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In their comprehensive text *Counseling Around the World*, Thomas H. Hohenshil, Norman E. Amundson, and Spencer G. Niles provide something that never has been attempted: a snapshot of the counseling profession from a global perspective. The scope of the book is impressive in that countries from all continents are included and the range of knowledgeable authors spans a diverse scope of educators, professional counselors, and scholars worldwide. The chapters are uniformly engaging, thought provoking, and informative.

Early in the book issues of diversity are defined and contribute to a clearer understanding of the need for global literacy. Readers of this book will experience an enormous increase in their own global literacy. Thus, we highly recommend the book as required reading for all who aspire to become or who already have become professional counselors. The subtle influences of culture in the development and implementation of counseling services requires that one have a full awareness of these issues prior to reading the other chapters in the book.

The editors’ introductory and concluding chapters are not to be missed, as they provide an overview of the challenges to the globalization of counseling and a succinct yet comprehensive and in-depth analysis of similarities and differences across nations. The scope of similarities is at once surprising in its simplicity and complex in its implications. Whereas counselors in the United States might imagine that their challenges to forming a clear professional identity are unique to their culture, the authors note that counselors in other countries face similar challenges. These include educating various publics about the counselor’s wellness, preventive, developmental approach to helping; establishing educational standards and recognition for those who call themselves counselors; and overcoming professional competitiveness and jealousies. Though counselors in many countries face similar challenges to the development of the profession, issues of language, culture, and diversity combine to make these challenges unique in each setting. The editors extend their analysis to a discussion of future challenges, defining both the state of counseling globally and directions for the future.

Credence is given to the valuable leadership of NBCC International and the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (the International Registry of Counsellor Education Programs) in the global development of the counseling profession. Chi Sigma Iota within its mission and practice also seeks to support the goals identi-
fied in the final chapter, especially networking and sharing between and among countries and practicing professional counselors, counselor educators, and counseling researchers and scholars. This book provides a strong foundation for such networking and allows readers to grasp the nuances of the counseling profession as it has evolved and continues to evolve within varying cultural contexts.

This book is destined to be a classic cited for generations to come, as it establishes the evolution of the counseling perspective to this point in time, identifies challenges and barriers to its advancement, and proposes needs to be addressed as counselors move into the future. Counseling Around the World merits integration into core counseling programs and courses that deal with all aspects of diversity and professional practice. East meets West in very basic, practical ways when theories of counseling are challenged as to their applicability in more collectivist cultures or when spirituality and counseling are thought of as one in the same for helping. Continuing education programs for professional counselors will also find this book to be an important resource for planning continuing education. In the coming years, counselors in settings from schools to private practice will find more children, family members, and persons of other countries of origin coming to them for assistance. The editors of this book are to be commended for providing a resource that is global in scope, in depth in content, and at once both realistic and aspirational in terms of defining both the challenges and potential for the globalization of the counseling profession. This is essential reading for all counselors!

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Acknowledgments

Thomas H. Hohenshil
It has been an exciting and extraordinary learning experience working with my excellent coeditors and the contributing authors of this book. Both coeditors have contributed significant editorial assistance and many excellent suggestions. The 100+ contributing authors collectively contributed international knowledge about the counseling profession that is not available anywhere else. To the contributing authors I extend a hearty thank you for helping transform me into a more globally literate counselor. Thanks to Carolyn Baker and the other members of the American Counseling Association publications staff, whose expertise was quite helpful throughout the publication process. And finally, a special thanks to my wife Sue for her encouragement and assistance throughout the development of this book. Sue was a professional counselor for more than 20 years and, thanks to her undergraduate major in English, is an excellent editor in her own right.

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Norman E. Amundson
The breadth of this project is truly quite remarkable and much needed in a time of increasing globalization. Pulling all of this together has required ongoing support from the American Counseling Association as well as a team of editors and international writers who have committed themselves fully to the task. I am thankful to be part of such a team, and I look forward to continued collaboration. Like Tom, I also must acknowledge the help of my wife Jeanette, who works as a spiritual director and is someone I can turn to on an ongoing basis for editorial and technological support. The creation of any new product is truly the result of many minds and hands, and I am very thankful to be part of the process.

