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Dungeons and Dragons as a Therapeutic Intervention Training

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Dungeons and Dragons as a Therapeutic Intervention Training

A Project Presented to
The Graduate Faculty of
Minnesota State University Moorhead

By
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Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Science in
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Abstract

Dungeons and Dragons (D&D) is a role-playing game that gives players' versatility by allowing them to dictate, customize, or create their own experience. There are many different iterations of role-playing games with varying presentations for in-person and online play; table-top role-playing games and video games (Connell, 2024) (Kowal et al, 2021). Through the 3 pillars of play (Exploration, Role-play, and Combat) player are able to customize their own experience to their preference or collective preference of the group. The balance between the 3 frames of play (Player, Game, and Character) optimizes the players role-playing experience (Connell, 2023). D&D is the first table-top role-playing game to be created, and after a history of stigma it's still being played today in the form of its fifth edition 5 decades later (Dungeons & Dragons, 2021) (Sidhu et al., 2020) (Biskin et al, 2015). D&D can facilitate high levels of creativity and empathy, promoting friendships, feelings of connectedness, exploring varying lifestyle models, balance group needs, and moral reasoning (Henrich & Worthington, 2017). The introduction of a fourth frame of play, psychological theory, has made a base for intertwining counseling and D&D as a new therapeutic intervention (Boccamazzo and Connell, 2020). Play therapy, psychodrama therapy, and narrative therapy are viable counseling approaches for the therapeutic application of D&D. Counselors are also able to insert other therapeutic interventions within the game play of D&D sessions. Counselors have to build competence in therapeutic theory and their understanding of D&D to use this game as a therapeutic invention with their clients (Connell, 2023).

Keywords: Dungeons and Dragons, creativity, mental health

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Introduction

Dungeons and Dragons (D&D) is a role-playing game, and it promotes freedom of choice, expressiveness, and creativity. In the world of counseling, therapeutic interventions provide a systematic way to treat clients with mental health illness. Many of these interventions tend to be similar and have a one-size fits all approach. Consequently, having a variety of different creative approaches that can be tailored to the unique clientele is beneficial for the counselor. The purpose of this training is to discuss how the game D&D can be used as a therapeutic intervention to treat mental health clients.

Role Playing Games

Role playing games have a long history of development over the years. Today it's common for people to think of role-playing games in a video game format. However, these video games that are focused on our choices and decisions started in the shape of playing on a board and using books. Connell (2023) defines a role playing game as any game in which players takes on a role of a character in the world/universe of the game, where the conditions of losing or winning are not fully clear (Connell, 2023). Role playing games can have multiple iterations and forms. The definition is nebulous because playing a role in any type of game where you can dictate, customize, or create your own experience is considered a role-playing game.

Table-Top Role-Playing Games

As the definition of what constitutes a role-playing game can vary between individuals, the original understanding of that definition is a good place start. Taking a look at table-top role-playing games can show some of the possibilities for opportunities for role-playing games in mental health. Connell (2023) breaks down what a typical table-top role-playing game looks like

and the signature themes related to those types of game. Each game will have one player that acts as the narrator of the story, and this title can be different depending on what game is being played. Such a role can be called game master, Dungeon Master, story teller, or anything that symbolizes the narrator position. The rest of the players are in the role of being a character in the story, they can be referred to as a player character. The narrator is in charge of conceptualizing and describing the world/universe to the player characters.

Pillars of Play

The role of the player character is to react and play out scenarios in the world/universe of the game. The player character can make a multitude of different decisions but the success of the action is determined typically by dice rolling or any other method that will dictate the outcome. Typically, each table-top role playing game has 3 pillars of play; exploration, role-play, and combat.

Exploration is the pillar that refers to the game play that is for discovery in the world/universe in the game by exploring lore, landscapes, and scenarios. The role-playing pillar centers on the experience of the players putting themselves in the perspective and mindset of their character, being able to make decisions and actions that their character would make. Essentially, when the player steps out of their self, and becomes that character.

Combat is the pillar that focuses on the conflict with other beings or the environment of the scenarios in the game. This could mean going into turn-based play for confronting fighting, traps, natural hazards, or anything that involves a conflict. It is good to note that not every session will use each pillar in the game play and it's common to see an imbalance between the pillars for throughout the duration of the game. Some games favor the combat pillar over the

other two pillars, or vice versa, where the exploration pillar and role-playing pillar is favored over the combat pillar. The priority of which of the pillars of play are determined by all players involved in the game (Connell, 2023). Because of creative endless possibilities, every table-top role playing game is customizable and can be tailored to players who are playing the game.

Variety/Customization of Role-Playing Games

Role-playing games are customizable and this is reflected in the numerous games available to the public. Connell (2023) discusses how the first table-top role-playing game was called D&D. From when it was created to present day there are hundreds to thousands of games inspired by its game mechanics (Connell, 2023). The variety of games might have been inspired by the mechanics of ‘Dungeons and Dragons.’ The genres of these games spread far; Legend of the Five Rings, Cyberpunk Red, Blades in the Dark, Call of CTHULHU, Partners, External Containment Bureau, The Troubleshooters, Bucket of Bolts, and Alice is Missing (10 Tabletop RPGs That Belong, 2022). These games can be held in a fantasy world but the setting can be from anytime period and each possess their own unique lore. With the multitude of options for table-top role playing games, it might be hard to determine which ones can be used for therapeutic purposes.

Frames of Play

A good start would be looking at the interpersonal mechanics in a table-top role-playing game. Connell (2023) describes picking a table-top role-playing game for therapeutic use can come down to a certain focus, frame theory. Looking at the 3 frames of play in a role-playing game will determine a functionality of a game; the first frame is the frame of the player, the second is the frame of the game, and the third is the frame of the character (Connell, 2023). Fine

(1983) lists and describes the 3 frames of table-top role-playing games. The frame of the player is the perspective, wants, and needs of the individual playing the game. The frame of the game focuses on the universe that the game has developed, that includes certain situations and lore of the game that have been established while playing. The frame of the character is the individual the player has created, including the motivations, actions, and perceptions of the imaginary character the player is acting out. The table-top role-playing game doesn't function correctly when there is confusion of the 3 frames (Fine, 1983). Connell (2023) explains that when a player (frame of player) takes their own wants, needs, or perspective over the other 2 perspectives (frame of the game, frame of the character) there can be a collapse in the game. It's the act of the player taking themselves out of their own perspective and puts themselves into the perspective of their character and the world/environment they need to navigate. The frame of the player is to take in the information provided and contemplate 'what would my character do?' or 'I think this might be a trap but my character doesn't know that' concepts (Connell, 2023).

The player might have more information than their character but it doesn't mean they should make decisions outside of their character's perspective or awareness, and not bring in or leave out emotion that isn't consistent with the other frames. This also can go into not taking other players or the narrator's actions personally but more of putting themselves in a third person view of the story. It's an active evaluation and an experience of different perspectives, emotions, and actions of someone else (the character) other than the player's own self.

Fourth Psychological Theory Frame

The process of contemplating different perspectives, emotions, and actions are inherently connected to therapy and mental health. Connecting table-top role playing games and the

therapeutic process, in theory, should work. Boccamazzo and Connell (2020) describe a fourth frame to address psychological interventions into role playing games; the frame of psychological theory. Through this fourth frame, a mental health professional can understand the interventions and is potentially able to intertwine skill development in the player (frame of the player) through the process of playing the mechanics of the game (frame of the game) by using the character they choose as an outlet (frame of the character) to practice those skills. As a narrator of the game, mental health professionals need a good understanding of the table-top role playing game they want to use, as well have a good understanding of the psychological/behavioral interventions they intend to use in game sessions (Boccamazzo and Connell, 2020). There are a lot of table-top role playing games out in the world, and because of that, the decision rests on the mental health professional to understand the concepts and mechanics of the game they intend to use, as well as having the ability to find and/or create opportunities to implement therapeutic interventions into game sessions.

Mental Health in Video Games

As technology has rapidly developed, improvements have been made in the gaming industry. The low-tech style of the past gaming options are still relevant today, but the capabilities and opportunities from the advancement in technology has brought a lot more utility and options to gaming as a whole. When it comes to therapeutic benefits from role playing games, video games and technology can add to that. Kowal et al (2021) discusses mental health issues, and explains that depression and anxiety are the most common throughout the world. As mental health issues are on the rise after the Covid-19 pandemic the demand of new therapeutic techniques and tools are needed to provide coping mechanisms in a cheaper and easily-accessible way. Commercial gaming is one of the methods under the microscope by researchers. The factor

of cost for these types of games should be considered, which typically range from 0\$ to 71\$, are readily available to play anywhere and at any time. It is found that there benefits in the use of commercial video games recreationally. Benefits of commercial video gaming recreationally were found, such as: socialization, cognition, emotional regulation, and overall mental health (Kowal et al, 2021). Commercial gaming brings a low-cost, accessible avenue for individuals who are in need of therapy. It's a resource that can be used alone or practically connect you across the world with other players. It really depends on the game that is selected but the utility of commercial gaming is versatile, and could provide certain benefits to the user.

