

I think it is especially fitting that this edition of the journal is comprised primarily of graduate student authors. My first editorial in this journal was entitled, "The Case for Scholarship." This has been our banner, and the fact that we have been able to attract new professionals into the publishing arena underscores our commitment to scholarship. I am grateful to the graduate school professionals who have undoubtedly worked with these students to help them get, what is for some, their first publication, and obviously, I am grateful to these dedicated students who endured multiple rewrites in order to contribute to our body of knowledge. It is our hope that their level of satisfaction will spur them toward more submissions to professional journals.

Thank you very much. It has been a joy.

#### Reference

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#### ARTICLE

### A Safer Social Passage: Helping Adult Children of Alcoholics Make the Transition to College

Peter V. Oliver, Karen I. Case, Jack L. Powell, and Lynn H. Collins

*College student Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACOAs) reported less positive feelings about being in college and shorter intimate relationships than non-ACOAs. A description of normal developmental tasks which may be especially troublesome for ACOAs, and suggestions for counselors to facilitate students' transition to college, are discussed as a means to improve student satisfaction and retention.*

Many programs have been generated for working with Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACOAs) on college campuses (Cutler & Radford, 1999; Harman & Withers, 1992). While some of these efforts address alcohol abuse prevention (Botvin & Botvin, 1992) and self-esteem/assertiveness issues (Crawford & Phyfer, 1988), others take a developmental approach that emphasizes the role of early childhood losses in negatively affecting adult self-concept (Lewchanin & Sweeney, 1997). However, considerably less attention has been devoted to programs that help student ACOAs make the transition from high school to college and to help them develop and maintain healthy intimate relationships. It is our contention that programmatic interventions such as these can be advanced and articulated at the level of the college's division of student affairs and counseling department. In this way, counselors can provide a smoother transition for ACOA students as they begin college.

It has been widely acknowledged among counselors that parental alcoholism affects not only the abuser, but also family members, particularly children of the alcoholic (Fischer & Kittleson, 2000; Heryla & Haberman, 1991). Although findings are not always clear-cut (Harter, 2000; Oliver & Powell, 1998), considerable clinical research suggests that ACOAs experience more psychological distress and behavioral problems than do people without an alcoholic parent (Beaudoin, Murray, Bond, & Barnes, 1997; Belliveau & Stoppard, 1995). Intellectually, some ACOAs have poorer visual-spatial learning skills (Garland, Parsons, & Nixon, 1993) and poorer levels of academic, personal, and emotional adjustment to college (Garbarino & Strange, 1993). With respect to relationships, ACOAs often have difficulties with intimacy, trust, and sharing their feelings (Martin, 1995; Shapiro, Weatherford, Kaufman, & Broenen, 1994).

Empirical research has yielded some interesting findings that contradict some

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widely held beliefs regarding ACOAs. For example, one characteristic often attributed to this group is that they possess a high need for social approval (Woititz, 1990). However, Oliver and Powell (1998) found the opposite to be true with college-aged ACOAs. They argued that ACOAs may lack interpersonal trust and are therefore not inclined to risk seeking others' approval out of a fear of rejection.

College counselors have become a necessary part of the team in introducing and ensuring the college freshman a safe social passage into a productive college life. Much has been written regarding the emotional and social adjustments necessary for freshman students as they transition to college (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994; Kenny & Perez, 1996). Adaptation to college living is challenging for all students, especially those attending for the first time (Sher, Wood, & Gotham, 1996). However, such changes may be especially stressful or tension-provoking for ACOAs (Garbarino & Strange, 1993). In fact, students with ACOA-related issues comprise a considerable proportion of the student-client population at university counseling centers (Bosworth & Burke, 1994; Lyon & Seefeldt, 1996).