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Spencer G. Niles
I am grateful to my coeditors for their excellent work and leadership on this project. I am also especially grateful to the international colleagues with whom I have had the honor of working (many are contributors to this book). They have taught me much about the international perspective on counseling in the 21st century. We are fortunate to have such leaders in our global profession.

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Section 1
Setting the Stage for Global Counseling
Leaders of many nations understand that the positive mental health of their citizens is a valuable economic and social asset. They also recognize that professional counseling is one of the tools that can help advance the mental health of their people. Counseling has a strong tradition in many Western countries, and there is ample evidence that other countries on almost every continent are now developing similar programs. Although the profession is at varying developmental stages in different countries, significant advancements in counseling are progressing with increasing momentum. It is clear that the globalization of communication technology, transportation systems, medicine, religion, and business has stimulated the growth of mental health programs, and this is resulting in significant global expansion of professional counseling as well (Erford, as cited in Shallcross, 2012; Hohenshil, 2010).

Counseling theory and practice over the next several decades must focus on understanding human development and relationships in a broad global context. Counselors in all countries will need to become globally literate. Global literacy is the basic information people need to maneuver through life in the highly interconnected world of the 21st century. Thanks to today’s sophisticated technology, the world is becoming a place in which people from diverse cultural backgrounds interact in ways that would have been unimaginable even 50 years ago. Although dealing with diversity is an important goal for all professional counselors, acquiring global literacy must now be a new goal for counselors who wish to practice in a culturally competent manner (Lee, as cited in Shallcross, 2012).

World Demographics

The world is composed of nations and peoples that are highly diverse in terms of economic opportunity, social policies, religious practices, and political organization. The planet’s population exploded from 1 billion in 1820, to 3 billion in 1960, to 5 billion in 1987, to 7 billion in 2011. The addition of 80 million people each year is exacerbating problems of employment, pollution, poverty, and the depletion of natural resources. In terms of literacy, approximately 84% of the world’s population can read and write. But of all of the
illiterate adults in the world, about two thirds are women. The lowest literacy rates are concentrated in three regions: the Arab states, South and West Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa, where around one third of men and half of all women are illiterate. At the same time, communication technology is expanding exponentially throughout the world. In 2010, for example, there were approximately 5.3 billion cell phone users in the world and 2.1 billion users of the Internet. It is not unusual in some countries to see a person riding down the road on a donkey while talking on a cell phone (Central Intelligence Agency, 2012; David Sanger Photography, 2012; Mundi Index, 2012).

The 20th century was marked by two major world wars, the end of colonial empires, advances in science and technology, the end of the Cold War, the advent of space travel, and increased concern about the environment. In the 21st century, continued growth in science and technology raises both hopes and fears. Hopes revolve around advances in medicine, advances in agriculture, and improved methods of achieving peaceful conflict resolution. Fears for the 21st century revolve around the development of more lethal weapons of war, pollution, climate change, and poverty (Central Intelligence Agency, 2012). It is in this global environment that professional counseling services are being initiated and developed.

The Global Development of Counseling

A number of organizations and individuals, mostly from the West, are helping other countries expand their counseling programs. For example, the American Counseling Association (ACA), NBCC International (NBCC-I), the Chi Sigma Iota Counseling Academic and Professional Honor Society International (CSI), the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), and various universities are all reaching out globally. CACREP introduced the International Registry of Counsellor Education Programs, which encourages high professional standards sensitive to the realities of global counseling. NBCC-I is providing support and expertise to more than 35 countries while helping them develop credentialing processes and training (J. S. Hinkle, personal communication, February 18, 2012). ACA is finding ways to encourage international membership and is developing an interest network to represent international counseling (Erford, as cited in Shallcross, 2012; Sandhu, 2012). CSI is becoming more involved internationally as well as through the frequently used global section of its website (http://www.csi-net.org/?page=Global_Network) and several other international activities (Sweeney, 2012).

Although the West has some of the world’s most advanced counseling systems, most other countries do not want to simply adopt those practices out of hand. In fact, they warn against the wholesale application of Western counseling theories and techniques to their cultures. The vast majority of countries advocate the development of their own counseling programs to meet their own unique mental health needs or the tailoring of Western practices to meet the needs of their cultures (Hohenshil & Amundson, 2011).