Versatility of Gaming

Versatility of gaming in therapy brings options and opportunity for individuals to maintain good mental health or provide an opportunity to improve their mental health for those who are struggling. Game design can differ and so can the mental health benefits that follow closely behind. Kowal et al (2021) discusses the variety of benefits that come from commercial gaming depends on what game is being played. For all the games they examined, they showed some level of cognition building, goal achievement, and emotion regulation. In the theme of cognition building they saw a spread of cognitive improvements such as changes in high executive function and visuospatial perception in individuals who play. They also noted how games mitigated symptoms of dyslexia. For the theme of goal achievement, they found that games showed improvements in goal setting behaviors and improving the motivation to complete those goals. Lastly, the emotion regulation theme was also found at varying levels in all the games they looked at. They found that these games helped facilitate coping strategies with strong emotions and regulated strong emotive experiences by simulating specific situations within those games (Kowal et al, 2021). These games help by putting these individuals through a situation in

a low risk atmosphere rather than a real-life scenario. With those themes reoccurring in all the games, there are some that pertain to certain iterations of games.

Different Styles of Gaming

In commercial gaming you're not going to be provided all the benefits that could be given from the games you play, but more of the style of the game can dictate the types of benefits the player experiences. Kowal et al (2021) explores the different mental health benefits to certain types of games, but the aim is focusing on the benefits that came with adventure video games, role playing games, and multiplayer games. With these types of games prosocial behaviors were promoted and they found that there was a decrease in loneliness. These types of games bring an element of interaction with 'Non-Playable Characters' (NPC's are programs that simulate a person) and interaction with real people who are connected through the game. Focusing on role playing games, they found that there were benefits of positive reappraisal and mood repair for individuals who played them. They explain it relates to goal achievement, and is shown over long periods of time and at the same time provides large leaps in development (Kowal et al, 2021). Role playing games in a digital form, whether they involve other people or not, provide a lot of mental health benefits to the individuals who played them recreationally. There can be a lot of differences in the style, concept, and delivery, between the games that are in digital form and ones that meant to be played on a board, but the reoccurring themes are centered on the mental health benefits that are provided while playing these games

Dungeons & Dragons

D&D was published by Tactical Studies Rules, Inc. in 1974. The game was created by Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson, and has since gone through several updates, and is currently on

the fifth edition (Dungeons & Dragons, 2021). The game has an extensive list of rules and might seem intimidating to newcomers, but with the complicated nature of the role-playing game it is designed to give players freedom to play the way they want to. The customization and imaginative aspect are integrated into the entire concept of playing the game, and having a large rule system to accommodate for the most players as possible is necessary.

Dungeons and Dragons Rules/Mechanics

Mearis et al. (2014) describes how the game is played through the official and most recent, updated version of D&D. The basic premise of D&D is that three to seven individuals get together and form a group. One player is the “Dungeon Master” that creates and guides the story that the other players have to navigate by making decisions as their characters. The amount of sessions and length of each session is developed the group. As the game is set in a medieval fantasy world, the players create characters from a variety of fantasy races and then choose a class that gives that character special abilities. In the first session, session zero, the dungeon master and players will discuss the ground rules/expectations of the campaign. In this session players will develop their characters into a class, race, stats, and backstory. Classes are separated into 12 categories; barbarian, bard, cleric, druid, fighter, monk, paladin, ranger, rogue, sorcerer, warlock, and wizard. Each of these classes has different features and abilities that tie into other aspects of creating a character. Some of the classes can use magic, fight with weapons, or even both (Mearis & Crawford, 2014).

Mearis et al. (2014) describes that the class of the character is a huge part of determining what they can do for actions in situations or combat. Another aspect of character creation is picking skills and using a point system to determine stats for their characters attributes;

Constitution, Strength, Dexterity, Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma. These attributes determine how well a certain character can perform different actions. To determine the success of actions in the game they use 6 different types of rolling dice; 1d4, 1d6, 1d8, 1d10, 1d12, and 1d20. Throughout the game the Dungeon Master will put the other players through an adventure/situation where they have to make decisions, fight enemies, and solve puzzles, ultimately creating a unique story crafted by the actions and decisions of individuals participating in the game (Mearis & Crawford, 2014). Although the explanation that was just given was simple, it is not enough to fully understand how to play. It really comes down to getting first-hand experience, reading more into it, or even put in time watching a game/session. The game is always evolving and new books are frequently published with add-ons of lore, character creation features, monsters/enemies, and overall content.

D&D Historical Stigma

In recent years the game ‘Dungeon and Dragons’ has become more popular and mainstream, but that was not always the case. Amongst religious populations it was considered to be related to satanic worship. Sidhu et al. (2020) discussed how the satanic panic was a phenomenon of mass hysteria in the 1980s, where a multitude of people in the United States were in fear of the rise of devil worship. The satanic panic stemmed from many allegations which claimed that day-care providers were abusing children who were in their care for satanic rituals. Those allegations were disproven and discredited, but the satanic panic spread to other areas in the United States. With a mass hysteria that was centered on fear towards misunderstood concepts, several populations of people started linking D&D and devil worship together while the game was growing in popularity (Sidhu et al., 2020).

D&D was relatively new for the 1980s and individuals outside of the community who play it wouldn't understand the concepts within the game. Sidhu et al. (2020) described that the satanic panic movement aimed its focus on D&D when Patricia Pulling believed her son completed suicide from the influence of playing the game. She claimed the game promoted a multitude of misleading beliefs towards the game including; demonology, witchcraft, voodoo, murder, rape, blasphemy, suicide, assassination, insanity, sex perversion, homosexuality, prostitution, satanic type rituals, etc. These claims sparked a smear campaign against D&D and the people who played it, produced stigma and misinformation that negatively affected the image of D&D for several years (Sidhu et al., 2020). Over the years scholars have tried to uncover if there is any weight to the stigma and the claims of negative ideologies of D&D. Researchers haven't found correlations between the two.

Psychiatrists' Perceptions

Biskin et al. (2015) explored psychiatrists' perceptions of role-playing games and found that participants did not assume that RPG players are at higher risk for psychopathology (Biskin et al, 2015). D&D and the mental health field have been woven together for decades. Both faced stigmas in the past, and throughout the years they have slowly been more accepted and mainstream. Though, that stigma still lingering, there has been major leaps in progressive thinking and game popularity in recent years. It's more excepting to talk about mental health and to seek help, and Dungeons and Dragons is having the most success it's ever had.

Mental Health Benefits of D&D

With more attraction over the years people have studied the game in many aspects of its functioning. Some of those aspects that have been researched involved an individual's mental

health and social skills when playing the game. Sören Henrich & Rachel Worthington (2017), discuss if used correctly, the game D&D can facilitate high levels of creativity and empathy. The development of creativity and empathy can facilitate the maintenance of friendships, feelings of connectedness, exploring varying lifestyle models, balance group needs, and moral reasoning (Henrich & Worthington, 2017). Connell (2023) states that individuals with varying diagnosis's can benefit as well; ADHD, Autism-1, Spectrum Disorder, Social Skills, Specific Learning Disorder, Reading Disorder, Mathematics Disorder, Anxiety, Depression, PTSD, and Trauma. With others having a harder time participating in group settings effectively, they can also benefit; eating disorders, Autism-2 & Autism-3, ODD/CD, dissociative or delusional disorders (Connell, 2023).

Social Benefits of D&D

The nature of the game, which is group focused, naturally encourages individuals to bond and explore new ways of thinking. Naturally, bonds between group mates are developed by exposure to different ways of thinking and experiencing situations together. It has been shown to possibly be beneficial in the improvement and maintaining of an individual's moral reasoning. Casey et al. (2017) found that D&D can serve as a medium for moral development in individuals. The authors found that individuals who play D&D had higher pre-test morality scores compared to people who didn't play the game. There was also an increase between the pre-test and post-test morality scores after people participated in playing D&D. As a result of their findings, the conclusion was drawn that D&D is a tool that can be used for individual's moral training (Casey, Weissglass, & Wright, 2020). In a single session of D&D individuals will be faced with many decisions and a lot of them can be considered thought provoking, morality questions that a player will have to navigate and learn from.

Benefits after the Covid-19 Pandemic

After the Covid-19 pandemic there's been a spike in many mental health problems in the United States. When the Covid-19 pandemic arrived in the United States, the majority of the population had their everyday lives halted to a stop, and in many cases individuals were isolated. With that isolation, those individuals lacked social interactions and a sense of community. Given the fact that D&D can foster an environment of connection and togetherness; it can be used as a means to combat negative effects from the Covid-19 pandemic including stress, depression, loneliness, substance abuse, domestic violence, and etc. Baker et al. (2022) discussed that D&D has a multitude of benefits including; exposure to democratic ideologies, friendship maintenance, extraordinary experiences, and good versus evil concepts (Baker, Turner, & Kotera, 2022). D&D creates an atmosphere that fosters interaction and connection between players.

The game can be made for anyone and adapted to however someone wants play. Scriven (2021) explores the impact the Covid-19 pandemic had on the players and function of the game. It was found that Dungeons and Dragons transcends in-person boundaries and can also be played online, and is customizable to fit a variety of situations. The versatile nature of the game allowed individuals to continue playing during the pandemic (Scriven, 2021). The game can be used in any setting, such as: a dining room, basement, community room, or on a computer. This is worth noting when talking about using D&D as a therapeutic tool in a clinical setting. The versatility and the accessibility of the game can be intriguing to mental health professionals as an intervention in counseling. The utility of D&D in therapy could be appealing to counselors for the lone fact of being able to connect with their clients and have sessions anywhere at any time. If there is an un-foreseeable event, like a pandemic, counselors can have sessions over long distances.

