murray).
- Peer educators can be effective role models of desired behaviors (Flay, 1985b; Perry et al.; Tindall, Taylor & Williams, as cited in Tindall, Foster & Black 2005).
- Trained young people who augment school support services are a cost-effective resource (Black & Coster; Forouzeshe et al., as cited in Tindall, Foster & Black 2005).
- Peer helpers can learn life long skills. Once peer helpers learn to teach and model positive health behaviors, they may continue beyond the program and

generalize what they learn to new situations (Finn; Forouzesht et al.; Tindall, Rouston & Lewis, as cited in Tindall, Foster & Black 2005).

- The greatest changes take place within peer helpers/mentors themselves.
(Farnsworth & Morris, as cited in Tindall, Foster & Black 2005).

Despite these results, most research and studies on peer programs are generally focused on the successful outcome of the program from the perspective of the person being helped. Limited studies have examined the effects of peer counseling on the counselor; moreover, even fewer have examined effects on the counselor from a systemic/Bowen framework. The next section will provide a description of the use of family therapy, a systemic model, within the school setting.

Utilizing Family Therapy Models in Schools

In the literature, there are several family therapy models that are used in schools. “Many approaches to family counseling exist,” writes Hinkle (1993), but he also notes that “the brief format seems to fit school counseling the best” (p. 253). Many articles review family therapy models and techniques pertaining to adapting a family system perspective in schools. The common three models that are mentioned are solution-focused brief therapy, structural, and strategic (Kraus, 1998).

The solution focused brief therapy (SFBT) model is one of the few evidence-based models proven to be effective. In SFBT, the therapist focuses on the client’s vision for solution building goals. Franklin, Biever, Moore, Clemons, and Scamerdo (2001) state, “Research on SFBT in school settings demonstrates promising outcomes in increasing self-esteem and positive attitudes” (p. 411). Likewise, Mullis and Edwards (2001) state, “Solution-Focused questions are a consultation tool that can be used to

discover what is going right with families and individuals” (p. 121). Alternatively, the structural model differs in that, according to Minuchin (1981), it focuses on the art of family counseling as a process of joining the family (Kraus, 1998). The parental hierarchy is explored alongside with its attendant power structures in order to effectively determine the boundaries within each subsystem. A subsystem is defined as a group; the children could be a group, for instance, or the parents. The problem arises when adults disagree on the rules for the family (Mullis & Edwards, 2001). Finally, the strategic model, very similar to structural, presents problems when the parents are not in agreement about issues. This model was designed to re-organize the family structure and help change family behavior and interactions (Davis, 2001). These recent attempts to incorporate family counseling in the school setting offer promising avenues for restructuring the school counseling approach because they attend to ways of dealing the not just with the student, but with the system as a whole.

Bowen Family System Theory

Dr. Murray Bowen (1913-90) developed Bowen family systems theory, a family therapy model that, according to Dr. Michael Kerr, emphasizes a learning process that allows clients to develop awareness of their natural family systems (Kerr, 1988). The term “natural” in this theory suggests an organic and evolving family unit. As humans in a natural environment, we are part of a larger system and therefore we are subject to the present moment as a natural process.

Bowen and Kerr (1988) described the interpretation of natural system: “Bowen proposed that the family operated in ways that were consistent with being in a system and that the system’s principles of operation were rooted in nature” (p. 24). In other words, no

matter what group or system the therapist is working with, whether it is a living organism or a human being, they all operate from a natural system. The natural system approach is a basic overview on how family systems function. Bowen family systems theory views the family as an emotional unit and uses thoughts and feelings to describe the interactions (Kerr, 2013). Moreover, Kerr (1988) states, “Like all theories, family system theory is not science but a creation of the human brain. It conceptualizes a relationship between the known facts about human emotional functioning and behavior” (p. 27). Bowen offers this perspective by looking at patterns that can explore a different way to see how a family system can adapt to a natural environment.

The Bowen family system model is uses eight concepts: (1) differentiation of self; (2) nuclear emotional process; (3) family projection process; (4) multigenerational transmission process; (5) sibling position; (6) emotional cutoff; (7) societal emotional process; and (8) triangles (Bowen, 1988). Some of these concepts will be explained in more detail in the next section, which outlines how Bowen family systems theory can be used in the context of a peer counseling program.

Bowen Family System Theory and Peer Counseling Groups

To date, little to no literature exists that addresses using a Bowen family systems model in a peer counseling program. Here I will define the main concepts of Bowen family systems theory, and provide an explanation as to how these ideas, originally designed to explain family dynamics, can be useful in understanding the dynamics within a school setting.

The emotional process is paramount when understanding Bowen family systems theory. Emotional process is what takes place when one experiences a

heightened response in regard to a situation. In Bowen family systems theory, the emotional system reacts off individuality and togetherness (Bowen & Kerr, 1988).

Kerr and Bowen (1988) state,

The human family was described as an emotional unit. It also can be described as an ‘emotional field’. The term ‘field’ is apt, as it suggests the complexity of emotional stimuli that family members are contributing and responding to on many levels. (p. 55)

When anxiety or emotion is increased, the natural movement of individuals is to find themselves seeking closeness with another person or social unit. Along these lines is Bowen’s concept of *triangles* (Bowen, 1978). Mullis and Edwards (2001) noted that, “Bowen observed that a two-person system is inherently unstable and that when anxiety becomes high within a dyad, a third person, activity, or thing is ‘triangles in’ to reduce anxiety” (p.117). Individuals tend to seek stability through getting close to others, and during times of stress, an additional person is often brought in to calm the tension.

When considering emotions in a school context, the overarching emotional process influences the emotional processes present in students and groups. The emotional process in groups then responds in a similar manner as an emotional system in the family. The emotion in the school is driven through the relationship that the student will carry throughout the day, such as relationships with students, parents, teachers, and administrators—essentially, the family unit. All these relationships represent a transfer of emotional processes that are present within the school’s emotional system. In addition, In

terms of peer counseling groups, the natural interactions between the peer leader and peer groups bring an emotional process to all individuals involved in the system.

In peer counseling training, the high school seniors are coached in the Bowen family model and a systems approach. Senior peer counselors gaining awareness of emotionally reactive systems can be helpful for the group dynamics. Bowen system knowledge that emotional reactions are behaviors driven by emotional processes versus thinking processes can allow the peer leader to better understand themselves in their freshman peer groups, and the larger emotional process by observing the actions and reactions of others.

Another major theoretical concept within the Bowen family systems model is the differentiation of self, which is “intended to convey the fact that not all families were the same in terms of emotional functioning” (Bowen, 1988, p. 12). Emotional functioning within the family unit is the key component that helps determine what will be helpful for a family. Bowen and Kerr (1988) further explain the difference between high and low levels of differentiation:

The higher the level of differentiation of people in a family or other social group, the more they can cooperate, look out for one another's welfare, and stay in adequate contact during stressful as well as calm periods. The lower level of differentiation, the more likely the family, when stressed, will regress to selfish, aggressive, and avoidance behaviors; cohesiveness, altruism and cooperativeness will break down.

(p. 93)

This difference in levels of differentiation is a way a person may be able to distinguish between thoughts and feelings, and his or her sense of individuality and togetherness during times of emotional reactivity. According to Bowen and Kerr (1988),

It is the ability to “step outside oneself” that is required to be able to see the family as an emotional unit. This is never an easy task. One has gained or regained an outside perspective when he is able to focus simultaneously on the influence of each family member’s thinking, feeling and behavior on the family “atmosphere” and the influence of the “atmosphere” on each individuals thinking, feeling, and behavior. (p. 9)

Based on Bowen and Kerr’s perspective, a person who has a higher level of differentiation could be described as having a higher level of emotional maturity. In a general school setting, a marriage and family therapist trained in the Bowen model may observe that not all students, families, and school administrators are the same in emotional reactive functioning and level of differentiation. In a context of a peer counseling program, Bowen family systems theory can help the peer leader to translate the emotional functioning of the group through the concept of differentiation of self. Peer leaders with a low level of differentiation will exhibit high anxiety and increased stress. Highly differentiated peer leaders will display more capacity for rational thinking and therefore, lowered anxiety. Bowen (1979) states, “Emotional process in a family is similar to emotional process among people who work together” (p. 212). In order for the peer leader to function with less “reactivity” to the freshman “emotional process,” some kind of capacity for increased differentiation of self from the system must occur.

When it comes to peer counseling practice, a Bowen training perspective tries to focus on the coaching abilities of the peer leaders. The coaching process with the seniors helps them separate emotions of anxiety to a rational state by taking the opportunity to learn about their individuality, family of origin, and their place within peer groups. Exploring the relationships within the group system can be accomplished by mapping out the system. Peer counselors are instructed to remain attentive to exploring emotional functions in the group system and help generate awareness about systems thinking. There is also an emphasis on awareness in order to decrease the anxiety within themselves. This same idea can apply within the social context of the peer group counseling program. The peer groups can be seen as an emotional unit of anxiety being passed back and forth in a natural environment.

Bowen's perspective is also helpful for the peer leaders to respond with an awareness that the goal is not trying to fix problems, but instead to recognize and regulate our emotional processes as humans. A person's awareness of the emotional system that can be helpful in producing change. Kerr (1988) defines *system thinking* as:

A process, a process extending beyond one individual to a relationship, beyond one relationship to a triangle, beyond one triangle to interlocking triangles in the nuclear family, beyond nuclear family relationships to relationships in the multigenerational family, beyond the family to the social system and beyond the human to the subhuman world. Successful efforts toward more differentiation of self depends on emotional detachment being based on a way of thinking, not a technique. (p. 30)

This emotional awareness will also be extremely useful for personally for peer counselors as they move forward to adulthood in college.

