

## ReadyMinds Distance Counseling (RMDC) Newsletter

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### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Welcome to all RMDC Subscribers.**

In its continued commitment to enhancing the practice of Distance Counseling, ReadyMinds is proud to announce the publishing of *Distance Counseling: Expanding the Counselor's Reach and Impact*. This book is being published by Counseling Outfitters, LLC in conjunction with ReadyMinds and has an anticipated public release date of early summer, 2007. Under the editorship of Dr. Jim Malone, Dr. Garry Walz and Mr. Randy Miller the publication offers practical, hands-on approaches to help counselors in a variety of work settings to both understand Distance Counseling and to implement effective programs and practices. The authors are experienced providers of technology-assisted counseling that focuses on career, educational and clinical mental health issues.

We are happy to we have been granted permission to present our subscribers with the introductory chapter to this forthcoming book. Based on his many years as a professional leader in the counseling field, Garry Walz shares his thoughts regarding Distance Counseling in general and more specifically, he helps the reader understand how *Distance Counseling: Expanding the Counselor's Reach and Impact* contributes to this evolving specialty.

To view this Chapter, please click on the link titled 'Feature Article' located on the left hand side of the page.

Enjoy this reading as well as the other information contained in this edition.

*James F. Malone, Ph.D., NCC, DCC*  
Editor, RMDC Newsletter  
ReadyMinds  
[jim@readyminds.com](mailto:jim@readyminds.com)

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## **FEATURED ARTICLE**

### **More Than an Introduction, Chapter 1**

*Garry R. Walz, Editor*

I recently attended a college football game among a group of highly exuberant and supportive young fans. Their involvement in the game was typical; but, in one sense, it was very different from any game I had previously attended. What struck me was how much these young people used their cell phones with picture and text messaging to interact on what was happening - both with one another at the game and with friends away from the game. Internet chats were going on all around me, greatly expanding the focus of the game from the playing field to a plethora of interactions both within the immediate space of the stadium as well as around the country – and, most likely, around the world. It was a dramatic illustration of how technology mediates how we relate and communicate. For me, as a counseling professional, it sharpened the message that clients who enter a counseling office today just aren't who they used to be! They're different on a number of dimensions; but, most significantly, they're used to relating and communicating with the aid of technology to a far greater degree than ever before. The challenge for us, as counselors, is: How do we respond and counsel this new breed of client?

This book goes a long way in providing insights as to how we might answer that question. Although it includes an interesting and useful discussion of the background of Distance Counseling and its theoretical underpinnings, it is basically a nuts and bolts approach to how counselors can apply and utilize Distance Counseling principles and tools. Through numerous personal “testimonials” by front-line experts in the Distance Counseling field, readers can learn how to effectively implement Distance Counseling practices as well as how to address potential challenges. It is unabashedly a “how-to” book that we present without apology because we believe unreservedly that ALL counselors can benefit from the use of Distance Counseling in their work – whether they be private practitioners, agency or educational institution counselors, counselor educators, or non-degreed coach/helpers.

Like physical exercise, Distance Counseling functions most effectively if the user understands its strengths and limitations and applies it judiciously. It is probably appropriate to say that the power in the medium is not in using it or not using it, but in being able to customize it to meet the specific needs and interest of each client. Its utility for any given individual will vary greatly with how appropriate it is for use with that client. Much as exercise can be overdone or inappropriate outcomes expected, the right focus and goals are key to how successful the use of Distance Counseling will be. What follows in this introduction are a few observations that may prove useful to persons developing their own personal belief system regarding the use of Distance Counseling. Clearly, the best practitioners of Distance Counseling are those who have thoughtfully considered how it augments their existing beliefs and counseling practices.