Therapeutic Application

Play Therapy

D&D can bring out the playfulness in its players. When counseling gets inserted into the game the opportunities/possibilities of therapeutic interventions and approaches could be endless. The therapeutic approach applicable in this case is play therapy when implementing counseling and D&D together. Blalock et al (2018) describes that children learn better through playing. A child's ability to verbally communicate is not fully developed yet, but they are better able to communicate complicated issues in the form of playing (Blalock et al, 2018). D&D can easily be played by children and adolescents, making this form of play therapy a feasible therapeutic approach for that young population. Just as younger populations could benefit from a D&D play therapy, adult populations also can benefit. Corliss (2021) reports that 12% of individuals who play D&D are 19-year olds or younger, 42% of players fall under the 20-29 year olds, and 46% of players are 30 year olds or older (Corliss, 2021). The majority of people who play are adults, and that reflects the versatility of D&D as a therapeutic tool. Play therapy is aimed for younger populations but the potential of using play therapy for adults is still there. For adults who struggle with communicating complicated issues, building a playful and engaging environment could help them find a way to explain more easily what they would like to say; building an environment that is welcoming and fun, while at the same time having a purposeful therapeutic element is possible.

Psychodrama Approach

The versatility of D&D makes it a useful therapeutic tool. Not only is the game versatile in its ability to be played virtually anywhere but also in its ability to be customized to a certain

way members want to play or the content of the game where members will be exploring.

Therapists can customize entire games tailored to the clients to fit whatever they need to work through. Also therapists and clients can play anywhere, if there is a storm or someone is out of town they can just join online without skipping a beat in sessions. Baker (2022) discussed in a clinical setting D&D can provide psychotherapy, career guidance, education, and etc. Therapists can give a psychodrama or drama therapy approach, to help clients act out situations and provide therapeutic healing (Baker, Turner, & Kotera, 2022). D&D can be used by counselors in a psychodrama approach by providing therapeutic care through their clients acting or reenacting certain scenarios. Lopez-Gonzalez et al. (2021) describes that there are five principle elements in each session for psychodrama therapy; protagonist, auxiliary egos, director, audience, and stage. Each member of the group will have a role. The session will have three phases; warming up phase, action phase, and sharing phase. These phases represent the process of getting the clients ready for acting out a scene, the action of acting out a scene, and sharing their thoughts/feelings about the scene they performed (Gonzalez et al., 2021). Throughout a D&D session, roles will be consistently shifting and there won't be a direct build up to a scene. The nature of the game is very spontaneous and an adapted therapeutic session will reflect that. For example, the protagonist and audience roles could shift amongst the clients and therapist throughout the sessions. While the roles of director and auxiliary egos would be the counselor's responsibility. As the stage will be the game board or the table everyone sits around in the session.

The mechanics of the game and the base principles/elements of a psychodrama therapy approach can be intertwined to produce a unique therapeutic intervention. D&D is perfect for the psychodrama therapy approach because of its unique role-playing aspect in every game. The members of each 'Dungeon and Dragons' session are encouraged to act out their characters, to

be their characters in interactions and at the minimum they have to conceptualize what would their character do in certain situations. Even the DM (Dungeon Master) has to act out characters in their game and describe each scene. You could say D&D is a very engaging game, and in a clinical therapeutic setting, this game can be a very interactive tool. The therapists can shape a game into any possible scenario or situation that tailors to the clients that look to benefit from sessions. D&D can be an outlet for any issue they are facing.

Narrative Approach

When discussing therapeutic approaches that fit with the concepts and fundamentals of ‘Dungeon and Dragons’, the psychodrama therapy approach is a natural fit for the mechanics of the game, but it isn’t the only counseling approach that is present in the therapeutic setting. The second counseling approach that can be identified is the narrative therapy approach. Morgan (2000) describes how individuals have multistoried lives and have many narratives happening all at once. Stories can guide a person’s decisions and behavior, either from the narrative they tell themselves or the narrative others tell about them. Humans are interpreting beings that try to find meaning in events and situations; in some shape or form (Morgan, 2000). When clients tell themselves or have been told by someone else a certain narrative, they make decisions based off of that narrative. For example, a client tells themselves or been told by others that they are good at a certain task, that narrative can possibly result in the client performing that task more often

Morgan (2000) describes after many events of confirming the individual’s narrative, it becomes the dominate plot. With a collection of reaffirming information about the narrative that’s been constructed around the individual, they tend to ignore other information that contradicts that narrative (Morgan, 2020). Going back to the example, the client will believe that

narrative even though there will be events where they didn't perform the task correctly and conflict with the overall narrative of them being good at that task. This can be said if a client believes in a narrative that is negative in nature. Even if there is conflicting events that prove a more positive narrative, it might be pushed aside for the dominate plot. In D&D a counselor will be able see the narrative the client has constructed and see it develop through sessions.

Polkinghorne et al. (2020) describes how role-playing games flow very well with a narrative therapy approach. This type of approach would be a collaborative based narrative therapy where patients would have co-authorship of their own self-narrative within the story they have built in sessions (Polkinghorne et al., 2020).

Polkinghorne et al. (2020) continues that as the counselor, they would be a dungeon master of the game facilitating sessions guiding the patients through the world that they are participating in, while the patients control their narrative through the character they play (Polkinghorne et al., 2020). There are aspects of D&D that encourage you to act out the situation that developed in the session, hence the potential of applying psychodrama therapy within playing the game. At the same time with the story building mechanic of the game, it introduces the potential of employing narrative therapy within sessions. With that reasoning there is potential of using D&D with both approaches at the same time, or individually depending on how receptive the client/clients are towards the approach. Counselors will have to see many different clients, and each of those clients have a range of different issues and situations they will need help with.

Other Possibilities

The implication of the vast quantity of different clients with their own unique mental health issues and preferences, it is fair to say that not every client will respond to the play therapy, narrative, or psychodrama approaches that were previously discussed. Every client is unique and the perk of using D&D as a therapeutic tool is that it's an extremely customizable game, where a counselor would be in a position as the dungeon master to have the ability to tweak or manipulate the game to fit other therapeutic approaches and interventions. They can create specific scenarios that tailor to the clients, and fit whatever they need to work on in a way that is effective to them. Not every client is the same and having the ability to adapt the game into the right focus and approach, can provide competency to clients with minor and/or major mental health issues.

D&D as a therapeutic intervention can be effective in helping a variety of clients with different mental health disorders and deficits. Connell (2023) states that using a role-playing game as a therapeutic intervention can help clients with a multitude of disorders; ADHD, Autism-1, Spectrum Disorder, Social Skills, Specific Learning Disorder, Reading Disorder, Mathematics Disorder, Anxiety, Depression, PTSD, and Trauma. Each disorder will prompt the counselor to approach the set-up the sessions of the game so they can be tailored to the client's needs and specific goals. There are some disorders that would make it difficult to focus on in sessions. Any eating disorder will be hard to effectively treat but focusing on secondary issues, like anxiety, will show some promise. Oppositional Defiant Disorder or Conduct Disorder will make it hard for group sessions. There will be unintended distractions that will disrupt the flow of the gameplay experience for the entire group. Clients with Autism-2 and Autism-3 already have difficulty understanding social norms and the challenges in conversing with others will make it difficult to running successful groups. Lastly, individuals with dissociative or delusional

disorders will also make it difficult to run sessions in a group session, but it has been showing some individuals can hold up the 4 frames of play needed to have an effective D&D game (Connell, 2023).

As counselors will see a vast number of different clients they will have to have sessions with, they will also see the vast amount of problems they will bring with them to the counseling sessions. Most of the time counselors will see clients about common issues that a lot of individuals come to counseling for, but on occasion they will see issues that are rarer and more serious. Blackmon (1994) identified that Dungeons and Dragons can be beneficial for individuals experiencing serious mental health issues. The author provided a case study on a young boy who has schizophrenia and he played D&D, and through playing the game he was provided therapy to improve his social skills and comfortability with oneself. D&D is a safe place for clients to acknowledge and express themselves, and given the positive outcomes, Blackmon (1994) asserts that Dungeons and Dragons can also be used with clients who are experiencing OCD, schizophrenia, borderline personality disorder, adolescents, and alexithymia (Blackmon, 1994). Although the article is dated, it provides useful information on the use of D&D as a therapeutic tool. More research is needed to explore the use of the game as a therapeutic tool. The game provides a great place to release emotions, and gives the members with varying issues the ability express themselves in an environment that is safe and healthy within playing the game.

Counselors as the Dungeon Master

As there are many counselors in the world and each of them counsel in different ways, shouldn't it be a possibility for counselors who use D&D as a therapeutic tool have different variations as well? Counselors can have a choice of a multitude of different approaches and

theories, each of those counselors have their own personality and perspective on things; are they all going to counsel and present the theory/approach the same?

Counselors Personality

As there are many variations of personalities in the world, not every counselor will have the same personality. The personalities of the counselors will greatly affect the tone, interactions, energy, presentation, or setup of each of their sessions. Counselors could use the exact same approach or theory in their counseling but their personality dictates the delivery and atmosphere of how they interact and conduct sessions with their clients.

Clients' Perception

The variety of counselors and their personalities don't just affect the presentation and overall look of sessions, but also how client's perception of them as well. Focusing on the counselor can help break down how counseling is done but the other side of counseling is the client's experience in sessions; their perspective of sessions and of their therapist is an important aspect to the counseling process. Vera et al. (1999), talks about the variables and factors that go into the overall perception of the counselors from their clients. The client's perceptions of their counselors are generated through their interactions in sessions, engaging their senses to see and hear from the very first impression of meeting with the counselor. Clients tend to perceive many aspects of their counselors including gender, psychological wellness, having the ability of reporting roles, agreeableness, and education. These aspects can be different or similar to the client's preferences and can slightly dictate the 'counselor-client' relationship (Vera et al., 1999). The outward presentation of the counselors can greatly influence the client's perception and can guide if sessions go good or bad; if the client gets beneficial progress in the therapeutic process.