Given the difficulties that many ACOAs experience academically and interpersonally, this research examined two issues with regard to the ACOAs' college experience: ease of transition to college and intimate relationships. Since college involves considerable opportunities for interpersonal contact and academic achievement, one could draw several predictions about the experience of ACOAs. Specifically, one implication of ACOAs' apparent difficulties with interpersonal relationships is that they tend to have intimate relationships of shorter duration compared to non-ACOAAs. An equally important and related prediction is that ACOAs should also report less overall satisfaction with their experiences in college. There are important implications of this research for college student personnel and their efforts to increase retention; if ACOAs are dissatisfied with college and struggling with intimacy, they may be more "at risk" to leave college prematurely.

## Method

### Participants

Participants were freshmen (58 females and 44 males), enrolled in introductory psychology classes at a private northeastern university. They received research credit in their psychology course for participating.

### Procedure

Students were seated at an IBM or IBM-compatible terminal and directed on how to enter answers to survey questions previously loaded onto the computer via a software package entitled "Micro Experimental Laboratory" (MEL) (Schneider, 1988). A preliminary set of questions assessed demographic features such as age, gender, grade point average, and academic major. The following question asked participants to respond on a 5-point Likert-type scale concerning how they felt "overall" about being in college (1 = "I feel great about it" to 5 = "I am very unhappy to be here"). Participants

were then asked about the length of their current intimate relationship on a 7-point scale (1 = "Not Involved" to 7 = "Three years or more").

## Results

Respondents were categorized as an ACOA on the grounds of a positive answer to a question of whether either or both of their parents had a problem abusing alcohol now or in the past. Considerable evidence has been established regarding the validity of the single measure for determining ACOA status (Ackerman & Gondolf, 1991; Berkowitz & Perkins 1988; Crews & Sher, 1992; Hodgins & Shimp, 1995). Twenty-one respondents were classified as ACOAs and 81 as non-ACOAAs. No significant differences on any of the measured demographic variables were revealed by preliminary analyses (chi-square tests and analyses of variance) between ACOAs and non-ACOAAs.

The first prediction was that ACOAs would report feeling less satisfied with their experiences in college. As can be seen in Table 1, this hypothesis was strongly supported,  $F(1, 97)=4.24, p=.04$ . ACOAs reported significantly less positive feelings about being in college ( $M=2.57, S.D.=1.21$ ) compared with non-ACOAAs ( $M=2.00, S.D.=1.01$ ). It was also predicted that ACOAs would be involved in intimate relationships of shorter duration compared to non-ACOAAs. The results, also presented in Table 1, confirmed this hypothesis as well,  $F(1, 97)=4.72, p=.03$ . ACOAs reported a shorter length of intimate involvement ( $M=2.71, S.D.=2.28$ ) compared with non-ACOAAs ( $M=3.62, S.D.=2.25$ ).

TABLE 1

### Mean Self-Ratings of Dependent Measures by ACOA Status

Dependent Measures	No-ACOA (N=81)	Yes-ACOA (N=21)	
Feelings About Being in College (1 = Feel Great; 5 = Very Unhappy)	2.0 (SD=1.01)	2.57 (SD=1.21)	$p=.04$
Length of Current Relationship (1 = Not Involved; 7 = Three Years)	3.62 (SD=2.25)	2.71 (SD=2.28)	$p=.03$

## Implications

These results, combined with additional research (Oliver & Powell, 1998), and research on student development (Heryla & Haberman, 1991), suggest that some college-age ACOAs may have a unique set of issues which negatively affect their ability to transition to college and to develop intimate relationships. These developmental tasks suggest several areas of focus in assisting ACOAs' transition to college: establishing autonomy, finding purpose, and developing healthy interpersonal relationships.

However, before developing interventions, counselors must identify potential ACOAs. As part of their college orientation, students often complete a variety of surveys that assess their personal preferences and learning styles. To identify possible ACOAs, the two questions used to identify ACOAs in the present investigation (i.e., assessing student's parental alcohol consumption) could be included as part of a student survey. Given the high reliability of the questions used to identify ACOAs in the present study, these items may serve well in this regard. To maximize honest responses and minimize the distrust often characteristic of ACOAs, special attention should be paid to assuring students of the confidentiality of their responses.

