Before we begin our presentation today we will conduct three brief surveys to know more about you:

- Workplace poll - What is your primary work designation?
What is your primary theoretical orientation?
A. Psychodynamic (psychoanalytic or Adlerian),
B. Experiential/Relationship Oriented (existential, person-centered, Gestalt therapy, and psychodrama);
C. Cognitive Behavioral
D. Postmodern Approaches (solution-focused brief therapy and narrative therapy)
E. Integrative Approach

Have you taken a course in Counseling Theory?
Presentation Description

• This program addresses the application of theory to the practice of counseling, with the focus on an integrative approach. A key question explored is: “How does theory influence your counseling practice?”

• The program is aimed at helping participants formulate their personal perspective on applying theory to counseling practice.

Presentation Description (continued)

• This program provides an overview of key concepts and techniques based on several contemporary theoretical approaches to counseling.
Both the advantages and disadvantages of an integrative approach to counseling will be addressed.

The focus of the presentation is on formulating a counseling style that takes into consideration the thinking, feeling, and behaving aspects of human functioning.

This integrative perspective primarily draws from the relationship-oriented therapies and the cognitive-behavioral therapies, but also mentions the psychodynamic and the postmodern approaches.
After participating in this Webinar program, it is expected that participants will be better able to:

- Describe ways of incorporating a variety of counseling techniques and approaches in an integrative manner.
- Understand the role of cognition, emotion, and behavior in counseling.

After participating in this Webinar program, it is expected that participants will be better able to:

Understand the contributions and limitations of contemporary theories of counseling in working with culturally diverse clients.

- Identify and clarify their own ideas regarding which theories they are most drawn to and how they can begin to think from an integrative perspective.
Central Message of Presentation

• A theory provides you with a structure for designing appropriate interventions and evaluating the outcomes of the counseling process.

• A theory provides a frame of reference for understanding the world of the client, especially when it comes to making an assessment, defining problems, and selecting appropriate techniques in meeting the goals of the client.

Central Message of Presentation (continued)

• It is particularly important that you develop a personal theoretical approach toward the practice of counseling that is compatible with your personality and therapeutic style, and is flexible enough to meet the unique needs of your clients.
Central Message of Presentation (continued)

• Attempting to make interventions and implement techniques as a counselor without having a clear theoretical rationale is much like trying to build a house without a set of blueprints.

• If you are unable to draw on theory to support your interventions, clients may not achieve the maximum benefit.

Central Message of Presentation (continued)

• A theory is a roadmap for guiding you as a counselor in determining what you want to accomplish, the best methods for getting there, and how to evaluate what you have accomplished.
What follows is a description of four general categories of theoretical orientations described in this lecture. These are:

(1) the psychodynamic approaches, which explore the individual’s past and work toward gaining insight in therapy (psychoanalytic and Adlerian therapy);

(2) the experiential and relationship-oriented approaches, which value feelings and subjective experiencing (existential, person-centered, Gestalt therapy, and psychodrama);

Description of four general categories of theoretical orientations described in this lecture (continued)

(3) the cognitive behavioral approaches, which focus on the role of thinking and doing and tend to be action-oriented (behavior therapy, cognitive therapy, cognitive behavior therapy, rational emotive behavior therapy, and reality therapy); and

(4) the postmodern approaches (solution-focused brief therapy and narrative therapy) which stress understanding the subjective world of the client and tapping the existing resources within the individual for change.
Psychodynamic Approaches

• Psychodynamic approaches to counseling focus on the client’s past and how that past helps individuals understand what they are doing in the present.

Psychodynamic Approaches (continued)

• Transference and countertransference are major concepts in this approach.

• A therapeutic experience offers many opportunities for the exploration of transference reactions that have roots in prior relationships.
Psychodynamic Approaches (continued)

• Countertransference issues are common occurrences for therapists.

• The key is to be aware of those issues, how they impact your therapeutic skills, and to work on those reactions with a supervisor or your therapist.

Psychodynamic Approaches (continued)

• The Adlerian approach is a psychodynamic approach that focuses on the notion of social interest.

• The Adlerian approach also examines the past to focus on how the client is functioning today by looking at the family of origin.
Experiential and Relationship Oriented Approaches

- These approaches are referred to as experiential because of the assumption that the best way to learn is by experiencing rather than by “talking about” an issue. In addition, the focus on emotion is the route to the change process.

- These approaches are also referred to as relationship-oriented because the methods focus on the relationships between the therapist and client as the way to bring about insight and change.

Experiential and Relationship Oriented Approaches (continued)

- Techniques are always secondary to understanding the world of the client.

- The main task of the therapist is to create a climate of safety and trust within the therapeutic setting that will allow clients to be who they really are.
Experiential and Relationship Oriented Approaches (continued)

- Common denominators of this approach include focusing on emotion, the counselor’s ability to be fully present in the therapy hour, and the counselor’s self-disclosure.

- Existential approaches address anxiety, freedom, choice, and responsibility.

Experiential and Relationship Oriented Approaches (continued)

- Person-centered approaches take the lead from the client.