As there are many perceivable aspects of a counselor, and those aspects can closely translate into personality traits of that counselor, and those traits can be outwardly presented in how sessions are organized and operated. Examples could be; counselors who are organized might have more structure to their sessions, or a counselor who is expressive might have more energy and purpose to each session. The main point is that aspects of a counselor can be materializing into the sessions they run. It's important to use the first session for a space to discuss expectations, the needs/wants of clients, and any other group rules to have everyone on the same page for future sessions

Identity of D&D Counselors

The multitude of different personality traits can dictate a lot of the factors in creating and running D&D sessions. The factors that can be influenced are the organization, details, and even visualization of each of the sessions. For individuals who play D&D, they can attest how the personality of the 'Dungeon Master' can influence how sessions are constructed and run, and ultimately the overall campaign experience.

The personality of a counselor can be considered a part of their identity as a professional and how they counsel in sessions. Thinking about the personality of "Dungeons and Dragons" therapy, what would its identity look like? What kind of concepts would go into an identity for a therapy? Lefleur (2007), talks about the differences between mental health professionals and each profession has a unique identity. Identity development separates fields from each other and brings structure, quality, and public image. The author found it was important for the field of counseling to develop a unique identity different from the other mental health professions. When it comes to structure, having a standard or program that brings an outline of how it is effectively

preformed sessions can help bring understanding for future counselors in training. Having a strong structure/standard for counselors in training brings a quality to the identity. Quality could mean educational backed evidence engraved into sessions, which bring an element of effectiveness and success for the clients. Having the element of quality can produce more favorable results for clients, and when the clients are having positive results it improves the public image of the identity. An identity with a high public image can mean it is a reliable and trusted identity (Lefleur, 2007). You can see all three of these aspects of strong identity can feed and promote each other. Developing an identity for “Dungeons and Dragons” as a therapeutic tool can improve the therapy, as well as separating the approach in a positive way. Having a strong identity in a D&D therapeutic tool can help the practice improve and grow, bringing a solid therapeutic tool into sessions for clients.

How to Get Started

As counselors contemplate if they should or can start using D&D as a therapeutic tool, there are a couple of aspects to consider before jumping in. It is one thing to be a competent/effective counselor, and being well-versed and educated enough to run a D&D game is a completely different concept. Having enough knowledge of the game to understand how to be the Dungeon Master in a normal game is a lot of studying and learning. Now adding that you need to be knowledgeable enough to be able to manipulate and tailor the game to fit the interventions that are molded around your client’s mental health issues. With the whole scope of all those aspects, it’s simple a lot of work. It might look like a lot but when you think about it you are half way there considering you are a competent/effective counselor already. So, now you just have to get the knowledge and experience on the D&D side of things.

Connell (2023) explains that to get in the desired position of using a table-top role playing game as a therapeutic tool in sessions is to start small and then work your way up. It is recommended to start by watching a game or if the comfort level is there go into a game in a player character position. Starting as a player character will give you the understanding of the basic mechanics of the game and it will give an experience of what it will be like for your clients. Once the comfortability level of the rules is there you can ease into the narrator position by hosting short campaigns. This will take the form of campaigns lasting only one session or a few sessions to be more manageable and taking the complexity down. When you are comfortable with the narrator position more you can go into running a larger prewritten game with many sessions. This will bring the difficulty up but still keep it manageable by taking the complexity/work of creating your own campaign design. It is worth noting even if the game is prewritten it is encouraged to experiment with improvisation, because it should be expected that the plan will not be followed completely; just like any counseling session. As the narrator of the game you have no control over what the other participants will say or do, improvising is key to keeping the game afloat and keeping a counseling session afloat. Lastly, the big step is to engaging your creativity even more by running a multi-session game of your own design (Connell, 2023). Once the development of the counselor as a Dungeon Master is at that level, then it is acceptable to start the process of mixing counseling and D&D together.

Ethics

Reviewing and understanding the 2014 ACA Code of Ethics (2014) is a necessity for counselors, especially when they are counseling in a new or unfamiliar format they need to consider every aspect of the code and apply it. D&D as a therapeutic tool can look different in presentation and application. It's the job of the counselor to translate the ethical code to the new

format; looking over sections A through I, the counseling relationship, confidentiality and privacy, professional responsibility, relationships with other professionals, ‘evaluation, assessment, and interpretation’, ‘supervision, training, and teaching’, research and publication, ‘distance counseling, technology, and social media’, and resolving ethical issues (2014 ACA Code of Ethics, 2014). It is necessary to review the counseling ethical code to fully understand and apply the ethics into D&D as a therapeutic intervention.

Professional Competence

Although it is established that using D&D as therapy can be effective, there is not nearly enough evidence to establish the effectiveness towards any specific population or diagnosis. It is important to refer to the 2014 ACA Code of Ethics (2014) for guidance as we meet certain standards as professional counselors. Ethical code *Boundaries of Competence* (C.2.a.) states that counselors must practice only within the boundaries of their education, training, experience, and accreditations. Counselors shouldn’t be jumping into different theoretical approaches and interventions without proper avenues for competence in those areas (2014 ACA Code of Ethics, 2014). It’s important in having competence in the interventions that the counselor wants to intertwine into their D&D sessions. To improve the effectiveness of D&D as a therapeutic tool counselors need to be knowledgeable in the interventions they want to use in sessions as well as the material and rules of the game. Ethic code *Qualified for Employment* (C.2.c) states that counselors should only accept positions that they have qualifications for. They need to be trained and competent to be effective for their clients (2014 ACA Code of Ethics, 2014). Having qualifications in the counseling interventions isn’t enough, becoming competent in facilitating D&D sessions is the other piece to becoming qualified. A counselor can’t just decide to use this game in sessions at will, there needs to be time and education to get to a point where they can

ethically say they are competent enough to conduct sessions with clients. Ethic code *New Specialty Areas of Practice* (C.2.b.) explains the importance of making sure a counselor has the proper credentials and experience to engage in new types of interventions in therapy. They should take steps to ensure that there's competence in their work and avoiding potential harm to the clients (2014 ACA Code of Ethics, 2014). Counselors should always be extra careful when transitioning to therapies/interventions where they are lacking in familiarity or experience. This is important especially for therapies/interventions that haven't been fully studied or researched. There are a lot of unknowns when it comes to D&D as a therapeutic tool, so taking extra steps to understand if the counselor is helping their clients improve is important. Ethic code *Monitor Effectiveness* (C.2.d.) talks about how documentation and tracking of the clients progress will help give evidence of the counselor doing something right, but also at the same time show what needs to be adjusted and improved upon (2014 ACA Code of Ethics, 2014). Monitoring is ethical when a counselor is treading in unfamiliar territory when counseling. Counselors will be able to see improvements through the course of sessions and what information they gather from the client's reactions from the therapy. Ethic code *Continuing Education* (C.2.f.) discusses the ethical responsibility of counselors to always find opportunities to improve and expand their competency in counseling. Being informed and aware will help provide clients with the most updated information surrounding their therapy (2014 ACA Code of Ethics, 2014). With D&D as a therapeutic tool in counseling there is this element of unknown, where the intervention would benefit greatly if there is more interest and research into it. Following the ethical guidelines will help counselors provide the best treatment possible for their clients.

Evidence Based Practices

As a counselor one of the main goals is to provide evidence-based practice for our clients. Bringing a well-researched and tested therapeutic approach to sessions that will bring the effectiveness of the interventions to a higher standard. Ethic code *Scientific Basis for Treatment* (C.7.a.) is focused on bringing any techniques, procedures, and interventions to a standard that is grounded by theory and has a scientific foundation (2014 ACA Code of Ethics, 2014). Again, as counselors we want to bring the most effective intervention and approach we can for the benefit of the clients. Evidence based practices have shown to be more effective through time and data. D&D as a therapeutic tool does show promise and has signs that it can be effective, but at present there hasn't been enough time and research into it to have the title of 'evidence based practice'. There is research but in a scientific field like counseling there needs extensive empirical data to back it, the more accuracy and understanding that it is established will get it closer to that goal. That's why there is an importance to intertwine already established evidence based interventions into the game, to give it more validity and purposeful. Ethic code *Development and Innovation* (C.7.b.) address that fact of there is still a lot of unknowns and the importance of understanding the potential risks, benefits, and ethical considerations of using new techniques in counseling; having the purpose of minimizing the harm and risks for the clients (2014 ACA Code of Ethics, 2014). This is relevant to using D&D as a therapeutic tool because of the present unknowns. Harping on the fact that it is an ethical responsibility for counselors to consistently learn and improve on the approaches and interventions they practice, and having the ability to express strengths, weaknesses, and overall facts of their practice.