Use of the Bowen family system theory can be a catalyst in the peer counseling programs. Titleman (1998) stated, “In Bowen family system therapy, it is the task of the therapist to encourage the natural adaptive reflex in clients” (p. 178). The peer counseling groups allow students to behave in a natural climate, and that climate is the first place to observe what can be helpful for the students. In a principal or counselor’s office a student might talk, but may not be as expressive as in his or her second home, the school peer group. The focus of observing the student in their second environment allows the peer leader to engage with the group, and offer awareness of how their positions might be functional in the family and educational system. Bowen (1984) explains it best by saying “There are those who say ‘Life dealt you a hand of cards and you ain’t gonna get no more. And it all depends on how you play it. I’ve worked on a theory that would say... there is a way to beat nature’s card game... to beat the dealer... if you know enough about the system. You don’t have to be a pawn of the system” (p. 34).

Introduction of Bowen Peer Leader Program

As described in chapter one, the pilot peer-counseling program occurred over the course of 12 weeks. Each training day, the peer counselor would be educated about Bowen concepts and systemic ideas, and the ideas were then illustrated through role-play. The next day the peer counselors would reflect or use the concepts within their peer counseling group meeting. Through systemic thinking and the Bowen model, the peer counselor can identify their problems as well as a systemic orientation to the situation at

school and or home. The concept of differentiation of self can revolutionize how we approach adolescents in developing their autonomy. Success as a peer counselor is largely dependent upon the skills they developed in training. To be effective, the students must first examine their own personal strengths and weaknesses, know problem-solving strategies, and learn specific helping skills. It becomes a very positive feedback loop where, by the act of helping the school out, that student is in fact deepening his or her own education awareness.

Summary

This chapter provides a background on school and peer counseling, family therapy in schools, and the Bowen family systems model and its application in a peer counseling program. This information sets the stage for the study methodology that will be laid out in chapter three.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

This dissertation documents the first attempt of a marriage and family therapist in an educational setting to utilize the Bowen family systems theory and model in a peer counseling program. Specifically, I wish to examine the extent to which participation in the Archimedean peer counseling program, grounded in Bowen family systems theory, impacted the overall differentiation of self among high school senior counselors as measured by: quantitative data in the form of pre- and post-test scores on the DSI inventory, as well as qualitative data collected from student reflection papers, debriefing discussion, my personal journal documenting my observations during the training session, and notes from my personal communications with the school principals. Since the aim of this dissertation is to examine the impact of participation in the Archimedean peer counseling program, a mixed methods design was the chosen methodology.

A Mixed Methods Study

Mixed methods research studies combine both quantitative and qualitative research methods, allowing for a research topic to be more thoroughly explored.

According to Creswell and Clark (2013), mixed methods research

....is the collection and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data (based on research questions), mixing (or integrating or linking) the two forms of data, giving priority to one or to both (in terms of what the research emphasizes), using procedures in a single study or in multiple phases of a program of study. . . . (p. 410)

The proposed project incorporates survey data (pre- and posttest scores on the DSI) along with additional information in the form of notes from a discussion group, my personal

journals from the trainings, and student reflection papers. The mixed methods design will provide me with a more detailed understanding of how the program impacted the counselors, above and beyond the pre and posttest survey results. Using one data source can be limiting, thereby making it difficult to flush out how the peer counseling program had an impact on the students. As described by Creswell & Clark (2013),

One type of evidence may not tell the complete story. . . a typical situation is when the quantitative results require an explanation as to what they mean.

Quantitative results can net general explanations for the relationships among variables, but the more detailed understanding of what the statistical test or effect sizes actually mean is lacking. Qualitative data and results can help build that understanding. (pp. 8-9)

A mixed methods study using an exploratory design will allow me to see a more complete picture of the effects of the counseling program by providing me with a context for which I can use to understand the survey results. In an exploratory design, quantitative data is collected and analyzed; following this, qualitative data is collected and used to fine tune the quantitative findings (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). In addition, understanding the impact of the program on the school system overall will be further expanded through examining my personal journal and notes from communications with the school principals.

Quantitative Design

According to Edmonds and Kennedy (2013), quantitative research involves the use of the scientific method to use data in the form of numbers to investigate the impact of an intervention on specified variables or the relationships among variables. This study

will use an analysis of archived pre- and posttest DSI scores from a group of seniors participating in the Archimedean peer counseling program in order to address each research question or outcome. According to Trochim and Donnelly (2008), this study qualifies as a pretest-posttest single group design; the group of peer counselors are given a pretest to measure baseline DSI scores, the Bowen family systems training is administered, and following this a posttest DSI is given.

The independent variable in this study is the Archimedean peer counseling program, and the dependent variable or outcome is the overall level of differentiation of self. In addition, DSI subscale levels of emotional reactivity, taking an I position, reactive distancing, and fusion with parents will be examined as outcomes. The null hypothesis for this investigation is as follows: as a result of participation in the Archimedean peer counseling program, the difference in overall mean level of differentiation of self will be equal to zero. This will be tested against the following alternative hypothesis: as a result of participation in the Archimedean peer counseling program, the mean difference will not be equal to zero.

Qualitative Design

Since the aim of this dissertation is to understand the impact of a Bowen inspired peer counseling program, the use of qualitative research, by nature, serves as the best modality to capture detailed information. Corbin and Strauss (2012) explain that qualitative researchers aim at:

- (a) locating experience within the larger conditional frame or context in which it is embedded; and (b) describing the process or the ongoing and changing forms of action/interaction/emotions that are taken in responses to events and the problems

that arise to inhibit action/interaction. We also look for consequences because these come back to be part of the next sequence of action. (p. 17)

Creswell also provides the following comprehensive definition of qualitative inquiry:

Qualitative research begins with assumptions and the use of interpretive/theoretical frameworks that inform the study of research problems addressing the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. To study this problem, qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is both inductive and deductive and establishes patterns or themes. (p. 44)

The basic assumptions of the qualitative research process lends itself to the study of how people experience the world. The only way to truly understand the lived experience of an individual is to get his or her account. Thematic analysis, a method for identifying, analyzing, describing, and reporting in order to bring together ideas from various types of documents (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017), provides the theoretical framework to guide me in developing research questions to complement the quantitative findings. For example, I looked for themes within student sources related to how the training impacted students, and how they were potentially using or incorporating Bowen concepts in their own lives or among their peer groups. Among qualitative data collected from the administration, I looked for themes involving student self-awareness, potentially evidenced by developing leadership qualities, increased responsibility toward groups and themselves. This thematic analysis was beneficial for assisting me in interpreting the quantitative results.

The qualitative sources to be used in this study include student reflection papers, information gathered during a debriefing discussion group about program experience, my personal journal, and notes taken down during personal communications with the school principals. Student reflection papers were collected at the end of the 20-week training. All students were asked to submit a one-page reflection paper. The journal reflection was not mandatory; out of 32 students, only 11 were submitted. The reflection papers focused on the following aspects of Bowen theory: differentiation of self, triangles, and emotional cutoff. A thematic analysis will be completed in order to compare and contrast themes and ideas across the reflection papers.

My own reflective journals will also be used as a data source. During training sessions, I observed what was happening among the seniors. After each training session, I documented the key points and questions in terms of how the students were relating Bowen in groups or in everyday life. In addition, on our last day of training, we had a discussion about what they felt they would take from the program and use in life. A journal entry was also made for this debriefing.

The final qualitative source I will use for this analysis is my personal communications with the school administrators. During the end of the program, the researcher sat down with the high school principal and assistant principal separately to discuss feedback about the program. In addition to their administrative duties, both principals also teach classes, and are therefore very in tune with the students and the overall school system. The principals were asked whether they noticed any change in the Archimedean culture since the peer counseling program started two years ago; moreover, they were asked to describe how the program impacted the school in general, and how the children benefited

from participation. They were also asked to explain any changes they may have noticed among the seniors. In order to document the program effects, I took detailed notes during these discussions.

Participants Selection

As described in chapter one, participants included high school seniors that participated in the Archimedean peer counseling program. An open seminar was announced to high school seniors who were interested in learning more about the peer counseling program. Students were asked to sign-up and provide their email in order to receive a senior questionnaire (Appendix A) to be filled out and returned within one week. The questionnaire was designed to provide the interviewer a baseline measure of attitudes toward the program. The director emailed all students applicants with a time for an interview appointment. Sixty-five seniors applied and 32 were selected to participate based on the outcome of the interview. Peer counselors were selected based on interest and character. Upon receiving their acceptance email, students were asked to attend an orientation meeting. At this meeting, students signed an informed consent form, a participation letter, an adolescent assent form, and a peer counseling school contract. Any forms that needed to be signed by parents were handed in the first training day. Participants (N=32) ranged in age from 17 to 18 (mean age=18), and the majority were female (N=24).

Quantitative Measure

The DSI is an instrument designed to measure differentiation of self, a major component in Bowen family systems theory (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998). Higher levels of differentiation increase an individual's ability to function, thereby decreasing

physical, emotional or social problems (Knauth & Skowron, 2004). In addition to measuring overall differentiation, the 43-item scale also measures other specific aspects of Bowen family systems through four subscales: emotional reactivity, 11 items, (I'm very sensitive to being hurt by others); I position, 11 items, (I tend to feel pretty stable under stress); emotional cutoff, 12 items (I'm often uncomfortable when people get too close to me); and fusion with others, 9 items (It's important for me to keep in touch with my parents regularly) (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998).

The measure was originally developed for use among adults, however, it has since been tested and validated for use with adolescents aged 14 to 19. According to Knauth and Skowron (2004), the DSI was found to have good internal consistency and reliability for use with adolescents. Calculating the Cronbach's alpha coefficient (ranging from zero to one) is a way of estimating the reliability of a measure (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). The DSI was found to have a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.84 (Knauth & Skowron, 2004). This measure was selected because it assesses major components of Bowen family systems theory that are part of the peer counselor training program. In addition, it was chosen because it has been validated for use with adolescents.

Data Gathering

All selected senior students were given the DSI instrument before receiving a twenty-week training in systemic and Bowen systems theory. Upon completion of the trainings, the students were once again given the DSI inventory. The pre and posttest questionnaires were collected by me, the school guidance counselor. These questionnaires and other study forms were kept in a locked filing cabinet in the school guidance office. In addition, on the last day of training, students were asked to submit an

optional one-page reflection paper including at least one concept of Bowen Theory. The journal reflection was not mandatory; out of 32 students only 11 submitted. These reflection papers, my personal journals from each session and the debriefing, and notes related to my personal communications with the school principals were also kept in a locked filing cabinet.