### **1) Adopting Something You Can Believe In.**

Critics of Distance Counseling, many of whom are jealous of its popularity, are prone to say that it lacks “solid research evidence” that it works. There is some truth to this in that, for all types of counseling, it is very difficult to apply rigorous experimental controls in evaluation studies. Still, a body of evidence does exist supporting the efficacy of counseling (see, for example, Sexton, Whiston, Bleuer, & Walz, 1997). Large numbers of practitioners as well as clients are supportive of it – frequently enthusiastically so. Distance Counseling, being still in the formative stages, is too new to have acquired a large body of research support; but, as detailed in Chapter Two, research support does exist and is growing. You can adopt and use Distance Counseling knowing that there is reasonable enough evidence (both quantitative and qualitative) for experimenting with it to see if it works for you. Until a larger body of evidence is amassed, a useful guide is: Does it work for you - do your clients achieve their goals and desired outcomes with the degree of certainty and regularity that you desire? Don't take someone else's word. Find out for yourself if it fits your style and needs. As you apply Distance Counseling tools, listen with your “third ear” to determine if you are achieving what you want and need. Be your own researcher as you practice Distance Counseling and become more proficient in its use. Much of what is taught in Distance Counseling training has been acquired just that way – trial with careful review – and selection based on the observed outcomes.

### **2) Being a “Go To” Counselor**

I recently overheard a young student say to another young friend, “Can you believe there was a time when you had to dial up on a phone line to get an Internet connection?” Whereupon the friend said, “Really?? How could you ever do anything?” The conversation went on and concluded that if you couldn't get “right on” (i.e., with a high speed, preferably wireless, connection), you were definitely still in the Dark Ages. However appropriate – or inappropriate – it may be, people are judged by others by the extent to which they opt for and use new technologies. This orientation is probably particularly potent among younger clients. To some extent, it is a phenomenon not unlike the mantra of an earlier generation – “You can't trust anyone over 30.” The counselor who has adopted and uses new technologies is seen as more relevant and more understanding, thus a “Go to” counselor.

Acquiring a “Go to” image and being seen as “cool” can well work to insure a flow of youthful clients. Using Distance Counseling can certainly help a counselor connect with persons who, by definition, would not be seen going to the counseling office or having sessions with a shrink.

### **3) Promoting a Technologically Savvy Professional Image**

It has been said that, of all the helping and artistic professions, counseling is among the greatest holdouts to the infusion of new technologies. Health professionals, musicians, even artists are seen as being more receptive to technology than are counselors. To a person struggling to cope with the demands of a technologically-driven age, a profession so resistive of technology to deliver its messages and/or offer services may well be judged as irrelevant, hopelessly out of touch, and old-fashioned. In some cases, that may just be true. A counselor who has not seen the advantages that can accrue to his/her counseling by the plethora of technologies available may well not be able to help a person explore appropriate life/career choices. A person who is more at home with cell phones, Web sites, and I-Pods may find relating to someone who shuns such devices as being unable to be helpful to them. Though it may border on the ridiculous to seemingly posit a “technology index” as a partial criterion for counseling effectiveness, the

counselor who would score low on such an index not only misses out on the many advantages the use of new technology can bring to his/her services, but also runs the risk of being seen as out of step with the world as it is. The use of technology inherent in Distance Counseling works to communicate to potential clients that this counselor does utilize new innovations that can enhance their effectiveness.

Doesn't such a judgment affect your choice of a person whom you would go to for help or advice? I expect many of us would agree that it does.

#### **4) Incorporating Distance Counseling as a Supplementary and Complementary Component of Traditional Counseling**

When one considers the extent and range of the need for counseling, especially career counseling, in today's world, it seems both a practical and a moral imperative that all counselors acquire a modicum of competence in Distance Counseling. In so many ways, traditional counseling can be enhanced through the use of components of Distance Counseling without embracing Distance Counseling as a distinct and separate form of counseling.

*Easing counselor/client contact*

*Communicating between face-to-face sessions*

*Providing a "hotline" for topics of immediate criticality*

*Reaching clients who are geographically distant*

*Expanding the availability of services to clients with limited means*

For all of these reasons and many more, it behooves counselors to augment their armamentarium of counseling tools with Distance Counseling interventions. Counselors who use Distance Counseling tools are clearly helping their clients by delivering a more potent counseling intervention. But they are equally benefiting themselves by expanding the number and quality of resources they can bring to their counseling practice. Perhaps most of all, there does seem to be a moral imperative to the use of Distance Counseling. In a time of great need brought on by natural and man-made disasters such as Katrina and 9/11, the need for counseling far exceeds what we can provide through existing traditional delivery systems. Are we to turn our backs on those unfortunate people who, because of cost, geography, or circumstance, can not go to a counselor? It seems that now, more than ever before, the counseling profession should utilize all available means to assist people with their life choices. To remain a profession where people must present themselves to us is to deny the needs of many and to tarnish our image of a helping, caring profession.