Informed Consent and Limits to Confidentiality

For any counseling practice there are ethical standards that need to be followed. There needs to be a transparent informed consent process. This can come in many different forms based

on the population and type of therapeutic approach. Ethic code *Informed Consent* (A.2.a.) states that clients have the right to choose if they want to participate or continue participating in the counseling relationship. It also says they need the appropriate amount of information about the counseling process and of the counseling. They need to be informed of their rights and what the responsibilities of both counselor and client. This consent needs to be documented (2014 ACA Code of Ethics, 2014). This ethic code is needed for every counseling relationship before it begins. Before clients can participate in therapy involving D&D they need to be informed and then consent to the counseling relationship. Ethic code *Types of Information Needed* (A.2.b.) states that counselors need to inform the client of the nature of all services provided; purpose, goals, techniques, procedures, limitations, potential risks, and benefits of services. The counselor also needs to provide their qualifications, credentials, experience, and theoretical approach. Lastly, provide the client of information retaining fees/billing arrangements, their right to confidentiality and the limitations that pertain, how to obtain clear information of their record, and express that they have the right to refuse services and being transparent in the consequences of such refusal (2014 ACA Code of Ethics, 2014). Providing this information to the client is a necessity to be under the guidelines of the counseling ethical code. Using D&D in therapy is new and might look different for a lot of counselors, but it is imperative for counselors to be able to pinpoint each standard and be able to effectively relay the information to the client.

The client has the right to confidentiality but it has limitations. Counselors need to relay those limitations to the client or clients. Understanding what individuals will be able to see their information and the extent to how counselor will keep confidentiality. Within a 1-on-1 counselor and client relationship, it's easier to guarantee confidentiality, but in a group setting it becomes harder. Ethic code *Protecting Clients* (A.9.b.) talks about counselors taking reasonable

precautions to protect their clients in a group setting; from physical, emotional, and psychological trauma (2014 ACA Code of Ethics, 2014). In a group setting it's hard to keep confidentiality because of the factor of working with multiple of clients at once. The counselor can't control the actions of the other clients, but they can take steps to minimize potential issues. Being transparent of confidentiality with the group can help stress the importance of maintaining that and provide information what will happen if a member violates the trust of the group. Precautions happen before the group is even formed too. Ethical code Screening (A.9.a.) reflects how counselors need a screening process when constructing groups. Counselors need to select participants that have needs and goals that are compatible with the overall group's goals. Participants who will not impede the group process and also those whose well-being wouldn't be jeopardized by the group experienced (2014 ACA Code of Ethics, 2014). When counselors want to use D&D in their practice it's good to understand that they can use it in 1-on-1 counseling or in a group setting. This screening process can help counselors determine if clients can handle or be compatible for a group setting, or be better off in a 1-on-1 counseling setting.

Records and Documentation

Counselors have the obligation to record and document sessions and of their clients. D&D by itself is a game but using it in a therapeutic setting there needs to be that element of professionalism like any other counseling setting. Ethic code *Creating and Maintaining Records and Documentations* (B.6.a.) states the creating and maintaining records/documentation is necessary for providing professional services (2014 ACA Code of Ethics, 2014). As counselors are professionals, therefore they need to document and record the services they provide; keeping accurate notes on clients and the documents necessary for a therapeutic relationship. Ethic code *Confidentiality of Records and Documentation* (B.6.b.) states that counselors need to secure and

guard this information from individuals who don't have authorization (2014 ACA Code of Ethics, 2014). This goes along with providing confidentiality for the clients. Clients have a right to keep their information private and have the ability to consent of the sharing of sensitive information. Ethic codes *Client Access* (B.6.e.) and *Assistance with Records* (B.6.f.) addresses that clients have the right to reasonable access to their record and counselors will aid and consultation in the interpretation of the records (2014 ACA Code of Ethics, 2014). Depending on if the counselor uses D&D in group therapy or 1-on-1 counseling, it can be important to understand what records you can give your clients. When it comes down to it having proper creation, storage, and access of records/documentation is professionally and ethically important when counseling.

Telehealth

D&D can be playing in-person and online, the aspect of telehealth services is very relevant. Telehealth is providing counseling over an online format that provides the benefit of counseling clients over long distances and for individuals who can't be present physically. D&D is regularly played over online methods for groups of people who can't meet in person for multiple of different reasons. Ethic codes *Knowledge and Legal Considerations* (H.1.a.) and *Laws and Statutes* (H.1.b.) stresses the importance of understanding state laws surrounding counseling from a distance. Counselors possibly can be subjugated to both the laws of the counselor's state and the client's state of residence. When counseling clients from other states it's important for counselors to educate and understand those states counseling laws (2014 ACA Code of Ethics, 2014). Being aware of legal issues is as important as ethical issues. Ethical codes under *Distance Counseling Relationship* (H.4.) focus on the importance of being knowledgeable in the technology and features of conducting counseling online. Then being able to communicate

effectively and provide adequate access/services with clients. As well as communication in the issues that might arise because of the online format (2014 ACA Code of Ethics, 2014). D&D in a therapeutic setting in an online format is very possible and achievable, but counselors need to understand the strengths and weaknesses of this format to be effective for their clients.

Conclusion

Role-playing games are present in a variety of forms and styles (table-top roleplaying games and video game), as well as provide therapeutic benefits to the individuals that participate in these games. D&D is one of these formats and is the very first table-top role-playing game. The game is versatile and customizable, through being able to play anywhere (in-person or online) and the promotion of creativity. Through the 3 pillars of play (exploration, role-play, and combat) players can customize and tailor the game to their needs. The frames of play (player, game, and character) bring balance to the overall role-playing experience. Through this experience of play, players obtain therapeutic benefits in improvements in socialization, cognition, emotional regulation, goal achievement, and overall mental health. D&D reflect these therapeutic benefits in the structure of the game. Counselors can use D&D as a format for therapeutic intervention.

The structure of the game helps support the use of therapy approaches by counselors. Play therapy helps build a playful and engaging environment, simultaneously promoting a purposeful therapeutic element for clients. Psychodrama therapy is embedded in the mechanics and structure of D&D. Psychodrama therapy's unique element of role-playing and acting out scenes is a parallel of what players of D&D are expected to do in sessions. D&D has an environment to promote the five principle elements of psychodrama therapy; protagonist, axillary egos, director, audience, and stage. Narrative therapy has the concept of clients having

multi-storied lives and multiple narratives happening all at once. D&D core concepts of storytelling and experiencing different narratives corresponds with the concept of narrative therapy. D&D versatility and customization opened the doors for counselors to intertwine other therapeutic approaches into the game play. D&D dungeon master role is a perfect position for a counselor to facilitate sessions. Counselors will have the ability customize and tailor each campaign for the clients participating. With an asset of versatility and customization, D&D has an extensive list of rules and mechanics. Though D&D can be overwhelming for a counselor new to the game, with study and practice any counselor can implement D&D as therapeutic intervention

Training Manual

Training Description

This training can be facilitated by counselors with their LPCC and having experience in D&D. The presenter of the training will host the presentation at the counseling business that requested to learn about the use of D&D as a therapeutic intervention in counseling. The target population is counselors from a variety of different emphasizes and client populations. It will take the presentation approximately 1 hour to complete. The unique, versatility and customization of D&D emphasizes the potential for training counselors in using D&D as therapeutic intervention with their clients. They understand the variety of role-playing games and therapeutic benefits that clients/players can receive from them. They will also understand basic mechanics and background of D&D. Counselors will explore therapeutic approaches that can be inserted into D&D for a therapeutic intervention in counseling sessions. Lastly, understand how to get started in using D&D as a therapeutic intervention.

D&D has the elements of creativity, versatility, and customization allowing counselors to tailor their sessions to their multitude of unique clients from varying population groups. Counselors will be trained in the concepts and elements of what constitutes a role-playing game, and diving deeper into the focus of the role-playing game D&D. Counselors will have the opportunity to explore and discuss the therapeutic benefits of playing D&D, as well as learn how to mix counseling and D&D together in sessions. They will be shown which therapeutic approaches mix well with the mechanics of the game and explore how to intertwine other therapeutic interventions into gameplay. Counselors will be taught the role they play in a D&D therapy session and the uniqueness of that position. Finally, counselors will be educated on how

to be competent as a counselor who uses D&D in their sessions and the steps on how get started in that process.

To assess the effectiveness of this training there will be a pre-test and post-test implemented to the counselors. This will gage their knowledge of the training subject and determine the effectiveness of the training afterwards. After the post-test counselors will have the opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings about the training, as well as critiques and comments in the training evaluation.

Slide 1

‘Dungeons and Dragons’ as a Therapeutic Intervention Training

By Samuel Grove

Script: Hello everyone! My name is -----, (introduce yourself and some credentials). At this time, you will all be participating in a training about D&D as a therapeutic invention for counselors. Some of you might be familiar with D&D at various levels and some of you might have zero knowledge of the game entirely, but after this training you will develop a good understanding of the concepts/mechanics of the game, and understand therapeutic applications that can be applied to begin the process of combining the two.

Slide 2

Pre-Test

- Take the time to fill out the pre-test.
- You will be asked to complete this assessment again after the conclusion of this training.

Script: Before we start the training I ask you to complete the pre-test I will be handing out (Appendix A). This will take a couple minutes to complete. At the end of the training I'll be handing out this test again for you to complete.

Slide 3

Discussion

Discuss for 5 minutes with the people around you.

- What do you know about role-playing games and 'Dungeons and Dragons'?
- How does 'Dungeons and Dragons' relate to mental health?

After the 5 minutes we will discuss as a large group.

Script: Now that everyone is done with the pre-test, we will begin this training with a 5 minute discussion. With people next to you I encourage you to discuss questions on the pre-test and discuss these questions.

- What do you know about role-playing games and D&D?
- How does D&D relate to mental health?

After we are done with the 5 minutes we will discuss as a large group to have an opportunity to share our thoughts with everyone.