Survey results can be made available to the students' academic advisors or even residential staff who have frequent contact with students. Then, programs that are designed to address the above-mentioned developmental issues can be implemented across campus. Although faculty and staff should make a concerted effort to encourage identified ACOAs' participation in these programs, they should also make them available to all students so that ACOAs do not feel singled out or stigmatized. Moreover, due to the high prevalence of alcohol abuse among adolescent ACOAs, counselors can also provide information in residence halls and during orientation, which focus on both alcohol abuse and ACOA personality characteristics. With respect to the former, counselors can conduct alcohol awareness programs that focus on strategies to resist peer pressure to drink.

#### Establishing Autonomy

Erikson (1963; 1982) described autonomy as the ability to exist independently from others. If parents encourage their independence, children will develop more self-awareness and assertiveness. However, if autonomy is not sufficiently developed, individuals may later doubt their self-concepts and question their adequacy. Autonomy is an important quality for college students, especially freshmen who are often still developing their own identities and career goals. This issue may be especially relevant for ACOAs.

According to Heryla and Haberman (1991), ACOAs often have trouble identifying and expressing their needs which, in turn, contribute to their difficulties in establishing autonomy. Furthermore, they argue that ACOAs' predisposition for taking responsibility for others' well-being, serves only to further obscure their sense of interpersonal boundaries: ACOAs' "inability to differentiate between their needs and the needs of others blurs the personal boundaries that are critical for establishing independence" (p. 38). Unclear about themselves and their interpersonal boundaries, ACOAs may therefore be more inclined to adopt identities prescribed for them by others. James Marcia (1991) refers to this as "Identity Foreclosure." Individuals who achieve identity foreclosure tend to avoid autonomous choices for themselves. So, rather than take responsibility for their life decisions, individuals who lack autonomy tend to accept values or roles that are prescribed for them by others. Further research in this area should focus more closely on the impact of being an ACOA on one's identity formation.

To help students develop autonomy, counselors or student affairs personnel could

have students complete an assortment of inventories that are designed to help individuals to identify their own unique learning styles (e.g., Kolb, 1984), multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1985), and personal interests (Strong, 1994). With proper guidance, experiential exercises such as these would help students to identify or clarify their unique characteristics and talents, including their strengths and weaknesses.

#### Developing Purpose

A related concern among many ACOAs is difficulty with developing life goals. According to Heryla and Haberman (1991), this issue stems from their inability to set limits and to establish boundaries: As a consequence, ACOAs may exhibit behavioral extremes, vacillating between acting irresponsibly and over-responsibly. Finally, Heryla and Haberman suggest that this may interfere with ACOAs' ability to plan an academic major and career and to manage their time effectively between academic and non-academic pursuits.

This apparent difficulty with establishing realistic priorities could help to explain why ACOAs in the present investigation were so dissatisfied with their experiences in college. The personality instruments described above could be used to help students to identify and develop their own learning styles and interests. Then, if successful, they would perhaps pursue goals with greater confidence in their abilities to achieve their objectives.

Counselors can facilitate students to develop purpose by helping them to set reasonable academic and career goals. This outcome could be accomplished by having information on career options and training requirements for particular careers readily available in student services. Counselors could also serve in a networking capacity by providing students with contacts in various professions. If more remedial academic help is necessary, counselors could also help students to develop or refine study and time management skills.

#### Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships

Many ACOAs seem to have problems with personal relationships. This tendency was supported in the present investigation and is consistent with research which shows that ACOAs have difficulties developing attachments (El-Guebaly, West, Maticka-Tyndale, & Pool, 1993) and maintaining healthy relationships (Martin, 1995). From a developmental perspective, according to Heryla and Haberman (1991), because their family norms dictate that emotions should not be expressed, ACOAs learn to deny or even hide their feelings from others. This response leads to limitations of emotional response and their expression; some ACOAs may experience extreme reactions to ordinary life events, while others may show little, if any, emotional reaction. Over time, then, ACOAs may become unable to even identify their own emotional states and thus express themselves inappropriately. The difficulties in appropriate expressions of emotion, identified by these authors, contribute to the difficulties ACOAs experience in developing healthy relationships.

Given ACOAs' tendency to be in dysfunctional, co-dependent relationships (Gotham & Sher, 1995; Jones & Kinnick, 1995), counselors can help students learn about building positive relationships through group therapy, mentoring, and other structured or experiential activities such as role-playing. Representing a positive adult role-model (Lickona, 1993; Rubin & Borgers, 1991), counselors can meet with ACOAs regularly and provide them with a sense of support and security. Positive mentoring such as this may be of paramount importance to college student ACOAs, who may not have experienced a history of stable and secure relationships with adults, particularly parental figures (Milner & Chilamkurti, 1991). In this way, counselors can model appropriate relationship boundaries as well as provide important social support to help students develop confidence in their relationship skills. Alateen and Alanon functions may also be beneficial as a means for helping ACOAs to develop positive relationships.

In sum, while ACOAs may be resilient and intelligent enough to succeed academically, some ACOAs have difficulties with some developmental tasks. The findings of this investigation, as well as those from previous studies, have important implications for counselors and student affairs personnel. ACOAs may be a particular "at-risk" group of individuals, who are prone to poor self-images, have less developed relationship skills, and experience limited academic achievement. As such, these students may be especially likely to drop out of college.

The counselor's role would depend on many factors, including the age, gender and developmental level of both student and counselor. While it is not possible to undo all the negative effects of growing up in an alcoholic family, it may be possible to resolve some difficulties that many ACOAs apparently experience with college satisfaction and interpersonal relationships. Counselors can play a key role in co-creating, along with student ACOAs, a safer social passage into college life.

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## ARTICLE

### Redesigning Traditional Programs to Meet the Needs of Generation Y

David B. Johnson and Michael T. Miller

*The 14th American generation is defined as those born after 1981, numbering between 31 and 55 million people who are now arriving on college campuses. These students bring to campus distinctive characteristics, attitudes, and expectations for the collegiate experience. College and university orientation program administrators have an opportunity to adapt to this generation by examining their characteristics. The current discussion provides an outline of how orientation programs meet changing student needs. Specifically, they need to convey institutional concern for new students, demonstrated through creative, unique programming that expresses a caring attitude toward students.*

Orientation and transitional programs traditionally have been designed to help students adjust and adapt to their new collegiate surroundings and master skills necessary to succeed in their academic careers. Transitional programs serve a variety of functions beyond these goals, including building bridges for success among international students (Borland, 1999), conveying institutional expectations to new students (Mullendore, 1992), and creating a sense of community among students new to the college environment (Twale, 1989). A central element in each of these goals is that they recognize the unique needs and differences among students. Efforts with multi-ethnic students such as those by Nadler and Miller (1999) are important first steps in applying strategies to meet the different needs of various student subgroups.

As college enrollments are predicted to increase throughout the current decade (Scully, 1999), real changes can be expected in the new generation of college students. Understanding and adapting to these changes will help those working with transitional programs to better prepare for meeting the dynamic challenges of the future. Although individual institutions have predicted what might be expected from this generation of traditional-aged college students, especially in terms of enrollment projections, little has been done to identify the future culture of the new generation from a national perspective. While much has been written about current college students, often known as Generation X, little effort has been made to look at their successors, known as Generation Y.

A critical analysis of current literature provides an initial foundation for understanding the next generation of college students. Through an examination of some key elements of the literature, important bearings on orientation and transitional programs and courses, including both the content and the methods of instruction, can be

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