#### **5) Enhancing the Power of the User**

It is rather common practice when viewing an innovation to pair it off against an existing resource, e.g., group counseling as contrasted with individual counseling. Typically, the emphasis in such comparisons is to think of the innovative practice as a discrete, separate practice that is being examined as a stand alone entity and to determine how it stacks up against current resources and practices. Such an approach is helpful in examining what are the characteristics of the new practice. But it lacks the focus on how the innovative approach will fit into and benefit existing practices. It is perhaps more helpful to think of Distance Counseling not so much as a unique, separate entity, but rather as a new resource that not only brings its own unique contributions, but, more importantly, creates a powerful synergy among counseling resources and tools. By fusing Distance

Counseling techniques with traditional counseling skills and resources, the mutual reinforcement can provide a power for bringing about desired outcomes far greater than could be achieved by either alone.

### **6) Increasing Technological Utilization with Limited Discarding of Conventional Approaches**

Over the past several decades, we have witnessed the introduction of new technologies that have been broadly heralded as bringing forth major changes in public behavior. Videotapes were expected to eclipse movie theaters; and computers and the Internet were to bring forth a “paperless” workplace. Neither expectation has proved to be true. What did happen was that the new technology has been adopted and used, but the older technology also continues to be used. The two exist side by side with some mutual support between the two. In some cases, movies have actually stimulated video sales. The Internet did come into its own, but printed materials and certainly books are still often preferable to staring at a monitor for long periods of time. My point is that Distance Counseling will not replace or even diminish conventional counseling. The two can co-exist with the special advantages of each. In certain circumstances, the advantages of Distance Counseling will diminish the use of face-to-face counseling. However, Distance Counseling will not curtail the use of the face-to-face counseling in situations where the latter is clearly superior. I believe that counselors will need to strike a balance for relative emphasis in each counselor/client relationship. What is clear is that contemporary complete counselors (CCCs) use a myriad of counseling resources and continually update themselves in the use of those resources. For most counselors, this means that they will need to “get up to speed” to develop competence in Distance Counseling so that it can be used when circumstances call for its use. Lack of skill in Distance Counseling should not determine its use.

Like so many aspects of contemporary life, the capacity of counselors to be open to change and to adopt or adapt new technologies is key to their being able to adequately respond to the changing client base and the new concerns that clients bring to counseling. CCCs are not all things to all people, but are always striving to educate themselves in the use of new tools and strategies to maximize assistance to clients.

### **The Specifics of this Book**

Even a quick perusal of this book will reveal several major characteristics.

They are:

- 1) It focuses on career counseling, not on generic or mental health counseling.
- 2) It relies heavily on one of the oldest, most frequently used and reliable forms of technology – the telephone.
- 3) It describes a systemic Distance Counseling program that incorporates the use of: individual phone counseling; test taking; judicious use of the Internet; at-home review and reflection by the client between telephone interviews; the use of experienced, certified, and supervised counselors; and regular review and evaluation of program components.
- 4) It essentially presents the knowledge and insights gained through several years of experience of the ReadyMinds program, buttressed by reference to the developing research and experiential counseling literature.

5) It has a strong practical “you can use this now” orientation that can be incorporated into a formal training program or used in an individual self study approach.

As the founder and long-time director of ERIC/CASS, I chose to focus on this single program because it was the best example I know of that is an operating program of some continuing duration. Its operation has met one major criterion – success in the marketplace. There may well be others as good or better, but I am not aware of them. My motivation in initiating and seeing this book through to its being published was to give counselors a concise picture of how a conceptually sound and well-managed Distance Counseling program operates.

I believe the ideas and practices presented in this book extend to many settings and populations. Counselors can pick and choose ideas and practices they see as worthy to be added to their repertoire of counseling resources. The book also offers a complete program which, with further study and practice, can be adopted and implemented in many situations.