Slide 4

Purpose of Training

Learning Objectives:

- Understand the variety of role-playing games and therapeutic benefits that clients/players can receive from them.
- Understand basic mechanics and background of 'Dungeons and Dragons'.
- Explore therapeutic approaches that can be inserted into 'Dungeons and Dragons' for a therapeutic intervention in counseling sessions.
- Understand how to get started in using 'Dungeons and Dragons' as a therapeutic intervention.

Script: The purpose of the training is to educate counselors on how D&D can be a viable therapeutic intervention in our work with clients. The first learning objective is the purpose of understanding what role-playing games are, and what therapeutic benefits the client/players can receive from participating in these games. The second learning objective narrows our focus on the role-playing game D&D, exploring the mechanics and background of this game. The third learning objective exploring the link between the therapeutic approaches in counseling and D&D, build an understanding on how to use D&D as a therapeutic intervention in our sessions with clients. Lastly, the fourth learning objective has the purpose putting counselors in the right steps to begin the process of using D&D in their counseling.

Slide 5

Role-Playing Games

Role-Playing Game - Any game in which players takes on a role of a character in the world/universe of the game, where the conditions of losing or winning are not fully clear.

- Role playing games can have multiple iterations and forms.
- Playing a role in any type of game where you can dictate, customize, or create your own experience is considered a role-playing game.

Types to Focus on:

- Table-Top Role-Playing Games
- Video Games

(Connell, 2023)

Script: A role-playing game is defined by Connell (2023) as any game in which players takes on a role of a character in the world/universe of the game, where the conditions of losing or winning are not fully clear (Connell, 2023). Role-playing games can come in many different presentations, where individuals can play a role where you can dictate, customize, or create your own experience. In this training we will be discussing table-top role-playing games and video games.

Slide 6

Table-Top Role-Playing Games

Table-Top Role-Playing Games:

- Each game has a player role of a narrator conceptualizing/guiding the game play and other players' roles are the characters in the game.
- Typically played using a board, paper, pencils, and the players imagination around a table.
- There is hundreds to thousands of different types table-top games with their own unique mechanics and styles.

Examples: Dungeons and Dragons, Legend of the Five Rings, Cyberpunk Red, Blades in the Dark, Call of CTHULHU, Partners, External Containment Bureau, The Troubleshooters, Bucket of Bolts, and Alice is Missing.

(10 Tabletop RPGs That Belong, 2022) & (Connell, 2023)



Script: A typical table-top role-playing game has a narrator role that is in the position to be conceptualizing and guiding the game play. The other players that are involved in the game have the roles of being characters in the story of the narrator. These types of role-playing games are played using a board, paper, pencils, and what's most important, the players imagination. Players are usually are around a table while playing, hence the name table-top role-playing game, There is hundreds to thousands of table-top games out, here are some examples: Dungeons and Dragons, Legend of the Five Rings, Cyberpunk Red, Blades in the Dark, Call of CTHULHU, Partners, External Containment Bureau, The Troubleshooters, Bucket of Bolts, and Alice is Missing.

Slide 7

Video Games

Video Games became popular as technology improved over the years. As technology advanced in society gaming as a whole has been opened up to more utility and options.

- Cost effective .
- Readily available to be played anywhere and anytime.
- Able to play alone or with others.
- Connected across the world.
- Varying types of styles of video games. (e.g. adventure video games, role playing games, and multiplayer games)



Therapeutic Benefits:

- **Socialization** (decrease loneliness, socialization with other players/NPC's, and morality development)
- **Cognition** (executive functioning & visuospatial perception)
- **Emotional regulation** (coping strategies, regulation of strong emotive experiences, and mood repair)
- **Goal Achievement** (goal setting, positive reappraisal, and motivation to complete goals)
- **Overall mental health**

(Kowal et al, 2021)

Script: When D&D and role-playing games is the main topic of this training you might be wondering why we are discussing video games. Well, video games are very much in the conversation. Video Games became popular as technology improved over the years. As technology advanced in society gaming as a whole has been opened up to more utility and options. They are cost effective, players will be able to play anywhere, and players can play alone or with others. When playing with others they can be connected across the world and be at home. Lastly, there are many different types of games players can choose from; adventure, role-playing, and multiplayer.

Video games also provide therapeutic benefits. Video games can provide socialization benefits that decrease loneliness and improve morality development through socialization with other players/NPCs. They can provide cognition benefits through improvements in executive

functioning and visuospatial perception. Players can be provided emotional regulation benefits in improvements in coping strategies, regulation of strong emotive experiences, and mood repair.

Video games can also promote goal achievement in the forms of goal setting, positive reappraisal, and motivation to complete goals. Lastly, they can improve overall mental health.

Slide 8

Pillars of Play

Pillar of Exploration - the game play that is for discovery in the world/universe in the game by exploring lore, landscapes, and scenarios.

Pillar of Role-Play - the experience of the players putting themselves in the perspective and mindset of their character.

Pillar of Combat - the conflict with other beings or the environment of the scenarios in the game.

(Connell, 2023)

Script: Role-playing games typically has 3 pillars of play; exploration, role-play, and combat.

The Pillar of Exploration is the game play that is for discovery in the world/universe in the game by exploring lore, landscapes, and scenarios. The Pillar of Role-Play is the experience of the players putting themselves in the perspective and mindset of their character. The Pillar of Combat is the conflict with other beings or the environment of the scenarios in the game. Not every session will use each pillar in the game play equally. In role-playing games it's common to see an imbalance between the pillars for throughout the duration of the game. An example would be that some games favor the combat pillar over the other two pillars, or vice versa, where the exploration pillar and role-playing pillar is favored over the combat pillar. The priority of which of the pillars of play are determined by all players involved in the game.

Slide 9

Dungeons & Dragons

- The game was published by Tactical Studies Rules, Inc. in 1974. Created by Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson.
- Dungeons and Dragons was the very first table-top role-playing game.
- Currently on the fifth edition.
- Set in a medieval fantasy world.



Historical Stigma:

- Involved in the 1980's Satanic Panic.
- phenomenon of mass hysteria
- Patricia Pulling believed her son completed suicide from the influence of playing 'Dungeons and Dragons'.
- Had a snowball effect that led large religious populations linking the game to devil worship, insanity, suicide, perversion, etc.
- Researchers determined that this isn't the case.

(Dungeons & Dragons, 2021), (Sidhu et al., 2020), & (Biskin et al, 2015)

Script: The game was published by Tactical Studies Rules, Inc. in 1974. The creation of the game was done by Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson. D&D was the very first table-top role-playing game and inspired the hundreds and thousands of iterations of table-top role-playing games that have been created up to the present day. After about 5 decades since it was made D&D is still being used today and on its fifth edition. The overall theme of D&D is set in an in-depth medieval fantasy world.

Here is some interesting history, D&D was very popular when it came out and is popular in present day, but that wasn't always the case. D&D was involved in the 1980's Satanic Panic. The game was sucked into the phenomenon of mass hysteria at the time. It was sparked by a woman named Patricia Pulling, and she believed her son completed suicide from the influence of playing D&D. Had a snowball effect that led large religious populations linking the game to

devil worship, insanity, suicide, perversion, etc. creating stigma that lasted for years. It got to a point where researcher conducting studies if there was fact behind the claims, and it was determined that this isn't there was no correlation.

Slide 10

Dungeon & Dragons - Basics/Rules



Dungeon Master - Guides the game/story and creates scenarios.

Players - 3-7 individuals

Sessions:

- Starts with session zero, where players and the dungeon master discuss ground rules, boundaries, and create characters.
- The amount is depending on the length of the campaign. In between 1 day to years.
- The length of sessions varies 1-4 hours on average.

Supplies:

- Dice (1d4, 1d6, 1d8, 1d10, 1d12, and 1d20)
- Paper and pencil
- Character sheet (keep track of stats)

(Mearis & Crawford, 2014) & (Connell, 2023)

Script: In D&D one player is the “Dungeon Master” that creates and guides the story that the other players have to navigate by making decisions as their characters. The of the players take the role of the characters, and there are about three to seven individuals in a D&D group. In the first session, session zero, the dungeon master and other players will discuss the ground rules/expectations of the campaign. In this session players will develop their characters into a class, race, stats, and backstory. In a game players will use 6 different types of rolling dice; 1d4, 1d6, 1d8, 1d10, 1d12, and 1d20. Other supplies include paper, pencils, and character sheets to keep track of their stats.

Slide 11

Dungeon & Dragons - Character Creation

Classes - Barbarian, Bard, Cleric, Druid, Fighter, Monk, Paladin, Ranger, Rogue, Sorcerer, Warlock, and Wizard.

Races - Multitude of races to pick from (human, elf, orc, etc.)

Attributes - Constitution, Strength, Dexterity, Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma

Gear - Depending what class, race, and attributes a character has will determine what gear they should start out with (choice is up to the player).

Backstories - This is up to the players creativity and who they want to play as.

(Mearis & Crawford, 2014)

Script: An important part of D&D is character creation. Classes are separated into 12 categories; barbarian, bard, cleric, druid, fighter, monk, paladin, ranger, rogue, sorcerer, warlock, and wizard. Each of these classes has different features and abilities that tie into other aspects of creating a character. Some of the classes can use magic, fight with weapons, or even both. Picking a race is another step in character creation. There is a multitude of races to pick from with their own abilities, stats, and bonuses. Another aspect of character creation is picking skills and using a point system to determine stats for their characters attributes; Constitution, Strength, Dexterity, Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma. These attributes determine how well a certain character can perform different actions. Through picking a class, race, and attributes, a player can pick certain gear that will complement their created character. Lastly, a player will make a backstory of their character, determining the motivations, history, and personality of the character. It's up to the players creativity develop their character.