Procedures

This study utilizes archival survey data, reflection papers, journals, and notes based in personal communications collected in the context of the Archimedean peer counseling program. I have been granted prior approval by Archimedean School administration in order to use the data for the purpose of this dissertation study (see Appendix E). Once the IRB application was completed and approved by the NSU IRB to analyze this previously collected information, I retrieved the questionnaires, reflective papers, and my journals and notes from the locked filing cabinet. Each student was assigned a number when completing the DSI. A password-protected database will be created in Microsoft Excel. The following information will be recorded in the database for each participant: student ID number, age, gender, and ethnicity, as well as pre and posttest answers for each item on the DSI. The data entry should take no more than two hours to complete.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Analysis: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)

SPSS is a computer program used to perform data entry while providing a platform for the organization, management, and analysis of quantitative data (Introduction to SPSS, 2017). The Microsoft Excel database file will be imported into SPSS version 24 for analysis. The Likert scale responses 1 (not at all) through 6 (very) will be coded 1 through 6, with a higher value representing how much a statement is generally true for the participant. To calculate the overall DSI scores, the 29 reverse scored items were reversed, so that higher scores reflect greater differentiation. Scores on all items were then be summed, so the total scores ranged from 43-258. Mean scores range from 1 (low differentiation) to 6 (high differentiation) (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998). This calculation was done for each participant score and a new variable was created to represent overall DSI score. Each subscale (emotional reactivity, I position, emotional cutoff, and fusion with others) was also be tabulated by reversing respective items, summing subscale scores, and then dividing by the number of items in each subscale. Scores for each subscale are represented in the same way as the overall score (1=low differentiation and 6=high differentiation). This calculation was done for each participant subscale score, and a new variable was created to represent each subscale score.

Quantitative Data Analysis Process

Frequencies and percentages were calculated for participant gender and race. Mean and standard deviation were calculated for participant age. To answer the research question related to overall level of differentiation, a paired samples t-test was conducted. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2003), a t-test is used to see whether there is a

significant difference between the means of two samples; specifically, a paired samples t-test is utilized to compare the mean scores of the same group before and after an intervention. As such, for the purpose of this analysis, a paired samples t-test was used to assess for significant mean differences in overall differentiation before and after participating in the program. In addition, paired samples t-tests were used to assess for significant mean differences in each subscale area. Significance level was set at $p < .05$ for all comparisons.

Qualitative Data Analysis: Thematic Analysis

Researchers personal journal, student reflection papers, debriefing notes from observations during students training sessions and researchers notes from my communications with the school administrators were analyzed via a thematic analysis. A thematic analysis is described as, “The identification of themes or major ideas in a document or set of documents. The documents can be any kind of text, including field notes, newspaper articles, technical papers, or organizational memos” (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). These materials will be compared and coded so that relevant themes can emerge from the data. Each theme will be identified, and common themes will be examined and used to shed light upon the results from the DSI inventory.

Trustworthiness of the Method

This study sought to examine the impact of a Bowen family systems training curriculum on peer counselors. One potential issue affecting the validity of the results is the fact that the DSI was selected after the development of the peer counseling curriculum. In other words, the curriculum was not specifically designed to include the concepts assessed on the DSI. Moreover, it may be difficult to generalize these results to

other high school settings. Archimedean High School is a very small public charter school with a unique environment due to the rigorous academic curriculum. In addition, Archimedean is a school that offers Greek language, math and philosophy. The findings from this study may not apply to other high school settings due to these specializations. For example, baseline differentiation scores might be different for students enrolled in Archimedean High School as compared to those in regular high schools. In addition, since this study does not offer an experimental design (there is no control group), the t-test results may have limited implications. Even if there are significant statistical differences between pre-and post-test for those students receiving the counseling training, many additional factors not necessarily related to the counseling training they received could explain the significant difference. For example, students' developmental maturity over time or other unique characteristics of this student group. Despite these limitations, the qualitative data analysis serves as a valuable tool to potentially explain the DSI results. Moreover, these preliminary study results can provide a basis for the use of the Archimedean peer counseling program in the context of a larger experimental study.

Summary

In this chapter I provided a description of how the data for this dissertation study were collected in the context of a peer counseling program. It also details how the study was conducted using archival data, and it includes specific information about the assessment tool, the DSI. The study methods and procedures, as well as the quantitative and qualitative analysis plans were also described.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

The purpose of this research study was to examine the potential influence of participation in the Archimedean Peer Counseling program on overall differentiation of self among high school senior counselors, as measured by pre- and post-test scores on the differentiation of self-inventory (DSI) (appendix D). In addition, the qualitative portion of this study aimed to explore the students' experiences in participating in the Archimedean Peer Counseling Program and the impact of the program from the perspective of the school administrators. ' perspectives. This chapter begins with a presentation of the quantitative findings drawn from the DSI survey, which was completed by students before beginning the peer training process and again at the end of the program. Following this, the qualitative results in the form of researchers' personal journal, student reflection papers, debriefing notes from observations during students training sessions and researchers notes from my communications with the school administrator are described.

Quantitative Findings

SPSS was used to calculate descriptive statistics for the sample. A total of 32 students participated in the study. The participant age range, mean age, and standard deviation were computed in SPSS. The students ranged in age from 17-18; the mean age of participants was 17.84, with a standard deviation of 0.37. Frequencies and percentages were run in SPSS to calculate gender and ethnicity. More than half of the respondents were female (N=22, 68.8%), and most reported being of Hispanic ethnicity (N=26, 81.3%). Caucasian ethnicity was endorsed by 5 respondents (15.6%), and the remaining respondent reported "other" ethnicity.

Before conducting the T-test analysis in SPSS, the 29 reverse scores items were recoded so that higher scores indicated higher levels of differentiation. Once the recoding was complete, descriptive statistics were used to calculate the overall mean scores for the pre- and post-test DSI, as well as the mean scores for each DSI subscale. SPSS was used to conduct the five paired samples t-tests: one representing the mean differences between the pre and post-test overall DSI scores, and four additional tests, one for each of the DSI subscales. Mean scores on the overall DSI and the subscales range from 1 (low differentiation) to 6 (high differentiation). For this sample, the overall mean score for the pretest DSI inventory was 3.88 ($SD=0.42$), and the pretest mean subscale scores were as follows: emotional reactivity ($M=3.51$, $SD=0.73$), emotional cutoff ($M=4.29$, $SD=0.76$), I position ($M=4.29$, $SD=0.67$), and fusion with others ($M=3.28$, $SD=0.60$). These baseline scores, ranging from 3.28 at the lowest to a maximum of 4.29 reflect moderate to good baseline levels of differentiation. The overall mean posttest score for the sample was 3.89 ($SD=0.50$), and the posttest mean subscale scores included emotional reactivity ($M=3.61$, $SD=0.86$), emotional cutoff ($M=4.26$, $SD=0.64$), I position ($M=4.26$, $SD=0.69$), and fusion with others ($M=3.30$, $SD=0.54$). These posttest scores, ranging from 3.30 to 4.26 also reflect moderate to good levels of differentiation after receiving the counseling intervention. There were no significant mean differences between the pre- and posttest DSI scores for any of the five t-tests conducted. See Table 1.

Table 4.1: Paired Samples T Test Results: Mean DSI Scores

Variable	Pretest mean (SD)	Posttest Mean (SD)	P value
Overall DSI	3.88 (0.42)	3.89 (0.50)	0.86
Emotional Reactivity Subscale	3.51 (0.73)	3.61 (0.86)	0.39
Emotional Cutoff Subscale	4.29 (0.76)	4.26 (0.64)	0.82
I Position Subscale	4.29 (0.67)	4.26 (0.69)	0.77
Fusion with Others Subscale	3.28 (0.60)	3.30 (0.54)	0.85

The overall DSI inventory posttest mean score increased by only one hundredth of a point, emotional reactivity increased a tenth of a point, and fusion with others increased two-tenths of a point, however, none of these increases were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). These results indicate that there was no difference in student level of differentiation after participation in the Archimedean counseling program.

Overall, based on these results, I accept my null hypothesis: as a result of participation in the Archimedean peer counseling program, the difference in overall mean level of differentiation of self was equal to zero; in other words, the program was not effective in changing level differentiation, as measured by the DSI inventory.

Qualitative Findings

The qualitative results encompass the researchers debriefing notes from observations during student training sessions, researcher personal journal, student reflection papers, and researcher communications with the school administrators. I will begin my explanation of the qualitative findings by explaining themes that emerged from my debriefing notes from observations during the student training sessions.

Debriefing Notes from Observation during Training Sessions

After each training session, I documented the key points and questions related to Bowen theory that came up in conversation. The theme that emerged among the senior counselors was self-awareness. For example, a student mentioned that she found herself caught in triangle with her parents, however, she was able to identify her role in the process (or triangle), thereby creating insight. This insight allowed her to gain perspective emotional and rationally. In addition, during our last days of student training, we had a debriefing discussion focused on what students believed they took from the program, and the specific skills that could be used in the future. Self-awareness once again was mentioned when a student described that he felt more confident because he was able to identify his role in situations with his friends. This awareness allowed him to be calm and think more clearly in order to make more pragmatic decisions, as opposed to decisions informed by emotion.

In addition, the overall running theme I observed was the student interest in Bowen Theory. Bowen Theory offers a systemic view of how to apply differentiation in terms of their personal sense of self and self in relation to family or other groups. The brief introduction of concepts, including genograms brought about additional questions. Genograms are helpful in tracking information about family patterns, allowing the peer counselors to grasp information about themselves and their systems. Genograms also provided an opportunity for reflection. In completing the genogram, students were able to have a visual representation of Bowen Theory concepts in terms of the patterns and processes (i.e., emotional cutoff, triangles, etc.) playing out in within their families. Following this activity, the students reported that it was very important for them to

understand the role of Bowen Theory concepts in their own lives in order for them to feel that they were prepared to help others as peer counselors.