At a minimum, I hope it will stimulate thought and discussion on which of the Distance Counseling practices should be adopted and how best to do so. I don't say “whether” because I believe we are past the point of that. We should utilize much or all of what Distance Counseling offers. But, of course, each counselor must determine for him/herself how much to adopt and incorporate into his/her own counseling practices. Hopefully, this book will aid counselors in the process of doing so.

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## **DISTANCE COUNSELING (DC) FORUM**

### **Relevant DC Articles, Licensure & Training Updates**

#### ❖ **[TV Screen, Not Couch, Is Required for This Session](#)**

By Kirk Johnson

A growing number of psychiatrists are using telemedicine technology to reach patients in rural swaths of the nation.

**Click here for the full story:**

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/06/08/us/08teleshrink.html?ex=1179892800&en=a2be5b644d46c11a&ei=5070>

#### ❖ **[Telephone-Based Psychotherapy Shows Durability in Depression](#)**

By Judith Groch, Senior Writer, MedPage Today

SEATTLE, For depressed patients on medication but too sad to seek psychotherapy, lasting help may be available by the telephone, researchers found in a follow-up study.

Click here for the full story:

<http://www.medpagetoday.com/Psychiatry/Depression/tb2/5300>

❖ **Supportive of telephone support in therapy.**

### ~LICENSURE UPDATE ~

#### ***Licensure Legislation Moves Forward in California and Nevada***

Legislative committees in California and Nevada have recently approved legislation to establish licensure of professional counselors. If enacted, the two laws would complete the adoption of licensure standards for counselors in all fifty states.

In California, the Assembly Business & Professions Committee by a unanimous 10 to 0 vote approved California Assembly Bill 1486 (AB 1486) on Tuesday, April 17th. The bill next goes to the state Assembly Appropriations Committee, which must approve the use of state government monies for carrying out the tasks involved in setting up the profession in the state.

The Appropriations Committee is likely to make a decision on the issue within the next two weeks. The California Coalition for Counselor Licensure (CCCL) has worked diligently over the past five years to get to this point, and provides updates and background information on the licensure effort at their website at <http://www.caccl.org/>.

In Nevada, the Senate Commerce & Labor Committee approved Nevada Senate Bill 543 (SB 543) on Friday, April 13th. The legislation will now be forwarded to the full Senate for its approval, which is expected to occur within the next week. The legislation will then be sent to the Nevada Assembly Commerce & Labor Committee for its consideration. The Assembly Commerce & Labor Committee also approved its own version of a counselor licensure bill last week, demonstrating its support for counselor licensure.

### **Distance Training Updates**

ReadyMinds is pleased to share that since Training inception (2004) **over 900 Counselors** have participated in the two-day DCC Training Workshop. Counselors from all over the country are benefiting from this training and the interest level continues to grow larger each year. To hear direct comments from DCC attendees, please visit:

[http://www.readyminds.com/training/dcc\\_testim.htm](http://www.readyminds.com/training/dcc_testim.htm)

Below we have listed the remaining dates and locations for the **2007 DCC Trainings**. We thank you for all of your inquiries and opinions for new co-hosted site locations ☺.

### 2007 DCC Training Dates and Locations

Date	Training Site	Location
7/9/07 & 7/10/07	<a href="#">Sheraton Seattle Hotel and Towers</a>	Seattle, WA
8/3/07 & 8/4/07	<a href="#">Wisconsin Lutheran College</a>	Milwaukee, WI
9/27/07 & 9/28/07	<a href="#">Oakton Community College</a>	Des Plaines, IL
10/4/07 & 10/5/07	<a href="#">Merz Consulting Inc.</a>	Adairsville, GA
10/11/07 & 10/12/07	<a href="#">Texas State Technical College Waco</a>	Waco, TX
10/18/07 & 10/19/07	<a href="#">ReadyMinds Corporate Headquarters</a>	Lyndhurst, NJ
10/25/07 & 10/26/07	<a href="#">Butler University</a>	Indianapolis, IN
11/1/07 & 11/2/07	<a href="#">CCE/NBCC</a>	Greensboro, NC
11/1/07 & 11/2/07	<a href="#">Ottawa University – Tempe</a>	Phoenix, AZ
11/8/07 & 11/9/07	<a href="#">Barry University</a>	Miami Shores, FL

If you are interested in attending a 2007 Training or would like up-to-date training information, please visit our website at:  
[www.readyminds.com/dcclocations](http://www.readyminds.com/dcclocations).