Slide 12

Frames of Play

Frame of Player - the perspective, wants, and needs of the individual playing the game

Frame of Game - the universe that the game has developed, that includes certain situations and lore of the game that have been established while playing

Frame of Character - the individual the player has created, including the motivations, actions, and perceptions of the imaginary character the player is acting out

a role-playing game doesn't function properly when there is confusion of the 3 frames

Frame of Psychological Theory - intertwine skill development in the player (frame of the player) through the process of playing the mechanics of the game (frame of the game) by using the character they choose as an outlet (frame of the character) to practice those skills.

(Connell, 2023) & (Boccamazzo and Connell, 2020)

Script: In table-top role-playing games there are 3 frames of play that define the role-playing experience for players; frame of player, frame of game, and frame of character. Frame of player is the perspective, wants, and needs of the individual playing the game. Frame of game is the universe that the game has developed, that includes certain situations and lore of the game that have been established while playing. Frame of character is the individual the player has created, including the motivations, actions, and perceptions of the imaginary character the player is acting out. A role-playing game doesn't function properly when there is confusion of the 3 frames.

For counselors there is a fourth frame of play called frame of psychological theory. This frame involves counselors applying therapeutic interventions into D&D games with clients. Just like the other 3 frames of play they will have to co-exist with this new fourth frame to have the

game function properly. The use of the frame of psychological theory would be intertwining skill development in the player (frame of the player) through the process of playing the mechanics of the game (frame of the game) by using the character they choose as an outlet (frame of the character) to practice those skills.

Slide 13**Discussion**

10 minutes to discuss with people around you.

- What interventions and other approaches might fit in a 'Dungeons and Dragons' therapy session?
- What therapeutic benefits does 'Dungeons and Dragons' give to it's players?
- What role would the counselor play in a 'Dungeons and Dragons' therapy session?

After the 10 minutes we will discuss as a large group.

Script: At this time I would like everyone to have a 10 minute discussion with people closest to you. I would like everyone to discuss these questions:

- What interventions and other approaches might fit in a D&D therapy session?
- What therapeutic benefits does D&D give to its players?
- What role would the counselor play in a D&D therapy session?

After the 10 minutes we will discuss in a large group.

Slide 14

Mental Health Benefits from 'Dungeons & Dragons'

Playing 'Dungeons and Dragons' can facilitate high levels of creativity and empathy. The development of creativity and empathy can facilitate the maintenance of:

- Friendships
- Feelings of connectedness
- Exploring varying lifestyle models
- Balance group needs
- Moral reasoning

Can help individuals with serious mental health issues (OCD, schizophrenia, borderline personality disorder, adolescents, and alexithymia)

- Improves social skills and comfortability with oneself
- Safe place for players to acknowledge and express themselves

Post Covid-19 Pandemic Revelations:

- 'Dungeons and Dragons' can foster an environment of connection and togetherness (e.g. exposure to democratic ideologies, friendship maintenance, extraordinary experiences, and good versus evil concepts). Combating negative effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic (stress, depression, loneliness, substance abuse, domestic violence, and etc).
- With restrictions of not being able to leave their homes or have close contact with others, players were able to play with each other virtually online. Being able to connect with each other over large distances. Showing another level of versatility and customization of 'Dungeons and Dragons'.

(Henrich & Worthington, 2017), (Casey, Weissglass, & Wright, 2020), (Baker, Turner, & Kotera, 2022), (Blackmon, 1994), & (Scriven, 2021).

Script: Playing D&D can facilitate high levels of creativity and empathy. The development of creativity and empathy can facilitate the maintenance of: friendships, feelings of connectedness, exploring varying lifestyle models, balance group needs, moral reasoning. It has been even shown help individuals with serious mental health issues. Individuals experiencing OCD, schizophrenia, borderline personality disorder, adolescents, and alexithymia can benefit from playing D&D. It improves social skills and comfortability with themselves by creating a safe place for players to acknowledge and express themselves.

After the Covid-19 pandemic there has been a spike in a lot of mental health issues and behavioral issues. Issues like an increase of stress, depression, loneliness, substance abuse, domestic violence, and other mental health/behavioral issues. D&D can combat the negative effects from the Covid-19 pandemic by fostering an environment of connection and togetherness.

This can take the forms of exposure to democratic ideologies, friendship maintenance, extraordinary experiences, and good versus evil concepts. With restrictions of not being able to leave their homes or have close contact with others, players were able to play with each other virtually online. Players were able to connect with each other over large distances, showing another level of versatility and customization of 'Dungeons and Dragons'.

Slide 15**Therapeutic Applications**

3 therapeutic approaches that fit the structure of 'Dungeons and Dragons'

- Play Therapy
- Psychodrama Approach
- Narrative Approach

Script: As counselors it will be important to establish what therapeutic approaches work well in the structure of D&D. The 3 therapeutic approaches are play therapy, psychodrama approach, and narrative approach.

Slide 16

Play Therapy

- 'Dungeons and Dragons' can bring out the playfulness in clients.
- Creates a welcoming and fun environment, simultaneously having a purposeful therapeutic element.
- Therapy in the form of play is an alternative way to relay therapeutic concepts.
- Play Therapy is applied onto children and adolescents in counseling. They learn better through play and better able to communicate through play.
- Adults benefit from Play Therapy as well.
- Majority of 'Dungeons and Dragons' players are adults.
- Builds a playful and engaging environment.

(Corliss, 2021) & (Bialock et al, 2018)

Script: D&D is a game, and play therapy is the approach of using games as an alternative way for counselors to help clients learn and communicate complicated therapeutic concepts. It creates a welcoming and fun environment, simultaneously having a purposeful therapeutic element. So, naturally D&D can be used as a form of play therapy in counseling. Play therapy is usually used in the work with children and adolescents in counseling, but adults benefit from play therapy as well. As majority of players of D&D are adults, and that will be most likely the majority of the clientele you will see when using D&D as a therapeutic intervention.

Slide 17

Psychodrama Approach

Counselors can provide therapeutic care through their clients acting or reacting certain scenarios using the Psychodrama Approach.

'Dungeons and Dragons' has a unique element of role-playing where players act out scenes and conversations.

Session Phases: warming up phase, action phase, and sharing phase.

Five principle elements for psychodrama therapy:

- Protagonist = Client
- Axillary Egos = Counselor
- Director = Counselor
- Audience = Clients/Counselor
- Stage = game board/table everyone sits around each session

The nature of 'Dungeons and Dragons' is spontaneous. Roles/elements will be shifting throughout each session.

(Baker, Turner, & Kotera, 2022) & (Gonzalez et al., 2021)

Script: The psychodrama approach is another approach that will work well with the setup and mechanics of D&D. In psychodrama therapy counselors can provide therapeutic care through their clients acting or reenacting certain scenarios. D&D has a unique element of role-playing where players act out scenes and conversations. In psychodrama therapy there are 5 principle elements that make up sessions: protagonist, auxiliary egos, director, audience, and stage. Each member of the group will have a role. In psychodrama therapy a session will have 3 phases; warming up phase, action phase, and sharing phase. These phases represent the process of getting the clients ready for acting out a scene, the action of acting out a scene, and sharing their thoughts/feelings about the scene they performed. Counselors will have to be creative on how they apply the 3 phases and the 5 elements of psychodrama sessions because of the spontaneous nature of a D&D. An example would be how the roles of the 5 elements would be consistently shifting. The protagonist and audience roles could shift amongst the clients and therapist

throughout the sessions. While the roles of director and auxiliary egos would be the counselor's responsibility. As the stage will be the game board or the table everyone sits around in the session.

Slide 18

Narrative Approach

Narrative Therapy Concepts:

- Individuals have multi-storied lives and have many narratives happening all at once.
- Stories can guide a person's decisions and behavior.
- Humans are interpreting beings that try to find meaning in events and situations.
- Many events that give confirmation to the individual's narrative, it becomes the dominant plot.
- With a collection of reaffirming information that's been constructed around that narrative, they tend to ignore other information that contradicts that narrative.

Narrative Therapy in 'Dungeons and Dragons':

- In 'Dungeons and Dragons' a counselor will be able see the narrative the client has constructed and see it develop through sessions.
- Collaborative based narrative therapy where clients would have co-authorship of their own self-narrative within the story they have built in sessions.
- It'll be a look into what narrative the clients want to portray and counselors will have the opportunity to work with the clients narrative.

(Morgan, 2000) & (Polkinghorne et al., 2020)

Script: The narrative approach has the concept of how individuals have multi-storied lives and have many narratives happening all at once. Stories can guide a person's decisions and behavior, either from the narrative they tell themselves or the narrative others tell about them. Humans are interpreting beings that try to find meaning in events and situations; in some shape or form. After many events of confirming the individual's narrative, it becomes the dominant plot. With a collection of reaffirming information about the narrative that's been constructed around the individual, they tend to ignore other information that contradicts that narrative.

In D&D a counselor will be able see the narrative the client has constructed and see it develop through sessions. It will be a collaborative based narrative therapy where clients would have co-authorship of their own self-narrative within the story they have built in sessions. It'll be

a look into what narrative the clients want to portray and counselors will have the opportunity to work with the client's narrative.

Slide 19

Customization of Therapeutic Application

- 'Dungeons and Dragons' as a game is very customizable.
- As a counselor it'll make it easier to construct a game and it's sessions around practically any therapeutic approach that is needed.
- Use session zero to develop understanding of what the group needs are, establish the ground rules/boundaries of future sessions.
- The counselor is the dungeon master. In that role the counselor can develop a story/campaign around other therapeutic interventions for the client's specific needs.