Researcher's Personal Journal

After reviewing my personal journal notes from year one, I was able to recognize the senior peer counselors applying the eight Bowen concepts in their peer counseling groups, as well as in their everyday lives whether it be with their family or friends. This prompted me to expand the initial 12 week program to a 20-week training, with the goal of understanding in-depth family relationship systems in order to assist the seniors in making better behavioral choices that could lead to a change for a differentiation of self. Overall, my analysis of my reflective journals revealed three main themes: first, the expansion of the APC Program. Examples of this theme are illustrated through quotes from my personal journal; students asked in-depth questions about Bowen Theory. The second main theme, the effect of the APC program on the students, was illustrated through my personal journal notes when seniors reached out via email during the summer about being a mentor in college. Finally, the third main theme was related to my experience in a school setting using Bowen perspective.

Student's Reflection Papers

In the experimental phase of the study, following the 20-week training, students were asked to submit a one-page reflection paper. Since the reflection paper was not mandatory, only 11 out of the 32 students submitted it. Students were asked to provide a letter describing their journey, and also a paper reflecting on at least one concept of Bowen Theory; students were asked to identify a concept and relate it to the reflection topic. The one concept that was most frequently identified was the differentiation of self.

Differentiation of self is about setting boundaries and maintaining emotional reactivity.

Triangles, the second most commonly mentioned concept, helped students recognize that, at times with their peers, they were being pulled in order to stabilize their relationships.

The concept of emotional cutoff was the third most popular theme; students identified times where they were emotionally cutoff from friends or family. Overall, these three concepts seemed to help the peer counselors develop autonomy and become responsible for their own emotional regulation. Table 3 illustrates the use of these concepts through quotes from the student reflection papers.

Table 4.2: Bowen Concepts Illustrated Through Student Reflections

Concept 1: Differentiation of Self	Concept 2: Triangles	Concept 3: Emotional Cutoff
"I practiced a lot with the concept of differentiation of self, and observed that my freshman at the beginning had trouble being their own people and feeling okay with their desires."	"We discussed Bowen Concepts, specifically triangles, and how that relationship dynamic is set up. Triangles are the smallest stable relationship systems because when tensions occur, tension can be shifted to another person, which is possible with two-person relationship"	"The concept of emotional cutoff, where you cut off communication with family members to completely avoid confrontations of emotions."
"During my time in APC we also learned about Bowen Theory where we went into depth in the topic of differentiation of self. In this topic what surrounds the individual is what shapes them."	"These triangles that is concept was talking about create tension because it is usually between three people rather than two. I could relate to this concept because I helped one of my peers being stuck in this triangle."	"One concept that I learned and helped enlighten me a lot when it comes to interactions with friends is "emotional cutoff"; while usually not resolving issues that make certain interactions tense, it made understand certain dilemmas that existed within me and apart from me."
"Differentiation of self-concept the less developed a person's self the more impact other people have on	"One concept which I identify with is the Triangles, a three-person relationship, I	

them.”	attempted to apply this in my groups.”	
“The differentiation of self, this concept has taught me to analyze people in a different light, I know how to analyze and how they react when surrounded by other people.”	“The triangles create tension because it is usually between three people rather than two. I could relate to this concept because I helped one of my peers being stuck in this triangle.”	
“One lesson that I hope to keep was when we were discussing the different types of self, meaning the pseudo self and the true self, and the differentiation of self. Through this lesson I’ve become more aware of how the people I hang out or the situations that I’m in affect the way that I am or the way I present myself to others.”		
“Out of all eight concepts, I would say that my favorite is differentiation of self. Yes, your surroundings do impact what you think, feel, and act. An individual’s family relationship during childhood and adolescence shape the individual.”		

Researcher’s Personal Communications with the School Administrators

Upon the completion of the program, I had personal communications with school administration, including the high school principal, assistant principal, and college counselor for feedback about the program. Since both principals and the college counselor teach the high school students in classes, they are very familiar with the students. Specifically, I sought to gather answers to the following questions: Did you notice a change in the Archimedean culture since APC started two years ago? How do you think it has impacted the school in general? How do you think the students benefited the most? Do you see a difference in the freshman students verses others? Table 4 outlines responses in the form of direct quotes by theme.

Table 4.3: Administration Responses

Administrator	<u>Theme 1: Peer Connections</u> How has the implementation of APC Program impacted the school?	<u>Theme 2: Students Growth</u> Notice a change in the Archimedean Culture?	<u>Theme 3: Developments</u> What can be changed?
Principal	"One thing is the freshman is getting information about how to navigate in high school, whether it be taking an APC class, community hours, to High School Peer Advice. Although the school provides this information, however the peer to peer allows it to be more open than from hierarchy. Definitely, it is positive and made a change in our school."	"Certain information gets validated then the official meaning administrations There is a difference in the seniors with maturity. It adds to a few of them, how they see themselves in the future, how they perceive them into leading, managing different teaching. Exposing them to different perspectives is healthy."	"More cohesiveness with other grades as well. Of course, some leaders that excel and freshman wish they had that particular peer counselor. More group event to have more connections. Personality of groups with each year contributes to leaderships."
Assistant Principal	"It has been positive. Seniors have developed lots of growth and leadership and maturity. In particular, seniors come out more confident. The students that want to work with children and have develop themselves. The freshman does appreciate the contact with senior	"I have seen some growth in the culture, it is something for them to be a part. Each year adds diverse group to the cohort."	Would like more juniors involved. I wish for more school spirit, more school pride."

	and rely on them. I like the program; maybe it should be more consistent."		
College counselor	"I believe the program is positive on both ends. Overall, it helps for the outsiders that did not come from our middle school to adjust. The freshman connect daily really helps with the cohesiveness. Through, APC to develop help each other for students. Seniors, think how you are going to influence others. It is great for empathy and development. Leadership development gets built and with APC just allows their maturity and confidence."	Freshman feel empowered that they know a senior. It helps them belong. Seniors, really nurture their freshman	"There needs to be more advertising and to be proud of what they do. There is more of an academic acknowledgment rather than humanitarian."

In summary, the administrators reported in their responses positive changes within the school culture and among the students and peer counselors. Responses such as "Definitely, it is positive and made a change in our school", "It has been positive. Seniors have developed lots of growth and leadership and maturity", "I believe the program is positive on both ends", illustrates a change. Additionally, they requested that the project include more events to allow for increased bonding between the students, as well as increased school pride.

Comparison Findings

Overall, quantitative results indicated that there were no significant differences in student differentiation as measured by pre- and posttest scores on the DSI inventory or its subscales. Despite these findings, significant differences among the individual items did show that students experienced increased differentiation in terms emotional boundaries, specifically, they were less likely to engage in emotional cutoff in an intimate relationship. These findings align with the qualitative comments provided by the students, particularly when they discussed the usefulness of knowledge related to the differentiation of self, especially the concept of emotional cutoff. Setting boundaries is something someone must be able to do if they wish to engage in emotional cutoff. Emotional reactivity increased among the students, suggesting lower levels of differentiation related to emotional reactivity.

Although the quantitative data did not reflect any differences related to the concept of triangles, the qualitative data suggest that knowledge of this concept was helpful in allowing the student to see their own role in their significant relationships. In terms of comments from the school administrators, the idea that is in line with the other quantitative and qualitative results is the difference in student self-awareness. Administrators noticed that students were more mature and self-aware, especially in terms of their influence on other students. This resonates with the reflections from the students indicating that their participation in the program provided them with a heightened sense of self awareness, specifically in their relationships with significant others.

Summary

In presenting the study results, I included quantitative survey results, as well as qualitative information drawn from journals, student reflection papers, my journal entries, and personal communications with school administrators. In Chapter V, I will discuss the results in terms of the implications of these findings, as well as how they can inform peer counseling initiatives and directions for future research.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter provides a discussion of the study findings from the pre- and posttest survey, and researchers' personal journal, student reflection papers, debriefing notes from observations during students training sessions, and researcher notes from communications with the school administrators. This discussion is followed by recommendations based on the findings, areas for further research, and final reflections.

The intent of this research study was to provide a pilot peer counseling program incorporating Bowen Systems Theory concepts to high school seniors in order to increase self-awareness and differentiation of self. The foundation for this work included a comprehensive literature review, quantitative DSI inventory scores, the researchers' personal journal, student reflection papers, debriefing notes from observations during students training sessions, and researcher notes from communications with the school administrators. Specifically, the study sought to determine the extent to which participation in the Archimedean peer counseling program increased overall differentiation of self among high school senior counselors, as measured by pre- and posttest scores on the differentiation of self-inventory (DSI). In addition, a thematic analysis of qualitative data in the form of researchers' personal journal, student reflection papers, debriefing notes from observations during students training sessions, and researchers notes from communications with the school administrators was also conducted.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study revealed that the peer-counseling program positively impacted student self-awareness, while helping to foster an environment of positive

growth within the school system. The results from the overall scores of the DSI self-inventory revealed that, between the pre- and posttest scores, students did not experience significant growth regarding their differentiation of self. Growth in the students was evident through analysis of the individual question related to emotional cutoff, illustrating significantly higher differentiation levels on the posttest and in the qualitative component encompassing a thematic analysis. Despite this increase, the question related to emotional reactivity provides evidence for significantly lower levels of differentiation among the students. Although this is a contradictory finding, it is possible that the students still developed their emotional maturity and social skills in building trusting and intimate relationships in the program, thereby influencing their differentiation level. This idea can be validated by examining the qualitative results.

Qualitatively, the success of the Bowen Systems Theory training implemented in the peer counseling program was evident in the results of the researchers' personal journal, student reflection papers, debriefing notes from observations during students training sessions, and researcher notes from communications with the school administrator. Through careful analysis of the researchers' personal journals, the notes revealed that the students were consistently applying the Bowen Systems Theory concepts within different areas of their lives, mainly in peer counseling, trainings, and within important relationships, as evidenced by comments from my personal reflection journals. In addition, school administrators stated that students were exhibiting more of a leadership role, demonstrating maturity and confidence in daily situations, and exercising systemic perspectives. These findings illustrate increased differentiation among the students within the school environment.