- The counselor is present, authentic, accepting, and empathic --- and attends to what is happening in the therapy session from moment to moment.
Experiential and Relationship Oriented Approaches (continued)
• Gestalt therapy draws upon experiments as a way to bring about change
• Experiments are different from techniques
• Gestalt approaches emphasize awareness and direct experiencing to focus on the here-and-now.

Cognitive-Behavioral Approaches
• Cognitive-behavioral approaches include behavior therapy, cognitive-behavioral therapy, cognitive therapy, rational emotive behavior therapy, and reality therapy.
• Of all the therapeutic approaches utilized today, the cognitive-behavioral ones are probably the most common.
Cognitive-Behavioral Approaches (continued)

• These therapeutic approaches emphasize collaboration, planning, accountability in having a sound data-based approach, structure, and focus on specific themes and problems.

• Cognitive-behavioral approaches view psychological distress as a function of faulty thinking, and therapy is focused on developing more constructive ways of thinking.

Cognitive-Behavioral Approaches (continued)

• Most cognitive-behavioral approaches are psycho-educational and teach skills, and also value homework as a useful technique.

• In cognitive-behavioral approaches as in all the others, there must be an awareness of diversity issues.
Postmodern Approaches

- Techniques commonly utilized in solution-focused and narrative therapy are some of the major postmodern therapy approaches.

- A common theme in all postmodern approaches is the concept of empowerment of clients, meaning that they are resourceful and have the capacity to change direction in their lives.

Postmodern Approaches (continued)

- The therapy setting is an opportunity for clients to learn how to move from a powerless stance in life to a powerful one.

- The postmodern therapies emphasize the notion of the client as the expert. Clients know best their own situation and solutions for change.
Postmodern Approaches (continued)

- Techniques commonly utilized in solution-focused brief therapy are the *miracle question*, the *exception question*, and the use of *homework*.

- These approaches all respect and attend to diversity issues. A counselor ethically cannot ignore culture and cultural differences in the therapeutic process.

An Integrative Approach to the Practice of Counseling

- An integrative approach borrows concepts and techniques from a number of different approaches.

- From psychodynamic and experiential-relationship oriented approaches, you will find ways to focus on relationship issues.
An Integrative Approach to the Practice of Counseling (continued)

- From the cognitive-behavioral approaches, a number of techniques can be utilized to change faulty thinking and to increase desired behaviors.

- From postmodern approaches, you can find ways to incorporate members’ life stories and the concept of their life context.

Study a Primary Theory—But Be Open to Integration

- For those of you who are beginning your counseling career, I suggest you select the primary theory closest to your basic beliefs. Learn that theory as thoroughly as you can, and at the same time be open to examining other theories in depth.

- If you begin by working within the parameters of a favored theory, you will have an anchor point from which to construct your own counseling perspective.
Study a Primary Theory—But Be Open to Integration (continued)

- Regardless of what model you may be working with, you must decide what techniques, procedures, or intervention methods to utilize, when to use them, and with which clients.

- Even if you adhere to a single theory, you will need to be flexible in the manner in which you apply the techniques that flow from this theory as you work with different clients.

Study a Primary Theory—But Be Open to Integration (continued)

- For counseling to be effective, it is necessary to utilize techniques and procedures in a manner that is consistent with clients’ values, life experiences, and cultural background.

- Although it is unwise and possibly unethical to stereotype clients because of their cultural heritage, it is useful to assess how the cultural context has a bearing on their problems.
Benefits and Limitations of an Integrative Approach to Counseling Practice

Benefits and Limitations of an Integrative Approach

- There are some drawbacks to encouraging the development of an integrative model, as opposed to sticking primarily with one theory.
Benefits and Limitations of an Integrative Approach

• At its worst, eclecticism can be an excuse for sloppy practice—a practice that lacks a systematic rationale for what you actually do in your work.

• Adopting an integrative approach is not a simple one where you pick and choose various techniques smorgasbord style.

• Rather you draw upon the various approaches and process them through your own filter so that your approach fits your style and personality and fits well with your therapeutic work.
Benefits and Limitations of an Integrative Approach

• Effective counseling involves proficiency in a combination of cognitive, affective, and behavioral techniques.

• Sticking strictly to one theory may not provide you with the therapeutic flexibility that is required to deal creatively with the complexities associated with clinical practice.

Benefits and Limitations of an Integrative Approach

• Such a combination is necessary to help clients think about their beliefs and assumptions, to experience on a feeling level their conflicts and struggles, and to translate their insights into action programs by behaving in new ways in day-to-day living.
Benefits and Limitations of an Integrative Approach

• There are advantages to constructing a systematic, consistent, personal, and disciplined approach to integrating various elements in your counseling practice.

Benefits and Limitations of an Integrative Approach

• Whatever the basis of your integrative approach to counseling, you need to have a basic knowledge of various theoretical systems and counseling techniques to work effectively with a wide range of clients in various clinical settings.
Benefits and Limitations of an Integrative Approach

• Adopting an integrative approach takes learning, experience, supervision and refinement and will occur over a period of time. It will most likely change as you gain more experience and competence about your approach and your work.

Benefits and Limitations of an Integrative Approach

• Synthesizing various techniques or approaches in a systematic way is not accomplished merely by completing a course in counseling theory.
Benefits and Limitations of an Integrative Approach

• The challenge is for you to think and practice integratively—but critically.