(Connell, 2023)

Script: When playing D&D there has to be an element of creativity. Counselors will have to tap into that creativity if they want to apply other therapeutic approaches or interventions into D&D sessions. A good thing for counselors is that D&D as a game is very customizable. Use session zero to develop understanding of what the group needs are, establish the ground rules/boundaries of future sessions. Session zero is for the purpose of helping the counselor understand the needs and wants of their clients.

As counselors are in the dungeon master role, it'll make it easier to construct a game and it's sessions around practically any therapeutic approach/intervention that is needed. In that role the counselor can develop a story/campaign around other therapeutic interventions for the client's specific needs.

Slide 20

Counselor as a Dungeon Master

The counselor in the role of dungeon master will help them be in a position to facilitate sessions.

- Construct the story and campaign.
- Guide clients through the world they constructed.
- Intertwine therapy approaches and interventions into the game.

Just like counselors, dungeon master's can come in different presentations, personalities, and style when running sessions. Both need to work well with their clients/players when facilitating sessions.

Important to build 'Dungeons and Dragons' counselors Identity.

(Vera et al., 1999) & (Lefleur, 2007)

Script: Just like it was mentioned in previous slide, counselors will be the dungeon master while using D&D as a therapeutic tool with clients. It is the only role that will put the counselor in the position to effectively facilitate sessions. The dungeon master is the one who creates the story and campaign. They will in charge of setting up scenarios and sequences that will benefit clients. It's also a position to guide clients through the world they constructed. An excellent position to intertwine the therapy approaches and interventions the counselor wants to put into the game for their clients.

There are a lot of similarities between counselors and dungeon masters. Just like counselors, dungeon masters can come in different presentations, personalities, and style when running sessions. Both need to work well with their clients/players when facilitating sessions. When using 'Dungeons and Dragon' as a therapeutic intervention in sessions it's good to

understand that there isn't set standard for how you run the session. Counselors come from all kinds of backgrounds and experiences, their personality and style is reflected in their counseling. It is the same in running a D&D game; facilitate it how you want to facilitate it. It is also good to note as counselors we still have to adhere to the 2014 ACA Code of Ethics, professionalism, and legal standards; but as a developing therapeutic intervention there isn't a clear cut way to run D&D in a counseling environment. Build your own D&D therapy identity, and over time there will be more research and development to produce a more standard identity as a D&D counselor.

Slide 21

Who Can Benefit?

Effective in D&D group sessions:

- ADHD
- Autism-1
- Spectrum Disorder
- Social Skills
- Specific Learning Disorder
- Reading Disorder
- Mathematics Disorder
- Anxiety
- Depression
- PTSD
- Trauma

Difficulty in D&D group sessions:

- Eating disorders
- Autism-2 & Autism-3
- ODD/CD
- Dissociative or delusional disorders

(Connell, 2023)

Script: Here are some disorders that would be effective in D&D group sessions; ADHD, Autism-1, Spectrum Disorder, Social Skills, Specific Learning Disorder, Reading Disorder, Mathematics Disorder, Anxiety, Depression, PTSD, and Trauma. Counselors will have to customize and tailor the sessions to the client's specific needs and goals.

There are some disorders clients will have that will make it difficult to run D&D groups sessions. Any of the eating disorders will be hard to effectively treat in sessions, but focusing on secondary issues, like anxiety, will show some promise. Clients with Oppositional Defiant Disorder or Conduct Disorder will make it hard for group sessions. There will be unintended distractions that will disrupt the flow of the gameplay experience for the entire group. Clients with Autism-2 and Autism-3 already have difficulty understanding social norms and the challenges in conversing with others will make it difficult to running successful groups. Lastly,

individuals with dissociative or delusional disorders will also make it difficult to run sessions in a group session, but it has been show some individuals can hold up the 4 frames of play needed to have an effective D&D game. The counselor will have to gage each client if they will be able to participate.

Slide 22

Getting Started

Before getting into using 'Dungeons and Dragons' as therapeutic approach there are some things to consider.

Being competent in therapeutic approaches that fit in the structure of the game.

- Understanding play therapy, psychodrama therapy, and narrative therapy.
- Understanding the pillars and frames of play.

Being well versed and experienced in 'Dungeons and Dragons'.

- Start with playing 'Dungeons and Dragons' as a player
- Facilitate small or 1 session games in a non-therapeutic purpose
- Facilitate large campaigns

Being a competent and knowledgeable counselor is one thing, but being a competent dungeon master is another. Taking the time to practice will put you in a position to effectively run 'Dungeon and Dragons' games as a therapeutic intervention for clients.

(Connell, 2023)

Script: As a counselor who just looking into D&D it might be intimidating to start the process of using D&D as a therapeutic intervention. With the appropriate steps we can slowly ease into it. Before getting into using D&D as therapeutic intervention there are some things to consider. As a counselor we are already expected to be competent in therapeutic theories, but I would stress building competence in the therapeutic approaches that relate to D&D: play therapy, psychodrama therapy, and narrative therapy. Also, understand the pillars and frames of play, and how they relate to therapeutic theory and intervention.

Another aspect of building competence is being competent in D&D as a game. It is recommended to start small by watching a game or if the comfort level is there go into a game in a player character position. Starting as a player character will give you the understanding of the basic mechanics of the game and it will give an experience of what it will be like for your clients.

Once the comfortability level of the rules is there you can ease into the narrator position by hosting short campaigns. This will take the form of campaigns lasting only one session or a few sessions to be more manageable and taking the complexity down. When you are comfortable with the narrator position more you can go into running a larger prewritten game with many sessions. This will bring the difficulty up but still keep it manageable by taking the complexity/work of creating your own campaign design. It is worth noting even if the game is prewritten it is encouraged to experiment with improvisation, because it should be expected that the plan will not be followed completely; just like any counseling session. As the narrator of the game you have no control over what the other participants will say or do, improvising is key to keeping the game afloat and keeping a counseling session afloat. Lastly, the big step is to engaging your creativity even more by running a multi-session game of your own design. Counselors that are using D&D in sessions have to have competence in both, the counseling world and the D&D world, to be effective with clients.

Slide 23

Ethics

Counselors must adhere to the 2014 ACA Code of Ethics. Here are some ethical codes to consider:

- Professional Competence
- Evidence Based Practices
- Informed Consent and Limits to confidentiality
- Records and Documentation
- Telehealth

(2014 ACA Code of Ethics, 2014).

Script: As counselors, we must adhere to the 2014 ACA Code of Ethics. Here are some ethical codes to consider: Professional Competence, Evidence Based Practices, Informed Consent and, Limits to confidentiality, Records and Documentation, and Telehealth. Using D&D in sessions will look different than the traditional counseling session we see, but we must still follow the 2014 ACA Code of Ethics. Playing D&D versus using it as therapeutic intervention, it should look different to tailor to the ethical code that all counselors follow.

Slide 24**Post-Test/ Evaluation Form**

- Please fill out the post-test being handed out.
- After you are done fill out the evaluation form.

Script: To wrap up this training I would like you all to fill out the post-test that's being handed out (Appendix A). This should take a couple minutes to complete just like the pre-test at the beginning of the training. After you are done please fill out the course evaluation (Appendix B). With your feedback I can improve this training for the future.

Slide 25

Resources

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Appendix A

D&D as a Therapeutic Intervention Pre/Post-Test

Circle the description which best describes your agreement or disagreement with each statement.

1. I understand what defines a role-playing game.

Strongly Disagree (1) --- Somewhat Disagree (2) --- Somewhat Agree (3) --- Strongly Agree (4)

2. I know what format role-playing games are presented as.

Strongly Disagree (1) --- Somewhat Disagree (2) --- Somewhat Agree (3) --- Strongly Agree (4)

3. I can describe what D&D is.

Strongly Disagree (1) --- Somewhat Disagree (2) --- Somewhat Agree (3) --- Strongly Agree (4)

4. I am comfortable of playing D&D.

Strongly Disagree (1) --- Somewhat Disagree (2) --- Somewhat Agree (3) --- Strongly Agree (4)

5. I can describe the therapeutic benefits received from playing D&D.

Strongly Disagree (1) --- Somewhat Disagree (2) --- Somewhat Agree (3) --- Strongly Agree (4)

6. I understand what therapeutic approaches work well with D&D.

Strongly Disagree (1) --- Somewhat Disagree (2) --- Somewhat Agree (3) --- Strongly Agree (4)

7. I want to know more about D&D.

Strongly Disagree (1) --- Somewhat Disagree (2) --- Somewhat Agree (3) --- Strongly Agree (4)

Appendix B

Training Evaluation Form

Date of Training:

Counseling Emphasis:

Client Specialty:

At the end of the training complete this questionnaire to evaluate the material presented. Please rate each statement on the scale of 1-5 (1-lowest, 5-highest).

1. The training explained information on role-playing games mechanics and concepts.

1 2 3 4 5

2. The training explained D&D rules and structure.

1 2 3 4 5

3. The training discussed therapeutic benefits of D&D.

1 2 3 4 5

4. The training discussed therapeutic approaches for D&D.

1 2 3 4 5

5. The presenter was engaging and able to answer questions.

1 2 3 4 5

6. I am ready to learn more about D&D as a therapeutic intervention.

1 2 3 4 5

Are there any suggestions for improving the content of the training?

Do you have any comments or questions?