Significance of the Study

This study came about as a pilot project to provide students with assistance in navigating the difficulties of transitioning from middle school to high school, and from high school to college. This was the first attempt at training high school seniors to use Bowen Systems Theory concepts in their peer counseling efforts with incoming high school freshmen. The Bowen Systems model was used with the goal of encouraging students to think about larger systems, examine interactions and patterns, improve school culture, enable freshmen to create connections with each other as well as with seniors, and to allow students to enjoy the process via these freshmen-senior collaborations. This was done in an effort to establish “social networks that integrate positive role models as mentors from the same community in the school” (Petosa and Smith, p. 351). This program also provided another means of further developing the Archimedean Student Support Services Department.

Within the climate of Miami’s diverse culture, Archimedean Upper Conservatory serves as a microcosm of the outside world. As such, by allowing students to coach each other through real-life situations, this program provided a means of relating personal experiences across a range of cultures, religions, languages, and socioeconomic backgrounds. By building peer relationships on a weekly basis, peer counselors were exposed to systems theory through the lens of the Bowen model in a diversity-rich climate.

The results of this study examining the implementation of the Bowen Systems Theory model into a peer counseling program will assist MFTs and other counseling professionals through providing an alternative approach to the process of student self-

differentiation. Differentiation of self is the ability of individuals to function autonomously by making self-directed choices while remaining emotionally connected to important relationships. "A poorly differentiated person is trapped within a feeling world ... and has a lifelong effort to get the emotional life into livable equilibrium" (Bowen, 1978, p. 67).

I believe that through increased understanding we can approach adolescents by coaching them through the processes of playing out themes within their lives, thereby allowing for differentiation of self through learning and using the model. Students in this study were able to take the concepts learned in the program and integrate them into their relationships. This is the first time Bowen Systems Theory was incorporated into a peer counseling program and as such, is a foundation for further studies and analyses on its application with adolescents within a high school setting.

Limitations of the Study

The study findings should be viewed within the context of several limitations. The most obvious limitation of this research was the absence of a control group within the peer counseling program, which would have demonstrated more concrete differences between the pre- and post-test survey results. Some might argue that over the natural course of time, from the start of the peer counseling program to the graduation of the seniors, the students would have naturally matured and developed increased differentiation, independent of the Bowen Systems Theory trainings.

Another limitation of the program was in the implementation of the pre- and posttest surveys. Students may have or not taken the survey seriously with thought and been careless. Upon additional research, I discovered a newer version of the surveys, but

since the pre-tests had already been implemented, it was necessary to continue with the same measure to compare growth from the beginning to the end of the year. In addition, although the peer counselor training sessions lasted weekly for an hour and a half which was adequate time to delve into coaching students on how to approach situations, sessions of longer a duration would have provided more in-depth training. The training was also not designed based on the DSI instrument; in other words, the activities were not specifically designed to address the four subscale topics.

One final limitation is the fact that the nature of the Bowen Systems Theory model can be challenging to teach due to its depth and breadth. Attempting to pick apart the successes of the peer counseling program and analyze the individual components of the Bowen Systems Theory model is complicated, and the results here likely provided a more simplistic explanation than the model might allow. Furthermore, complex analyses might yield more productive information on the various aspects of the model.

Recommendations for Future Research

As the limitations of the program did not allow for a control group, future implementation of peer counseling programs could include a group of peer counselors with only a basic and traditional peer counseling model, outside of the Bowen model. This would provide further research demonstrating the validity of the intervention. Furthermore, the time dedicated to coaching the peer counseling groups could be increased to two hours per week, which would allow for additional time in delving deeper into their insight as peer counselors. I would implement additional readings on specific aspects of Bowen Systems Theory, and expose the students to more case studies tailored to individual student needs, allowing the peer counselors to more actively focus on

personal student issues and not just general fields. In addition, since Bowen Systems Theory provides an in-depth analysis of personal family history and patterns via the genogram, allotting more time for the counselors to understand their own genogram and family background would likely provide additional benefits to the program.

Feedback to the school administrators of the study's findings will be helpful to navigate the students, program and school culture by focusing on leadership qualities and peer connections. My study helped to demonstrate the high levels of maturity and resiliency that the students conveyed. The students remained focused and engaged, which entitled them to feel connection towards the school. My future research will be focused on utilizing Bowen Theory in schools through training more school personnel and school counselors in these valuable concepts.

Personal Reflections

Upon reflection after the completion of the initial two years of this pilot project, I feel that the peer counseling program was a success overall in its establishment of a safe zone in which students could communicate their challenges, find ways to overcome them, and bond with their peers during the process. I see the program as having long-term effects, as past students are leading by example by entering college counseling programs and residential programs, with many seeking to continue their peer counseling roles even after graduation. In fact, several students have reached out to learn more about the theory and pursue potential roles within the counseling field. Overall, the goal of the program was to provide students with a means of attaining self-actualization by discovering their own systems through a Bowen Systems Theory lens. According to Bowen (1984),

There are those who say ‘Life dealt you a hand of cards and you ain’t gonna get no more. And it all depends on how you play it. I’ve worked on a theory that would say.... there is a way to beat nature’s card game.... to beat the dealer.... if you know enough about the system. You don’t have to be a pawn of the system (p. 34).

Although the Bowen model terms differentiation of self as “forever a life process,” the students who participated in the program acquired the tools to gain valuable insight and awareness through their own perspectives, thereby allowing their systems to change.

In addition, as the researcher, I regularly questioned myself in terms of how I remained differentiated from the system and program in order to be effective. I needed to remain self-aware, listening to my gut instincts to make sure my thoughts were aligned with the best interests of the students and the program. I could never forget my part in the process because, as the school counselor, I was a part of the system I was trying to expand. Being true to myself and due to the coaching of Bowen System allowed me to remain differentiated in order to serve as a model for the students and their future. I coached the students to never be afraid to reach out to your resources and to check in with others.

Conclusion

Traditional Bowen theory allowed psychotherapists to coach families, however, providing a different lens of Bowen Systems Theory in the context a peer counseling program can result in individual growth and as well school improvement. The merging of Bowen Systems Theory and the peer counseling process provides numerous important possibilities for collaboration between school counseling programs and programs in the

field of family therapy. The work of professional therapists, as well as peer counselors can foster and nurture the entire school system.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Senior Questionnaire



Archimedean Peer Counselor Program Questionnaire

Name:

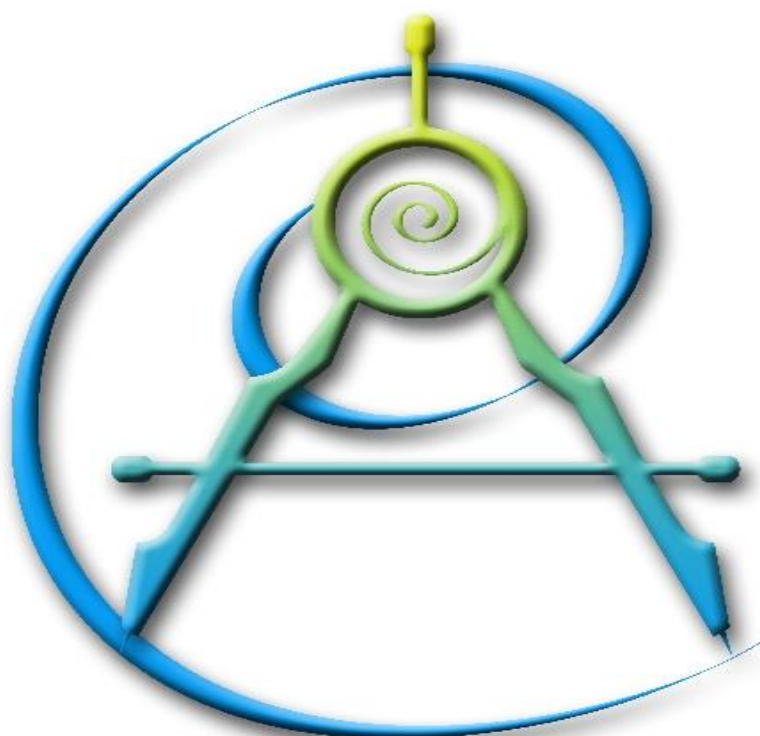
1. Why do you want to become an Archimedean Peer Counselor?
2. What is one thing that you did not hear as a freshman that you would have like to know about that could have enhanced your high school experience?
3. Do you have any experience with mentoring/ volunteering?
4. If you were an Archimedean Peer Counselor, what ideas do you have for your freshman group:
 - a) How would you break the ice with them?
 - b) What are some teambuilding ideas you could do?
 - c) How would you build trust with students?
- 5) How would you or have you handle a situation with cheating on exams, bullying, or a serious matter (domestic violence etc.)? If so, how do you handle it?
- 6) Tell me one thing about yourself that is different from other applicants?
- 7) Please provide anything else you would like to share about yourself.
- 8) Please provide any experience that you have with children (it can be siblings)? If you don't have any that is ok.
- 9) What kind of situations do you find most stressful in high school or with others?
- 10) What are your personal fears?

Appendix B: Freshman Survey

APC Program	5=Strongly Agree 4=Agree 3= Neutral 2= Disagree 1=Strongly Disagree				
Overall, I would rate my experience in the APC Program as	5	4	3	2	1
I enjoyed working with other students in the group	5	4	3	2	1
I enjoyed working with the counselor in the group	5	4	3	2	1
I learned new skills and am using the skills in AUC.	5	4	3	2	1
The group had many positive activities.	5	4	3	2	1
The APC group and Counselor gave me a lot of direction with my freshman needs.	5	4	3	2	1
I learned a lot about myself and am ready to make definite changes for my sophomore year.	5	4	3	2	1
I can better communicate my thoughts and feelings.	5	4	3	2	1
APC Group counseling helped me stay in school.	5	4	3	2	1
I have healthier relationships with others.	5	4	3	2	1
I am satisfied with my overall group counseling experience	5	4	3	2	1
I welcome suggestions for changes you feel would improve your Archimedean Peer Counselor Program:					

Appendix C Archimedean Training Manual

The Archimedean Leader: A Bowenian Systems Approach to becoming an Effective Peer Counselor



ARCHIMEDEAN
ACADEMY

APC

Christina Berdebes
Director

Dear AUC Peer Counselors,

Welcome to AUC Peer Counseling 2015-2016. Be proud of yourself for making it in the program, it was a selective process. However, you are the qualified individuals that administration and I best suited the needs of AUC freshman. This program looks for students who will be able to listen and provide support in all areas of Archimedean community.