From an international and historical perspective, the International Association for Counselling (IAC), which was established in 1966, has long been an advocate for global counseling. IAC’s mission is to promote the well-being of people worldwide through the advancement of counseling practice, research, and policy. Among other activities, IAC sponsors yearly conferences that involve representatives of the United Nations, various counseling associations, and counseling leaders throughout the world (Lee, 2012). Another international counseling organization, the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG), has been in existence for more than 50 years and has several thousand members on six continents. Its general mission is to advocate that all people who need and want educational and vocational guidance and counseling are able to receive these services from competent professionals. IAEVG also sponsors annual conferences and other professional activities (IAEVG, 2012). Both associations have provided assistance to
numerous countries wishing to implement and further develop their counseling programs. In addition to these two organizations, there are a number of other highly respected international and regional counseling associations that are listed in the Appendix.

**Counseling, Professional Counseling, and Professional Counselors**

Basic counseling functions are practiced in every culture in the world, sometimes by professional counselors and sometimes by others. They are provided by families, friends, tribal leaders, indigenous healers, spiritual leaders, medical personnel, and credentialed mental health professionals. Each culture has unique characteristics and needs, and counseling skills are unusually adaptable to meeting those needs, regardless of who uses them (NBCC-I, 2011). The need to expand the counseling profession is gaining considerable global support because of the increased industrialization that is resulting in changing family structures, new political alliances, and advances in communication technology. All of these developments have worldwide repercussions that produce significant stressors for individuals and groups.

**Definitions of Counseling**

There are as many definitions of counseling as there are groups defining it. NBCC-I contends that the specific definition of professional counseling varies because counseling practice must adapt to local cultural conditions. However, NBCC-I generally describes counseling as a process in which specially trained people provide academic and career guidance, problem-solving expertise, expertise related to specific biological threats, and other support and expertise to people and communities as they work toward maximum wellness (NBCC-I, 2011). In 2010, ACA adopted a definition that described counseling as a professional relationship that empowers diverse individuals, families, and groups to accomplish mental health, wellness, education, and career goals (ACA, 2012). CSI endorsed the ACA definition of counseling in the following statement:

Professional counselors hold their highest graduate degree in counselor education from a nationally accredited preparation program, are credentialed by authorized state and/or national agencies, and adhere to its competency standards on matters of ethics, diversity and behavior in order to contribute to the realization of a healthy society by fostering wellness and human dignity. As a consequence, **counseling is a professional relationship that empowers diverse individuals, families, and groups to accomplish mental health, wellness, education, and career goals.** (CSI, 2011, emphasis in the original)

**Professional Counselors**

Professional counselors undergo an educational program that is usually prescribed by some type of governmental agency, university, or mental health group (such as a professional association) and must successfully pass an examination to demonstrate that they possess the required knowledge and skills endorsed by the particular credentialing group. Professional counselors differ from other helping individuals because they have received formal training and supervision in counseling and they follow an approved code of ethics or standards of practice. Although counseling codes of ethics differ from country to country, each provides an approved path to follow when questions of ethical practice arise (NBCC-I, 2011).

**The Purpose of the Book**

This book is designed to provide information about the global status of professional counseling as well as counseling provided by those without extensive professional training. The countries represented herein are highly divergent in many ways and represent every con-
tinent except Antarctica. Some countries in the book are relatively new on the world stage, whereas others have been in existence for centuries. There are also significant differences in the countries’ social orientations (individualist vs. collectivist) and in their political and economic systems. Although there is a significant lack of research regarding the global status of the counseling profession, it is expected that counseling services have developed in different ways in different countries. It is also expected that counselor education programs vary widely, from virtually none in some countries to those that offer graduate degrees and use the CACREP Standards in others (CACREP, 2012). Finally, some countries may have drawn heavily from counseling professionals and organizations in the West to develop their programs, whereas others may have received help from other regions of the world. This book was designed to collect this kind of information.

The authors writing about the 40 countries in this book were asked to follow a similar format for their chapters. The intent was to develop a common structure for reporting information that would facilitate a comparison of counseling from country to country. Authors from each country were responsible for collecting the necessary information from a review of published and unpublished documents, personal experience, and communication with colleagues. As expected, the chapters differ in the extent to which all topics are addressed because there is a lack of organized information about counseling in some countries.