If you would like to be put on our Master e-mail list to receive updates on when new training sites have been announced, please send an email to Lisa Miller at [lisa@readyminds.com](mailto:lisa@readyminds.com). If you are interested in attending a workshop in a specific state(s), please mention specifically in your e-mail. We do have co-hosting opportunities still available for this year.

### **Continuing Education (CE) Hours**

Due to popular demand and requests from the Counseling Community, ReadyMinds is now pleased to offer a new CEU course within the specific area of Distance Counseling. The online course is titled, **Security Strategies for Distance Counseling via E-mail**. Successful completion of the course will result in **three (3) NBCC continuing education hours**.

**The cost is \$49.00 and the entire Course can be taken online from the comfort of your own surroundings.**

**If you are interested in learning more about this course or would like to register, please visit:**

<http://www.readyminds.com/training/ceu.html>.

## **Other Training/Credential Opportunities**

ReadyMinds and the Center for Credentialed and Education, Inc, (CCE, an affiliate of the NBCC®) will soon be offering a new **online** training course. The online course is titled, Distance Credentialed Facilitator (DCF) and will be launched in June 2007. For details about this course, please visit <http://www.readyminds.com/training/overview.html>.

~ 2007 NEW RMDC NEWSLETTER FEATURE ~

“SHARE YOUR PERSONAL DISTANCE JOURNEY...”

ReadyMinds' Founder & CEO was recently featured in the (NCDAs) **National Career Development Association Monograph Series:**

Randy Miller, Founder & CEO of ReadyMinds was asked to share an inside look into the creation and journey of ReadyMinds, the nation's premiere provider of distance counseling services. In his Chapter 6, "What is Your Strategic Plan", Mr. Miller shares his personal story as well as specific entrepreneurial tips that can assist others.

Mr. Miller is featured along with fifteen other successful entrepreneurs within the field. If you are a risk-taker with an independent style, you will benefit by reading the stories and strategies of successful career entrepreneurs. These contributors share from the dual perspective of active counselors who have grown their own business.

***"I like this book, a lot! More and more workers these days are attracted to the idea of running their own business, but lack lessons in how to do that. Now they can listen in to interviews with people who have gone down the road before them - successful, articulate, smart, reflective people talking about how they started their own business. (I know two-thirds of them personally). Required reading, if you are even thinking about starting your own business."***

***--Richard N. Bolles, Author, 2007 What Color Is Your Parachute?***

To view more, please visit:

[http://www.readyminds.com/about/news\\_2006\\_12.htm](http://www.readyminds.com/about/news_2006_12.htm)

*Author/Editor:*

*Dr. Sally Gelardin "Starting and Growing a Business in the New Economy: Career Entrepreneurs Share Stories and Strategies" (NCDAs, 2007); eLearning Instructor and Curriculum Designer*

*([www.jobjuggler.net](http://www.jobjuggler.net), [www.lifeworkps.com/eCDF](http://www.lifeworkps.com/eCDF)). Dr. Sally Gelardin is the Past-President of the California Career Development Association.*

This new interactive feature, **“Share Your Personal Story --- of Going The Distance”** is being added for 2007-2008. Our Editors want to hear from you regarding your distance journey and how you impact the lives of others. Are you in private practice? affiliated with an organization?, just starting your new journey ?, etc....How has the learning or incorporation of Distance Methodologies in your work aided you & others? Your colleagues and the distance community want to know!

When submitting, you can share openly or remain anonymous. Please share challenges, concerns, and struggles as well. Our in-house Editors & Experts in the field will be dedicating time and energy to addressing these open questions & challenges in our next Edition. Please offer permission to publish your entry when submitting. If anonymously, please use your initials only (we will keep your e-mail address/full name confidential).

We thank you in advance for submitting. Send your personal distance journey story to [RMDCnewsletter@readyminds.com](mailto:RMDCnewsletter@readyminds.com).

Thank you.