As the Director of the program, my primary responsibility is to support the success of all students by providing personal, social and emotional safe climate. This program is designed to learn about your "responsible self" as well as your group. You will be learning dynamic skills in order to be an effective leader in AUC and college.

I look forward to offering support to you and growing with you personally and professionally. I encourage you to reach out if you have concerns.

I wish you much success for the year!

Warmly,

*Christina Berdebes, M.S.
Archimedean Student Support Counselor
Christina.Berdebes@archimedean.org
305-279-6572 ext 401
Time is the wisest counselor of all ~Pericles*

Open Door Policy: I, like you, value a friendly, respectful work environment. Please come to us with your questions or concerns. You can offer feedback in person or by telephone or e-mail. If you prefer to remain anonymous, put a note in my mailbox.

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Archimedean Vision Statement:

Written by Dr. George Kafkoulis on 30 April 2001.

The founders of Archimedean Academy envisioned a Charter school whose main goal is to provide its students an excellent education with emphasis in the teachings of the two main branches of the 3,000 year old Greek civilization: The Classical achievements in literature and the arts as they permeate our modern civilization and the art of mathematical thinking as the lifeline and the wind beneath modern science and technology. A conservatory is a public place of instruction, designed to preserve and perfect the knowledge of some branch of science or art. Children blossom inside a rainbow of heritages and dreams deeply rooted in the belief that an education of the highest quality will steer their lives for a better future in a better society.

The conservatory provides the students with the highest quality education. Its strength emanates from the deep sense of responsibility in helping young minds to grow and the confidence in teaching the art of thinking through mathematics and literature. The Greek heritage belongs to humanity and not just to Greeks. It influenced our modern civilization from the architecture, to the literature and the fine arts. Mathematics form the foundation of modern scientific thought and practice. Therefore, their presence in the curriculum opens the children's horizons and provide them with a better understanding of our modern society.

Archimedean Schools Mission Statement:

The mission of the Archimedean Schools is to initiate the young mind into the art of thinking through the teaching of Mathematics and the Greek Language.

Archimedean Student Support Services Mission Statement:

The Archimedean Academy Student Support Services mission is to provide services and support to students and their families for the greatest level of academic, social and emotional success. The Department facilitates the support system to ensure all students at Archimedean School have access to and are prepared with the knowledge and skills to contribute at the highest level as productive members of society. Our Philosophy is work systemically and collaboratively with parents, teachers, administration, and community

to help facilitate student development in education, social, personal, and emotional domains.

Role of Archimedean Student Support Counselor:

My primary goal for the Archimedean Academy Student Support Counselor is to support the success of all students by providing personal, social and emotional safe climate.

My Personal Philosophy:

According to the Greek word Philotimo, which can be translated to mean a person who offers to fulfill commitments for in-group members and to love or honor, Philotimo is the highest value one can obtain within the system. As the Archimedean Student Support Counselor, Philotimo will be my commitment to Archimedean School. Using a Systemic foundation is my basic work with children and their families within the context of the educational system, utilizing a family-school system theoretical orientation.

AUC Peer Counseling Mission Statement:

The Archimedean Upper Conservatory Peer Counseling mission is to provide services and support to the freshman students in order for them to achieve the greatest level of academic, social and emotional success.

AUC Peer Counseling Program-APC

Archimedean peer counseling program (APC) was uniquely designed to cater the students of Archimedean Upper Conservatory. Our aim is to present the AUC seniors with Bowenian systemic ideas to enhance their awareness to be an effective leader and supporter for the freshman class. These systemic ideas and family counseling concepts cover the importance of finding their sense of self as well as managing their groups and families.

Role of AUC Peer Counselor

The primary goal for the Archimedean Upper Conservatory Peer Counselor is to support the success of freshman students. The AUC Peer Counselors are trained to be helpful, active listeners and sources of support for various high school issues.

Section One

Archimedean Peer Counseling Program:

Exclusively offered to AUC freshmen, small peer groups (5-6 members) are facilitated by exemplary seniors. Groups will be meeting once a week during lunch to discuss topics related to adjusting to high school, academic issues, family concerns, peer relationships, etc. Peer Counselors attend instructional workshops on a weekly basis and meet with the director, Ms. Christina Berdebes for supervision and support.

Archimedean Peer Counseling Goals:

Goal 1: To enhance the connection between seniors and freshman.

Goal 2: To improve with interpersonal communication and interconnected anxiety with in-group peer counseling.

Goal 3: Demonstrate an understanding of individuality in group settings through systemic Concepts (Bowen Theory)

Goal 4: Develop decision-making skills for independence.

Goal 5: Apply your systemic understanding to your approach to peer counseling.

Archimedean Peer Counseling Objective:

The overall objective of the Archimedean peer-counseling program is for students to build autonomy for leadership roles.

Archimedean Peer Counseling Program Screening and Selection:

Archimedean Peer Counseling program is advertised to Juniors in May for recruitment. A meeting on school campus is arranged for information regarding the program. Interested candidates are required to fill out a basic interview questions. After submission, the director will call candidates for an interview. During the interview the director will ask question and answer questions that would benefit the process. After candidates are screened the director will follow up with the principle and assistant principle for recommendations on the selected candidates.

Archimedean Counseling Training:

Through workshops, role-playing and team building activities, AUC peer counselors are trained to help freshman students. This program is an advanced counseling training in which addresses skill building in communication dynamics, problem solving and decision-making. It also addresses systemic foundation and thinking for individuals,

school and family concerns. Training is mandatory; the training is necessary for the student to be prepared to address possible topics that come up. Remember you're a student and will NOT be fixing or solving problems, but looking to help the students to see there problem from a different perspective and guide them to help solve the problem for themselves. HOWEVER, unless the problem is endangering the student or the student is in imminent risk. The training will honor multi-cultural perspectives and will respect religion.

Archimedean Peer Counseling Supervision:

Archimedean Peer Counselor are required to meet with the director once a month for supervision. Supervision consist of one hour evaluation of the progress of (1) peer counselor (2) peer counseling group dynamics (3) APC program.

Archimedean Peer Counseling Expectation Agreement:

The Archimedean Peer Counselor is expected to be a role model as an exemplary student. They hold a strong work ethic for academics, mentoring and helping others. Archimedean Peer Counselors will abide by the student code of conduct.

Archimedean Peer Counselor Confidentiality Agreement:

The Archimedean Peer Counselor will abide and respect confidentiality. Students will be sharing information about themselves, families and peer counseling groups and need to guard all information. Please understand you will be providing service to the school and your group. If you decide to tutor, that will remain under the confidentiality. As an Archimedean peer counselor, student and myself will be sharing information and your role is to abide to the rules and ethics of confidentiality.

Archimedean Topics:

Archimedean Dialogues:

AUC Monthly- APC and Student Services highlights monthly observances to raise awareness about important emotional, physical and psychological issues. APC and freshman will promote awareness with posters, or fundraising events.

Section Two:

Request for Counseling:

As a Archimedean Peer Counselor, you are going to get personal with some of your freshman. During this time, some freshman will be experiencing a difficult time. Since you are not an experienced counselor you have to refer.

When should you Refer a Student to Archimedean Student Support Services:

Academic concerns.

Divorce, separation, and family changes.

Drug and alcohol concerns.

Educational and career planning.

Experiencing loss, death, and grief.

Peer relationship issues.

Problem solving skills.

School adjustment issues.

Stress reduction and coping skills

Study skills.

Note: When student is in imminent danger the referral process will be waived. Administration and Counselor will be informed immediately via verbal communication.

The following should be considered emergency referrals and referred immediately:

Suspected evidence of child abuse, physical or mental.

A child who cries or gets sick daily.

A child who becomes unable to function in a normal way.

Any behavior change in a child that is sudden or unusual.

A child undergoing a traumatic family experience.

Indications of mounting hostility between a child and a teacher or his or her peer group.

May refer:

Any child who requests to see a counselor.

Students who need individual help beyond the time permitted in the classroom. Students with learning difficulties.

Students having difficulty with special relationships.

Students demonstrating observable changes in behavior that cannot be accounted for by the teacher.

Children whose parents request counseling. Children who are antisocial.

Children who are constantly late to school or with their work. Children with frequent complaints of hurts or aches.

Children who are fearful or nervous.

Children who seem to seek only negative attention. Children unable to follow rules.

The "class clown."

Children who are often absent from school.

Should refer:

Children who have experienced a death in the family or of a close friend. Children experiencing a divorce or separation in the family.

Students moving to a new community.

Children entering a new or special learning class. Children who exhibit excessive aggressive behavior.

A group of children who are unable to resolve a conflict. Children living in a broken home.

Children of migratory families.

Confidentiality:

1. There are three situations in which confidentiality must sometimes be broken and you have a Duty to Warn: When in Doubt, REFER!!!

a. When there is a reasonable suspicion that the student is at imminent risk of committing suicide or homicide.

b. Child abuse/abuse of dependent adults

c. Court-subpoenaed records

****Reporting Abuse, Neglect, or Abandonment
Abuse Hotline (1-800-96-ABUSE)**

2. Reporting Process

1. Meeting immediate needs of Crisis

a. If the student is in a crisis, Archimedean Staff must report to Archimedean Counselor and Archimedean Principal (305) 282-5821(my private cell) and call 911 or Crisis Hotline

b. Report the knowledge of Suicidal ideation, threat or gesture

c. Suicide attempt

d. Homicide Ideation, threat or gesture

e. Self-injurious behavior.