### Historical Development

One of the topics included for each country is the historical development of counseling in that country. This usually includes such things as historical information about the country itself as well as information about the development of mental health services in general and counseling in particular. This section sets the stage for the rest of the chapter, because the historical development of a country often shapes the way counseling develops. It gives the reader a feel for the country; its people; and its political, economic, and social systems.

### Current Status

The historical development section is followed by a description of the current status of counseling in each country. This includes such things as the number of counselors and where they are employed (e.g., schools, agencies, private practice, industry). Other topics in this section include descriptions of professional associations; credentialing procedures; and the relationship between counselors, psychologists, social workers, and other mental health professionals. The types of services provided by counselors in the country are also described.

### Best Counseling Practices

Each chapter has a section that describes the counseling practices that work best in that particular country. For example, how do counselors handle assessment and diagnosis, the counseling process, and follow-up? Is a particular theory predominant in the country, or are a certain set of counseling techniques particularly effective? Other topics involve the use of the Internet and additional forms of technology in counselor practice and counselor education. Authors were also asked to indicate whether counselors use mostly talk therapy or whether they use other techniques, such as art, play, and drama.

### Diversity

How counselors in other countries deal with diversity is an important and consistent theme in the book; a separate chapter is devoted to the topic, and there is a diversity section in each individual country chapter. The diversity theme touches on topics of ethnic
and gender diversity, immigration, identity, age, special needs, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic issues that may influence the counseling process. Of special interest is how such issues are identified and how they are handled by counselors and other mental health professionals in the country.

Counselor Education

Authors were asked to include a description of the way in which counselors are prepared. This section normally involves a description of how and where counselor education is offered as well as the curriculum and standards involved. For example, if a country does not have a well-developed counselor education program, where are counselors trained, and by whom? Of particular interest is whether there are national curricula similar to the CACREP Standards and, if not, whether procedures are in place to develop similar standards.

The Future

Authors were also asked to project 5–10 years into the future and indicate how they saw counseling developing in their countries. This section might include a discussion of the servicing of different client groups; new kinds of services; innovation in counseling techniques; advances in counselor education and credentialing; research; or coordination of services with other mental health providers, such as psychiatrists, social workers, psychologists, and indigenous healers.

Influential People and Counseling Approaches

Authors from each country were asked to include the most relevant and important references in the reference sections of their chapters. Thus, it is possible to review those sections to identify the most influential people, theories, and techniques in the global development of the counseling profession. These sections also provide information about counseling theories and techniques that have been developed by professionals in non-Western parts of the world that may be applicable to other regions and cultures.

The Selection of Authors and Countries

Because it was obviously not possible to include chapters for all of the nearly 200 countries in the world, it was decided to include representative countries from each of the continents except Antarctica. A listing of those countries appears in the Table of Contents. The chapter authors were solicited through a number of sources. The most effective method was the posting of several announcements on the counselor education listserv CESNET-L. Other authors were identified through a review of the international counseling literature and recommendations by counselor educators who had considerable international experience. Every attempt was made to select at least one author who was a native of that country, and this goal was met for almost all of the 40 country chapters. Because several of the chapters have multiple coauthors, a total of 109 authors participated in the writing of this book. See “About the Contributors” for a listing of the authors.

Summary

In this introductory chapter the stage has been set for a global analysis of the counseling profession. The remainder of the book includes chapters about counseling in 40 different countries representing virtually every continent. Each chapter follows a common format intended to facilitate the comparison of counseling among the countries. As noted previ-
ously, the chapters include a discussion of (a) the historical development of counseling services in the country, (b) the current status of the profession, (c) the kinds of counseling theories and techniques that seem to work best in the country, (d) how diversity issues are handled, (e) how counselors are educated, (f) how the authors see the future development of counseling in the country, and (g) influential people and publications in the country. The last chapter in the book is an analysis and synthesis of the information in the 40 country chapters. Readers will find the Appendix helpful because it includes a listing of English-language international counseling journals, references to international counseling articles, and a list of international and regional counseling associations.

Given the sweeping scope of this book, it was necessary to restrict the amount of information that could be provided for each country. The intent was to provide an overview of counseling in the various countries as well as some useful references. It is hoped that those who are interested in particular countries will use this information as a foundation upon which to conduct further research. It is also our hope that readers of the book will become increasingly globally literate and will come to appreciate the contributions to the counseling profession of professionals from around the world.

References