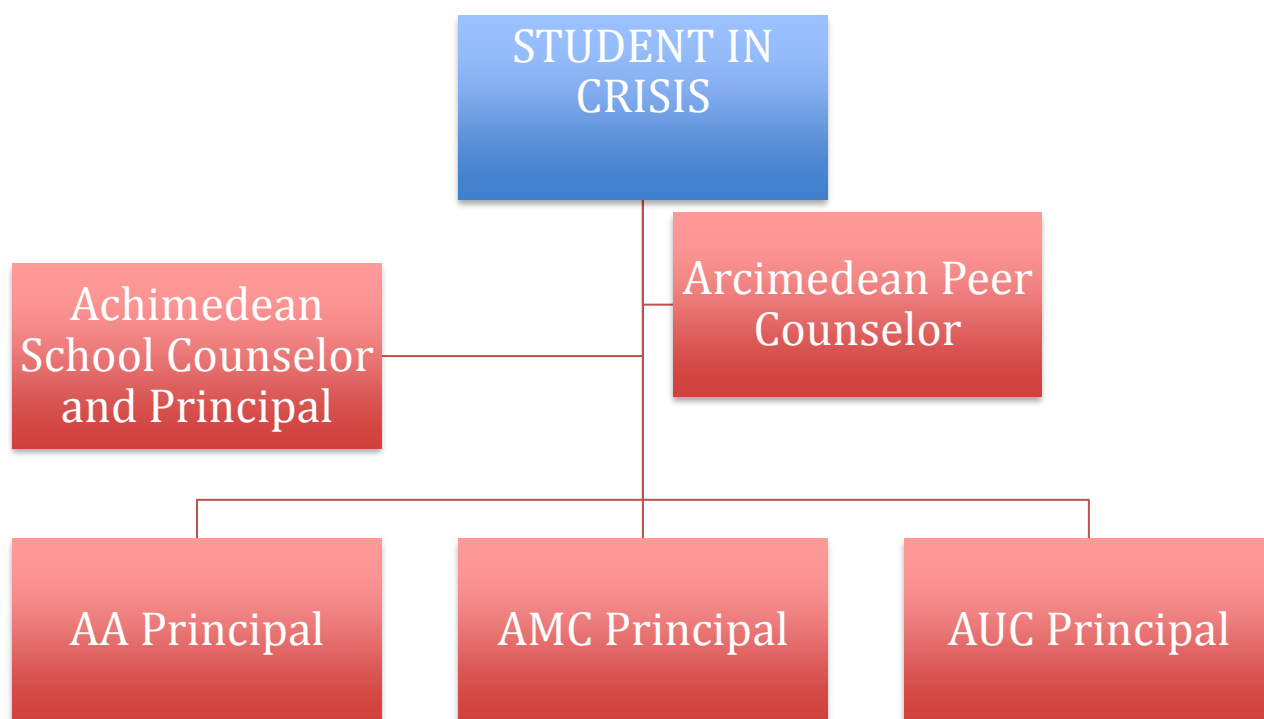
**2. If Archimedean Counselor is not on school property,
Archimedean Staff will report to the Principal. The principal can
call Crisis Hotline (305) 995-2273 for immediate consultation.**

3. Document the incident; refer to (Appendix B)

a. Archimedean Student Support Services Crisis Form.

4. Crisis Hierarchy (REFER TO CHART)

Administration and Teachers were chosen in case Principals are not on Property.



Ethical Responsibilities of Archimedean Student Support Services:

1. Archimedean Student Support Counselor abides by:

American School Counselor Association Board of Ethics.

(<http://www.schoolcounselor.org/files/EthicalStandards2010.pdf>)

Miami Dade Public school county code of ethics and conduct.

http://studentservices.dadeschools.net/crisis/pdfs/CM_resource_man08.pdf

2. Referral outside the School System

Archimedean Student Support Counselor will refer out, if he/she thinks that the services are not beneficial or is incapable to handle. (ASCA Code of Ethics)

Ethical Responsibilities of Archimedean Peer Counseling Program:

1. Archimedean Peer Counselor abides by:

National Association of Peer Program Professional Code of Ethics for Peer Helper

Peer Helpers shall be people of personal integrity. As a minimum, the NAPPP believes the peer helpers Code of Ethics shall contain the following and be evidenced by a commitment to and pursuit of:

A philosophy, which upholds peer helping as an effective way to address the needs and conditions of people.

The individual's right to dignity, self-development, and self-direction.

Supervision and support from professional staff while involved in the program.

The development of a nurturing personality which:

- Reflects a positive role model and healthy lifestyle (i.e development and observation of set of norm, which guide behavior while in the program)

- Rejects the pursuit of personal power, elitist status, or gain at the expense of others.

- Strives to exemplify the peer helping philosophy in all life situations.

2. Maintenance of confidentiality of information imparted during the course or program-related activities. While confidentiality is the norm, certain exceptions shall include the following:

- Situation involving real or potential dangers to the safety of well being of the peer helper, helpee, or others.

- Child abuse, sexual abuse, and other situations involving legal requirements of disclosure.

- Sever family dysfunction, psychotic behavior, extreme drug or alcohol abuse, and any other problems beyond the experience and expertise of the peer helper.

3. Personal Safety

Peer Helpers must recognize, report, and know techniques to deal with potential threats to their emotional or physical well being.

***A CODE OF ETHICS IS AN AGREEMENT AMONG THOSE WHO COMMIT TO THE PROGRAM AS TO THE NORMS WHICH SHALL GUIDE THEIR BEHAVIOR DURING THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN THE PROGRAM.**

4. Referral outside the School System

Archimedean Student Support Counselor will refer out, if he/she thinks that the services are not beneficial or is incapable to handle. (ASCA Code of Ethics)

Section Three

Administrative Committee

Demetrios Demopoulos, Principal

Olga Bardoutsos, Assistant Principal

Financial Board

Dimitri Bardoutsos

Appendix A:



Archimedean Student Support Services Counselor Request Form

Date: _____

Grade: _____

<input type="checkbox"/> Student Name	<input type="checkbox"/> Other(Teacher, Parent, Administration, AUCPeer) Name:
---------------------------------------	--

Explain briefly the situation:

HOW URGENT? (Please check one)

EMERGENCY-must be seen immediately

CRITICAL-can wait till tomorrow

MODERATE-can be seen within the next few days

LOW-can be seen next week.

Confidentiality Statement: Information students share with the Archimedean counselor is confidential. The student's right to privacy is guarded as much as permitted by law, ethics and school rules. The Archimedean counselor is obligated to break confidentiality when there is a potential harm to the student or others, concern of neglect or abuse, or a court of law that requires testimony or student records. The school counselor often consults with other school professionals, but only shares information necessary to achieving the goals of the consultation.

Christina Berdebes, M.S.

Archimedean Student Support Counselor

Received: _____

Appendix B:



Archimedean Peer Counselor Program Questionnaire

Name:

Why do you want to become an Archimedean Peer Counselor?

What is one thing that you did not hear as a freshman that you would have like to know about that could have enhanced your high school experience?

Do you have any experience with mentoring/ volunteering?

If you were an Archimedean Peer Counselor, what ideas do you have for your freshman group:

a) How would you break the ice with them?

b) What are some teambuilding ideas you could do ?

c) How would you build trust with students?

5) How would you or have you handle a situation with cheating on exams, bullying, or a

serious matter (domestic violence etc)? If so, how do you handle it?

6) Tell me one thing about yourself that is different from other applicants?

7) Please provide anything else you would like to share about yourself.

8) Please provide any experience that you have with children (it can be siblings) ? If you don't have any that is ok.

9) What kind of situations do you find most stressful in high school or with others?

10) What are your personal fears?



Archimedean Student Support Services
Parent/Guardian/Student
Informed Consent Form and Participation Letter

Dear Students, Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

During the school year, seniors at Archimedean Upper Conservatory have expressed an interest in participating in peer counseling. This will be the first year AUC welcomes a Peer Counseling program that will involve seniors that will be trained to counsel freshman. AUC seniors will be able to use this training provide growth and learning opportunities for both as mentors and mentees.

Please understand that participation in the AUC Counseling is completely voluntary and student confidentiality is addressed and respected. The exception to this is my legal and ethical responsibility to take appropriate action in the case of an individual intending to do harm to self or others; if abuse or neglect is suspected, if illegal activity is reported to me or if I am required to do so by a court of law. Please contact me at (3052796572 EXT 401) you have questions or desire further information about the group.

If you agree to participate, you and your son/daughter may be asked to complete a survey. This survey will help the school to identify the strengths and weakness of peer counseling program. The data from this survey will be used to identify the types of training needed, effectiveness of the program in order to meet the needs of the students.

I _____ (Print Parent Name) have read this letter and I fully understand the contents of this document and voluntarily consent my child to participate. All of my questions concerning this program have been answered. If I have any questions in the future about this program they will be answered by Christina Berdebes.

I understand that the signature of this implies my consent and my child to participate in this program and survey/data can be used for research.

Information will be treated confidentially.

***Confidentiality shall NOT be maintained where there is:

Reason to suspect the occurrence of child abuse or neglect

Where there is clear threat to do serious bodily harm to self and/or others

Where a court intervenes under court order

Student Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date

Christina E. Berdebes, M.S.

Archimedean Student Support School Counselor

Phone: 305-279-6572 EXT 401 Room: 221 Email:

Christina.Berdebes@archimedean.org

Adolescent Assent Form

Assent Form for Participation in the Research and or Data Study for AUC Peer Counseling

We are doing a research/data study about *AUC Peer Counseling Program*.
A research study is a way to learn more about people and provide growth and learning opportunities for both mentors and mentees

If you decide that you want to be part of this study, you will be asked to

1-Attend training modules after school.

2-Hold freshman group meeting during lunch.

3-Report to your supervisor with brief notes about your sessions.

4-Pre and Post survey

5-Attend Supervision with the Director.

There are some things about this study you should know.

If you do not want to be in this research participation, we will tell you what other kinds of options there are for you.

When we are finished with this study we will write a report about what was learned.

This report will not include your name or that you were in the study.

You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to be.

If you decide to stop after we begin, that's okay too. Your parents know about the study too.

If you decide you want to be in this study, please sign your name.

I, _____, want to be in this research study.

Print Name.

(Sign your name here)

Date

AUC PEER COUNSELING AGREEMENT

I, _____, agree to maintain a high ethical standard as a Peer Counselor for the 2015-2016 school year at Archimedean Upper Conservatory.

**** I will:**

Achieve a "C" average for the school year.

Have no more than 2 absences during each semester (e.g., required attendance at sporting events, music contests, state contests, etc. are exempted.)

Attend the Peer Counselor Training and Supervision.

Attend all Peer Counselor Activities.

Participate in presentations for Archimedean.

Abide by the legal and ethical ground rules established by the Peer Counseling program as required by state and federal statutes.

Make a commitment to grow and change in personal ways to be a more positive and effective role model to my peers the community as a whole.

Agree to protect the other members of the program by reporting all suspected unethical breaches (e.g., confidentiality) by any member of the program.

Agree to support.

Failure to abide the counseling agreement will lead to disciplinary action from the principal and expulsion from the program.

Your Signature

Date DOB

EMAIL: _____

Archimedean Student Support Peer Counselor Date

**** Failure to abide by the conditions of this contract will result in the automatic dismissal from the program.****

APC Program	5=Strongly Agree 4=Agree 3= Neutral 2= Disagree 1=Strongly Disagree				
Overall, I would rate my experience in the APC Program as	5	4	3	2	1
I enjoyed working with other students in the group	5	4	3	2	1
I enjoyed working with the counselor in the group	5	4	3	2	1
I learned new skills and am using the skills in AUC.	5	4	3	2	1
The group had many positive activities.	5	4	3	2	1
The APC group and Counselor gave me a lot of direction with my freshman needs.	5	4	3	2	1
I learned a lot about myself and am ready to make definite changes for my sophomore year.	5	4	3	2	1
I can better communicate my thoughts and feelings.	5	4	3	2	1
APC Group counseling helped me stay in school.	5	4	3	2	1
I have healthier relationships with others.	5	4	3	2	1
I am satisfied with my overall group counseling experience	5	4	3	2	1
I welcome suggestions for changes you feel would improve your Archimedean Peer Counselor Program:					

Appendix D: Differentiation of Self Inventory

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SKOWRON AND FRIEDLANDER

Appendix

Differentiation of Self Inventory

These are questions concerning your thoughts and feelings about yourself and relationships with others. Please read each statement carefully and decide how much the statement is *generally true* of you on a 1 (*not at all*) to 6 (*very*) scale. If you believe that an item does not pertain to you (e.g., you are not currently married or in a committed relationship, or one or both of your parents are deceased), please answer the item according to your best guess about what your thoughts and feelings would be in that situation. Be sure to answer every item and try to be as honest and accurate as possible in your responses.

	Not at all true of me					Very true of me
1. People have remarked that I'm overly emotional.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. I have difficulty expressing my feelings to people I care for.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. I often feel inhibited around my family.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. I tend to remain pretty calm even under stress.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. I'm likely to smooth over or settle conflicts between two people whom I care about.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. When someone close to me disappoints me, I withdraw from him or her for a time.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. No matter what happens in my life, I know that I'll never lose my sense of who I am.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. I tend to distance myself when people get too close to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. It has been said (or could be said) of me that I am still very attached to my parent(s).	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. I wish that I weren't so emotional.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. I usually do not change my behavior simply to please another person.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. My spouse or partner could not tolerate it if I were to express to him or her my true feelings about some things.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. Whenever there is a problem in my relationship, I'm anxious to get it settled right away.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. At times my feelings get the best of me and I have trouble thinking clearly.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. When I am having an argument with someone, I can separate my thoughts about the issue from my feelings about the person.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. I'm often uncomfortable when people get too close to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. It's important for me to keep in touch with my parents regularly.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. At times, I feel as if I'm riding an emotional roller coaster.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. There's no point in getting upset about things I cannot change.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. I'm concerned about losing my independence in intimate relationships.	1	2	3	4	5	6
21. I'm overly sensitive to criticism.	1	2	3	4	5	6
22. When my spouse or partner is away for too long, I feel like I am missing a part of me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
23. I'm fairly self-accepting.	1	2	3	4	5	6
24. I often feel that my spouse or partner wants too much from me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
25. I try to live up to my parents' expectations.	1	2	3	4	5	6
26. If I have had an argument with my spouse or partner, I tend to think about it all day.	1	2	3	4	5	6
27. I am able to say no to others even when I feel pressured by them.	1	2	3	4	5	6
28. When one of my relationships becomes very intense, I feel the urge to run away from it.	1	2	3	4	5	6
29. Arguments with my parent(s) or sibling(s) can still make me feel awful.	1	2	3	4	5	6
30. If someone is upset with me, I can't seem to let it go easily.	1	2	3	4	5	6
31. I'm less concerned that others approve of me than I am about doing what I think is right.	1	2	3	4	5	6
32. I would never consider turning to any of my family members for emotional support.	1	2	3	4	5	6
33. I find myself thinking a lot about my relationship with my spouse or partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6
34. I'm very sensitive to being hurt by others.	1	2	3	4	5	6
35. My self-esteem really depends on how others think of me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
36. When I'm with my spouse or partner, I often feel smothered.	1	2	3	4	5	6
37. I worry about people close to me getting sick, hurt, or upset.	1	2	3	4	5	6
38. I often wonder about the kind of impression I create.	1	2	3	4	5	6
39. When things go wrong, talking about them usually makes it worse.	1	2	3	4	5	6
40. I feel things more intensely than others do.	1	2	3	4	5	6
41. I usually do what I believe is right regardless of what others say.	1	2	3	4	5	6
42. Our relationship might be better if my spouse or partner would give me the space I need.	1	2	3	4	5	6
43. I tend to feel pretty stable under stress.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Differentiation of Self Inventory Subscale Composition (underlined means reverse scored):

Emotional Reactivity: 1, 6, 10, 14, 18, 21, 26, 30, 34, 38, 40

I Position: 4, 7, 11, 15, 19, 23, 27, 31, 35, 41, 43

Emotional Cutoff: 2, 3, 8, 12, 16, 20, 24, 28, 32, 36, 39, 42

Fusion With Others: 5, 9, 13, 17, 22, 25, 29, 33, 37

Received September 22, 1997
Revision received February 16, 1998
Accepted February 16, 1998 ■

Appendix E: Archimedean Approval Letter



**ARCHIMEDEAN
ACADEMY ARCHIMEDEAN MIDDLE
CONSERVATORY ARCHIMEDEAN
UPPER CONSERVATORY**

12425 SW 72 Street
Miami, FL 33183 USA

T 305 279 6572
C 786 210 2964
kafkouli@fiu.edu
kafkoulis@gmail.com

www.archimedean.org

Wednesday, February 24, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

Ms. **Christina Berdebes** has requested permission to collect research data from Archimedean schools, students and employees through a project entitled Archimedean Student Services & Peer Counseling Programs. I have been informed of the purposes of the study and the nature of the research procedures. I have also been given an opportunity to ask questions of the researcher.

The data requested including student pre and post survey scores can be provided to the researcher (with) or (without) parental permission under our Miami- Dade Charter Schools Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) policy. The data will be provided to the researcher without student names or other identifiers.

As the President and Chairperson of the Board, co-Founder & Founding Archimedean Parent of Archimedean Schools, I am authorized to grant permission to have the researcher recruit research from our Archimedean Schools. Christina Berdebes is also permitted to collect research data during school hours/ office hours / at our school(s).

If you have any questions, please contact me a 305-279-6572.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. George Kafkoulis, Ph.D

Associate Professor of Mathematics
Florida International University
Co-founder & President of Archimedean Academy Inc. Chairman of the
Boards of the Archimedean Schools

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Biographical Sketch

NAME: Christina Elizabeth Berdebes

POSITION TITLE: School Counselor and Registered Marriage and Family Therapist

Christina Elizabeth Berdebes was born in Flushing, New York, where she lived until she enrolled in Florida International University. She received her Bachelor's degree in Psychology, Master's degree in Marriage and Family Therapy, Minor in School Counseling Certification, and Ph.D. in Marriage and Family Therapy at Nova Southeastern University. Christina has over 15 years of experience counseling children, families and working with educational systems.

It was during the period of her post-graduate education that she saw the valuable contribution a marriage and family therapist could bring to school counseling. This prompted her to do further research and she decided to pursue her doctoral degree. While attending her doctoral studies, Archimedean Schools (K-12) employed her to serve as their counselor where she made her own title and department to incorporate both roles. Christina gained a wealth of experience and started to research a gap of peer counseling programs, which she created and directed, to bring a sense of connection within the school's culture. The peer-counseling program was the first to attempt to train students from a Bowen Systems perspective. Archimedean Peer Programs was Nationally certified and recognized by the National Association of Peer Professionals. Christina's background as a school counselor, instructor, clinician, researcher, and her interests in the advancement of the counseling/psychotherapy field has made her a strong candidate in her professional career.

Education

Nova Southeastern University Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences
Ph.D. in Marriage and Family Therapy (2018)

Florida Atlantic University & Florida International University
Guidance and Counseling, Grades PreK-12 (2009)

Nova Southeastern University Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences
M.S. in Marriage and Family Therapy (2007)

Florida International University
B.A. in Psychology (2002)

CERTIFICATIONS & PUBLICATIONS

Certifications: Guidance/School counselor in Florida (1044729); New York (48716011); New Jersey (595743)

Provisional License: Marriage and Family Therapist (FL IMT1575); New York (Pre-License)

Gottman Couples Training: Level 1,2,3

Professional Affiliations: American School Counselor Association (ASCA); American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT); Florida Association Marriage and Family Therapy (FAMFT); Florida Association of School Counselor (FSCA); National Association of Peer Programs Professionals (NAPPP).

Publications/Presentations:

- Created and Directed National Peer Counseling Program for Middle and High School.
- Archimedean Peer Program is Nationally Certified from NAPPP.
- Presented at the 2006 Solution Focus Conference, “A Creative Focus on Solution Building in the Therapy Training Room.”

Academic Achievements: Dean’s List ,Summa Cum Laude; Member of Psi Chi (Psychology) National Honor Society, Delta Epsilon Iota Academic Honor Society.